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1. Introduction

Over the course of the 19th and early 20th centuries, Britain had significantly increased its influence in the territory that is today known as *Ghana*.¹ This process was accompanied by local resistance from the outset. As a consequence of intensified anti-colonial resistance in the 1930s and a changed international environment that emerged during the Second World War, developments towards a transfer of power from colonial rulers to Africans picked up speed over the 1940s and 1950s.² In 1951, the Convention People's Party (CPP), led by Kwame Nkrumah, won Ghana's first substantial general election and was invited to form the administration, which introduced the period of dual rule. Still, certain key powers remained under British control. Only after two more outright victories of Nkrumah and the CPP in the general elections of 1954 and 1956, Ghana gained independence on March 6, 1957.³

After it had seized power as an election winning mass party, the CPP faced numerous challenges and growing opposition forces, which it increasingly oppressed. In 1960, Ghana's parliamentary democracy was officially dismantled and turned into a republic with Nkrumah as its president. In 1964, Ghana was declared a one-party state. In terms of economic policies, the first three years of independence were characterised by a rather liberal strategy, whereas from circa 1960 on, Nkrumah aimed more overtly at the country's socialist transformation. On February 24, 1966, his rule was ended in a military-police coup that took place without significant popular resistance.⁴ Similar to political freedom in Ghana, the economy had also been declining since the late 1950s; the per-capita economic growth rate remained negative from 1964 on.⁵

Coupled with the economic demise, the fact that a party which had enjoyed mass support could be overthrown rather easily stimulated a scholarly debate in the later 1960s/early 1970s. The original debate focused on the presumed superficial nature of the CPP's attempt to transform Ghana into a socialist republic, and was largely, though not exclusively, led amongst Western scholars with a Marxist background, whose interpretations of Nkrumah's economic policies were heavily influenced by what, in their view, would have been the

¹For the sake of brevity, I will use the term *Ghana* to refer to the applicable colonial and pre-colonial territories throughout the present thesis. The respective pre-independence administrative units are discussed in 2.1 below.

²Crowder 1984: 22-26.

³Gocking 2005: 95-98, 102-104, 109-111.

⁴Beckman 1976: 15-17; Boahen 1975: 173-225; Gocking 2005: 125, 131, and 137-139.

⁵Frimpong-Ansah 1992: 166.

optimal strategy.⁶ Numerous other contributions have since been added to the dispute about Nkrumah's decisions in the economic sphere.⁷

In addition to this policy-focused debate, a number of academic publications has also dealt in detail with Nkrumah himself. This body of literature includes biographical works, as well as non-biographical ones that nevertheless contain a characterisation of Nkrumah. There are also overlaps with the economy-focused literature, as some economists have participated in the discussion about what to make of the first Ghanaian head of state. Nkrumah's many own writings constitute a crucial element of the diverse interpretations of his life, his philosophy, and his actual rule. As in the case of the debate about the CPP's particularly economic policy, the multi-faceted *Nkrumah controversy* has been strongly shaped by Western publications.⁸ Against the background of the evident dominance of Western writings in the Nkrumah controversy, the present thesis raises the overriding question: *how have Ghanaian intellectuals interpreted Nkrumah's life and rule?*⁹ On this basis, several more concrete questions arise:

- 1) In what way have Ghanaian academic contributions to the Nkrumah controversy, published between 1970 and 2008, been characterised by change and/or continuity? Can we determine certain trends, or epochs?
- 2) Have the authors' politico-economic ideologies, and their professional and societal backgrounds, influenced their views of Nkrumah? If yes, which political ideologies have been most dominant in shaping the Nkrumah controversy? What role have nationalism and Pan-Africanism played in particular?
- 3) Have political changes in Ghana had an impact on Ghanaian intellectuals' publications on the Nkrumah controversy?

In order to answer these questions adequately, some theoretical and methodological considerations are necessary. As the present thesis deals with representations of history, it clearly involves an engagement with *historiography*. *History*, as an academic discipline, and historiography cannot be strictly separated: "... die moderne Geschichtswissenschaft [ist] gegen ihre literarische Nachbarschaft, die Historiographie (die Geschichtsschreibung) nicht

⁶Fitch and Oppenheimer 1966; Genoud 1969; Green 1971; Mohan 1967; Murray 1967; see also Beckman 1976: 19-29; Gocking 2005: 139.

⁷Prominent examples are Frimpong-Ansah 1992; Killick 1978; Rimmer 1992.

⁸Birmingham 1998; Davidson 2007 [1973]; Fitch and Oppenheimer 1966; Genoud 1969; Killick 1978; Milne 1974, 1977, 1990, 2000; Rathbone 2000; Rimmer 1966, 1969, 1992.

⁹I decided to focus on Ghanaian intellectuals in order to have a workable category that allows for meaningful comparisons and does not go beyond the scope of a Master's thesis. Clearly, the overriding research question could well be extended to broader African regions in future research.

dicht".¹⁰ Thus, it is impossible to maintain a clear boundary between the two categories: "... wissenschaftliche Texte sind als Texte immer auch *Geschichtsschreibung*".¹¹ The crucial point concerning this thesis is that professional academics are, like everybody else, influenced by their respective historical consciousness, by their personal conceptions of history. These, in turn, are likely to relate to an individual's background in society.¹² Science has never been produced in a social, cultural, or political vacuum; it has never been the mere registration of objectively given phenomena. It has also been about giving meaning to phenomena, interpreting them,¹³ which means that scientific texts contain ideologies and agendas.

An interdisciplinary approach is useful in further conceptualising these issues. Sociologists like Karl Mannheim (1893-1947) argued that all ideas should be related to social position in a non-deterministic way. A person's thought is influenced by his or her worldview, which in turn is, to a large extent, socially conditioned. Political ideologies, which lie at the core of the present thesis, are more often than not expressions of authors' social positions.¹⁴

Methodologically, even though there is not *the* one method to work on historiography, the clear implication is that texts and their authors need to be contextualised, meaning we have to ask under which circumstances a text was written and published, what questions it aimed at answering, who it addressed, and what intention(s) its author may have had.¹⁵ *Intellectual History* as a discipline and methodology is quite helpful in coping with these issues. It has picked up and developed further several methods that originated from the sociology of knowledge à la Mannheim.¹⁶

Even though it is a heterogeneous field, Intellectual History certainly is, among other things, about revealing the implicit ideas and perceptions that underlie an author's explicit formulations.¹⁷ In this connection, it is useful to look for a text's correspondence to one or more contemporary discourses that surrounded its author.¹⁸ However, in order to attempt to *explain* an author's affinity for one or another discourse, it seems indispensable to transcend the level of both the individual and the text, and to consider aspects of "milieu", "class", "status".¹⁹ In more concrete terms, we need to ask for an author's socio-economic background,

¹⁰Simon 1996: 13.

¹¹Simon 1996: 14.

¹²Simon 1996: 15-16.

¹³Simon 1996: 263.

¹⁴Gordon 2012.

¹⁵Simon 1996: 15-17.

¹⁶Gordon 2012; Simon 1996: 256-257.

¹⁷Gordon 2012; Simon 1996: 256.

¹⁸Simon 1996: 17.

¹⁹Simon 1996: 256.

for his or her political affiliations, and, as trivial as it may sound, for his or her geographical location(s). Considering this, a sociologically oriented Intellectual History also asks under which conditions certain conceptualisations of the world appear²⁰ and, in our case, continue or cease to be attractive to certain authors.²¹ These deliberations also relate to ideological criticism, whose proponents emphasise that being influences consciousness.²²

This is not to imply determinism. Taking into account the factors that I have just discussed will not enable us to give a definite explanation as to why someone wrote what he or she wrote in the way he or she wrote it.²³ Nevertheless, proceeding in the fashion of a sociologically oriented Intellectual History, by which I largely mean an all-encompassing contextualisation of academic writings, will enable us to make plausible propositions regarding an author's motivation(s) for writing what he or she wrote.

The obvious implication of these theoretical considerations is that my own view of Nkrumah is not unbiased either. Hence, I feel obliged to briefly inform the reader about my own opinion on Nkrumah's philosophy and rule. In this connection, let me anticipate that the historiography of Nkrumah's intellectual and political life is, to a large extent, characterised by polarisation. As I will demonstrate in chapter three, Ghanaian opinions on what to make of the famous independence leader have ranged from complete condemnation to worship without condition. My personal view of the first Ghanaian head of state is rather informed by authors who, in my opinion, take up a more balanced position. This includes Ghanaian authors like Kwame Arhin, Jonathan H. Frimpong-Ansah, and certain aspects of the writings of Albert Adu Boahen. However, the author who has influenced my own view of Nkrumah the most is Tony Killick. Furthermore, I often rely on the works of Roger S. Gocking, and Nkrumah himself.²⁴

It seems most appropriate to me to treat Nkrumah as a complex human being with highly diverse and occasionally conflicting motivations that cannot be reduced to one or two primary ambitions, or characteristics. In my opinion, Nkrumah was truly influenced by Marxism-Leninism since at least 1945, but his identification with socialism grew even stronger in his later years. He was genuinely enthusiastic about anti-colonialism and Pan-Africanism, which

²⁰Simon 1996: 256.

²¹This is what differentiates intellectual history as a (heterogeneous) methodology from the *history of ideas*, or *history of mind* (*Geistesgeschichte*), as the latter treats ideas as independent and acting beings (Gordon 2012; Simon 1996: 257).

²²Simon 1996: 266.

²³Simon 1996: 249.

²⁴The authors mentioned here are discussed in chapter three of this thesis. For an examination of Nkrumah's own writings, see especially 2.3.

included enthusiasm for Ghanaian nationalism. It should be noted that his political philosophy stood on non-racialist grounds. Before and after independence, Nkrumah was confronted with a highly complex political and socio-economic situation, in which nation building was a difficult task. Partly, Nkrumah's controversial undemocratic measures were indeed aimed at national stabilisation.

This, however, should not lead us to believe that a genuine interest in the country's well-being was the only, or main motivation behind legislations like the Preventive Detention Act – a more selfish interest in maintaining power, and a general readiness to adopt authoritarian methods cannot be disputed. In my opinion, the fact that Nkrumah had been very much interested in leading positions throughout his entire life, as evident from his biography, gives testimony to a certain “instinct for power”. This view also matches Nkrumah's capability of opportunistic calculus: even though he disliked “tribalism”, Nkrumah was ready to exploit ethnicity-based rivalries when he thought he had to (see 2.3).

Additionally it should be noted that the deterioration of international cocoa prices from 1958 onwards severely constrained Nkrumah's range of actions, and Western hostility towards his increasingly socialist course arguably made matters worse. Nkrumah's role as a crucial historical figure in African nationalism, Pan-Africanism, and anti-colonialism, as well as his role as a continuing source of inspiration to current writers and activists is indisputable.

To put it in a nutshell, my main point is that Nkrumah had multiple interests, ranging from genuine ideological convictions to a selfish interest in power. Hence, I do not believe that we gain much insight from asking whether he was a “sinner” or a “saint”, as such simplistic categories neglect the importance of the complex circumstances within which Nkrumah's political actions took place.

Let me now briefly outline how the present thesis is organised. Putting Nkrumah in historical perspective in chapter two, I will demonstrate and explain his political activities, the complex environment(s) within which he had to conduct them, and his intellectual influences and his own philosophy. Thus, chapter two provides basic information about Nkrumah's political and intellectual life, the Ghanaian anti-colonial struggle, and Pan-Africanism without which an investigation into the Nkrumah controversy would be impossible.

In chapter three, a brief examination of dominant Western views on the Nkrumah controversy will be followed by an in-depth analysis of Ghanaian contributions to the subject that were published between 1970 and 2008. In order to answer the research questions raised at the beginning, I will apply the methodology outlined above. Thus, special attention will be paid to

the respective authors' biographies so as to find out how their personal background in society, their political affiliations, and possibly their places of residence affected their writings on Nkrumah. In the course of asking which political ideologies have most strongly shaped the Nkrumah controversy in Ghana, the role of nationalism and Pan-Africanism in these writings will be highlighted, assuming that these concepts have mattered to a majority of the authors under consideration. I will also examine connections between Ghana's overall political development and the views put forward in Nkrumah-related publications. Furthermore, I will look for trends in the Ghanaian historiography on Nkrumah, asking when and why argument patterns changed or reappeared.

Lastly, in the conclusion, I will answer the research questions raised above by summarising the main findings of the present thesis. Additionally, I will put forward recommendations for future research.

2. Nkrumah's intellectual and political life in historical perspective

2.1 *British colonial rule, early Ghanaian nationalism, and the international spread of Pan-Africanism*

The first encounter between Ghanaians and Europeans dates back to what has been labelled Europe's *Age of Discovery*. Searching for a sea passage to the Far East and the Western Sudan in order to circumvent regions that were controlled by Muslim traders, the Portuguese arrived in present-day Ghana in 1482. In the 16th century, small numbers of other Europeans, notably the English and the Dutch, also made their way to Ghana and gradually dislodged the Portuguese. After 1642, English traders who, like the Portuguese, were especially interested in the region's gold established permanent fortifications at the coast.

Over the course of the 19th century, British influence in present-day Ghana increased significantly, and appeared in new forms, characterised by a stronger will to actually rule African territory.²⁵ An own agent and consul was appointed by the British government in 1818, English common law came to be established, and in 1850 the forts and settlements at the Gold Coast became a colony on their own, separate from Sierra Leone which they had formerly been administered by. In 1870 the last remaining possessions of the Dutch were bought, and eventually the entire Gold Coast became a British colony in 1874. In the same year, "... Britain annexed the southern vassal states of Asante and constituted them into a Protectorate ...".²⁶ European conquests of African and other world regions were not exceptional at that time: the period from the mid-1870s up to the outbreak of the First World War is commonly referred to as the era of *High Imperialism*.

In 1901, the Ashanti area²⁷ became a British colony; the Northern Territories became a British protectorate in 1902. Out of practical considerations, the Gold Coast colony, Ashanti, and the Northern Territories were treated as one political entity, under the administration of one single governor. Furthermore, the British obtained the western part of Togoland in 1919. They had invaded German Togoland during the First World War and were to administer British

²⁵It is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide a comprehensive picture of British expansion in Ghana in the 19th century. This expansion was not linear, there were temporary accelerations as well as setbacks (Boahen 1975: 34-44). Nevertheless, it is valid to establish that British dominance increased over the course of the 19th century.

²⁶Boahen 1975: 34.

²⁷Regarding the different spellings of Asante/Ashanti, I follow "... contemporary usage in Ghana, where the region is spelled *Ashanti* and the people/culture is spelled *Asante*" (Gocking 2005: xxi).

Togoland as a mandated territory after Germany's defeat.²⁸

Colonial rule had diverse effects on present-day Ghana. One important aspect is that it led to a decline of the political, judicial, economic, and spiritual power of chiefs, which was increasingly noticeable since at least the 1920s. The decline of the influence of chiefs spread from the south to the interior. It should also be noted that there was a significant growth of urbanisation especially since the turn of the century. In these emerging larger towns, several innovations like the supply of piped water, electricity, and hospitals were introduced.²⁹ The larger towns were also to play a decisive role in the formation of nationalist resistance.

In addition, some important economic changes occurred. After the abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, kola nuts and, even more so, palm oil became important exports in Ghana. By the 1880s, palm oil and palm kernels had superseded gold and ivory as Ghana's leading exports. Ineffective infrastructure caused the British government to seriously engage in the construction of roads and railways in Ghana from the 1890s. Palm oil products remained in the leading export position until 1911, when cocoa became Ghana's major export crop.

Cocoa had first been introduced to Ghana in 1857. From 1890, the British administration strongly encouraged the diffusion of cocoa production by distributing seedlings, notably at the same time of the expansion of roads and railways. The spread of cocoa cultivation throughout Ghana continued until the 1930s; its importance cannot be overrated: cocoa came to be the mainstay not only of Ghanaian exports, but of the Ghanaian economy in general, accounting for circa 60% of national income from the 1940s to the 1960s.³⁰

Cocoa also was to have a strong political dimension after the way it was marketed was fundamentally altered in 1939. I will explain this in more detail in 2.4 in connection with other changes that had an impact on Ghanaian nationalist agitation in the 1940s.

Last but not least it should be noted that, not surprisingly, the process of Ghana's colonisation was accompanied by local resistance. For the simple reason that the Asante empire was the largest political entity in Ghana during the time of British expansion in the 19th century, it serves well to demonstrate the case.³¹

In addition to rivalries with other Ghanaian states, the Asante empire fought several wars against the British invaders. Open conflict between the Asante and Britain emerged in 1824,

²⁸For this entire chronological overview compare Boahen 1975: 34-77; Buah 1980: 65; Gocking 2005: 12, 25-39.

²⁹Boahen 1975: 104-106.

³⁰Boahen 1975: 82, 89-101; Green 1971: 234; Phillips 1989: 59-84.

³¹The Asante empire had strongly expanded during the first half of the 18th century (Boahen 1975: 15).

1826, 1863, and 1873. The last of these wars ended in Ashanti's final defeat and the establishment of the British protectorate in the southern Ashanti area mentioned above.³² Other forms of resistance manifested themselves in the Fante Confederation and in the Accra Native Confederation movements, in the third quarter of the 19th century.³³

However, it would be misleading to imagine a straight-forward linear connection between the resistance in the 19th century and the nationalist movements that began to take shape in Ghana and elsewhere in Africa since the early 20th century. The precise motivations of Ghanaian resistance against British domination varied significantly over time – as did British domination. Leaving other aspects aside, the main difference to point out is the nationalist and pan-Africanist orientation that characterised many anti-colonial activists from Africa after the turn of the century. It is also important to emphasise that there was never a homogenous group of anti-colonialists. For example, Africans in diaspora worked together with continental Africans, but they certainly did not all share the same visions.

In the following I am going to briefly examine the formation of early nationalist movements in Ghana at the beginning of the 20th century. Such an examination also requires an outline of the international spread of Pan-Africanist ideas in the early 20th century. An understanding of both the development of and connections between Ghanaian nationalism and Pan-Africanism is crucial for comprehending the intellectual ideas and social environments which strongly influenced Kwame Nkrumah. Nkrumah pointed out these influences himself.³⁴

An understanding of Nkrumah's ideas and influences is, in turn, indispensable for coping with the diverse Ghanaian interpretations of his intellectual and political life which will occupy the centre stage of this thesis in chapter 3.

In the first two decades of the 20th century, the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society (ARPS), which had been founded in 1897, embodied an early form of nationalist agitation. Most of all, the ARPS campaigned – sometimes successfully – against British ordinances which were intended to strengthen colonial power. However, after 1911 it increasingly became a conservative group confined to Cape Coast. The leading role in Ghana's anti-colonial activism was taken over by the National Congress of British West Africa (NCBWA) after the end of the First World War.³⁵

In order to comprehend the intellectual influences of the NCBWA, the subsequent course of

³²Boahen 1975: 14-33.

³³Boahen 1975: 45-56.

³⁴Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: 18-19, 164-165, 168-169.

³⁵Boahen 1975: 119-120. Despite its declining influence, the ARPS existed until the 1950s.

Ghanaian anti-colonial activism, and also Nkrumah's political thought, it is first of all necessary to examine the core ideas of the influential early 20th century Pan-Africanist thinkers.

The intellectual roots of Pan-Africanism reach back to European conceptions of the world as consisting of continents which constitute natural entities with characteristics that distinguish them from one another. Internally, these entities were perceived to be rather homogenous. This view of the world emerged in conjunction with the rise of modern cartography. During the enlightenment era, Africa increasingly came to be associated with darkness, serving as a counter-image of the bright, literally enlightened Europe. Furthermore, racism became a dominant paradigm in Europe,³⁶ meaning – in a simplified way, as there were several versions of racism – that the belief in the existence of three or more “races” with distinct characteristics and differing value was commonly accepted.

During the 19th century, Africans were commonly depicted as savages, whose extinction was deemed inevitable by some Europeans.³⁷ A significant proportion of official politicians and the general public did not develop a critical attitude towards racist assumptions until after the Second World War.

The idea of an internally connected “Africa” with shared characteristics was picked up by Africans living in the Caribbean and the Americas since the 18th century. “Africa” – regardless of the diverse realities on the actual continent – became an important element of the identity of these descendants of African slaves. Despite their anti-racist stand, “race” solidarity characterised their ideas of Pan-African connectedness.³⁸ The “race” paradigm was so strong that not even anti-racists could escape it.

For example, Alexander Crummell (1819-1898), an African-American, countered European conceptions of a lost “negro race”, arguing that Africans were able to learn and could hence be civilised. Crummell attacked essential views on “race” with a circumstantial approach. In his view, the mission to improve “Africa” was to be accomplished by already civilised African-Americans.³⁹

This opinion was characteristic of 19th century Pan-Africanists. They had both emancipatory and imperial ambitions, meaning African-Americans were supposed to colonise Africa.

³⁶Sonderegger 2011: 98.

³⁷Farrar 1867: 123.

³⁸Sonderegger 2011: 98-99.

³⁹Crummell 2011 [1861]. In terms of anti-racism, James Africanus Beale Horton (1835-1883) from Sierra Leone went further than Crummell: in an anthropological fashion, he discussed empirical historical examples of earlier cases of African self-government in order to prove contemporary Africans' ability to rule themselves, and also to demonstrate “race” equality (Horton 1969 [1868]).

Furthermore, in their view, the common misery of all blacks was Anglo-American and Anglo-Saxon rule and exploitation.⁴⁰

Nkrumah, several decades later, was certainly no proponent of an African-American colonisation of Africa. Yet, the latter argument concerning a common misery of black people can also be found in Nkrumah's writings, thus demonstrating a link between his philosophy and the thoughts of earlier Pan-Africanists. Discussing the connections between “race” and “class” as the bases of capitalist exploitation, Nkrumah compared the conditions of blacks in South Africa with those in the US, the Caribbean, and Latin America.⁴¹ This also demonstrates that Nkrumah's Pan-Africanism did not stand on racial, but rather on political-economic grounds. In his view, “... the race struggle [had] become part of the class struggle”.⁴² Furthermore, even though he compared the conditions of Africans and people of African descent in different parts of the world, Nkrumah's Pan-Africanism, in terms of action, was mainly confined to the African continent – hence his emphasis on *African* nationalism, as opposed to *black* nationalism.⁴³

To 19th century Pan-Africanists, the only solution to the problems they identified seemed to be a black African nation in which the *African personality* could express its true self. Against this background, Edward Wilmot Blyden (1832-1912) from Saint Thomas Island in the Caribbean actually welcomed the military conquest of Africa by Europeans during the *Scramble for Africa*. In his view, it provided opportunities for the improvement of the continent and its “race”. Furthermore, he was convinced that European presence in Africa would be temporary.⁴⁴

Awareness that European rule on the African continent would *not* be temporary is what clearly distinguished early 20th century Pan-Africanists from their 19th century precursors. Furthermore, the Pan-African idea was increasingly influential on the African continent itself after the turn of the century, aided by more organised activities of the diaspora leaders, like the first Pan-African Conference that took place in London in 1900. Improved organisation of Pan-Africanists in the early 20th century should be seen against the background of growing realisation that political activity was necessary in order to enhance Africans' lot. Among other things, the foreign domination of blacks, racism, and the future of Africa were discussed at the Pan-African Conference in 1900. However, an overwhelming majority of the participants was

⁴⁰Sonderegger 2011: 100.

⁴¹Nkrumah 1980a [1970]: 27.

⁴²Nkrumah 1980a [1970]: 27.

⁴³Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: 44.

⁴⁴Boahen 1975: 120; Sonderegger 2011: 100.

not from Africa.⁴⁵

One attendant of the London conference in 1900 was William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (1868-1963), an African-American distinguished historian. Du Bois was one of the most influential Pan-Africanist intellectuals of the early 20th century. In certain respects, his position ties in with that of earlier Pan-Africanists – especially in terms of the improvement of Africa based on outside guidance. But Du Bois was also a crucial figure in the concretisation of the critique of colonial rule. For example, in 1919 – the year in which the first Pan-African Congress, organised mainly by Du Bois, took place in Paris – he argued that Europeans, contrary to what they claimed, were not interested in civilising Africa, but in the continent's raw materials and cheap labour. European greed and exploitation kept Africa from unfolding its full potential.⁴⁶

The same argument is central to Nkrumah's pamphlet *Towards Colonial Freedom: Africa in the Struggle against World Imperialism*, which he finished writing in 1945. Nkrumah's most pressing concern was to warn colonial subjects of the false nature of the promises of self-government made by any colonial power. He based this warning on the argument, similar to Du Bois, that there had never really been a civilising mission; colonialism had been and always would be about economic exploitation. In Nkrumah's view, colonialism essentially meant that colonies received expensive manufactured goods and capital, but they exported cheap raw materials and were being paid low wages. The intellectual indebtedness to Du Bois is obvious. Furthermore, as Nkrumah himself pointed out, the argument is clearly informed by the Marxist-Leninist theory of imperialism, which I will explain in a more detailed discussion of *Towards Colonial Freedom* in 2.3 below.⁴⁷

Another aspect worth noting in Du Bois' writings is that “race” solidarity was a political instrument in his view. He stressed differences between African-Americans and Africans and argued that “[i]t is ... absurd to talk of a return to Africa, merely because that was our home 300 years ago ...”.⁴⁸ These critical remarks were directed towards another early 20th century Pan-Africanist by the name of Marcus Garvey (1887-1940). Garvey wanted all black people in the world to settle in – in Garvey's opinion: to return to – Africa, as he took it to be their racial home, just like he considered Europe to be the true home of white people. The overall goal was to create an all-African nation, and an essentialist view of “race” was crucial to his

⁴⁵Boahen 1975: 120-121; Sonderegger 2011: 104. Boahen identifies more African influence at this early conference than Sonderegger.

⁴⁶Du Bois February 1919a; Sonderegger 2011: 104.

⁴⁷Nkrumah 1979b [1962, written 1945].

⁴⁸Du Bois February 1919b: 166.

ideas.⁴⁹ Whereas Du Bois and the Pan-African Congresses had a strong impact on African elites, Garvey was highly influential on the masses.⁵⁰ Accordingly, Frederick Cooper called Garvey's writings the “populist version”⁵¹ of Pan-Africanism.

During his time as a student in the US, Nkrumah was clearly influenced by Garvey's writings.⁵² Nkrumah's initial enthusiasm for Garvey, however, was followed by strong scepticism towards Garvey's essentialist views on “race” since at least 1945.⁵³

Another influential Pan-Africanist concept was Negritude. According to Abiola Irele, Negritude represents “... the equivalent on the French-speaking side of what has come to be known as Pan-Africanism”.⁵⁴ Its major proponent was Léopold Sédar Senghor (1906-2001), who argued for the existence of a distinct “Africanness”, claiming that there were fundamental racial differences between Africans and others. In his view, Africa was to make a significant contribution to global civilisation. In the course of embracing “Africanness”, Senghor strongly idealised Africa and its past.⁵⁵ Nkrumah was highly critical of Senghor's views, which will be discussed in more detail below in an examination of Nkrumah's writings on African Socialism (see 2.3).

What the diverse Pan-Africanist ideas had in common was their hostility against European imperialism and alleged European superiority. In order to understand Nkrumah's own writings not only on Pan-Africanism, but also on ideas like African Socialism, it is helpful to keep this Eurosceptic intellectual environment in mind. Without doubt, the idea of capitalism was identified with Europe in colonial Africa, and in the immediate independence era. Thus opposition to colonialism often included opposition to capitalism.

2.2 *Ghanaian anti-colonial agitation from the 1920s to the 1940s*

The first Pan-African Conference and the first Pan-African Congress were rather elitist and dominated by blacks who did not come from Africa. Similarly, the attendants of the second, third, and fourth Pan-African Congresses taking place in the 1920s were predominantly from the US and the Caribbean. One of the first Africans to call the African-American claim to Pan-African leadership into question was Joseph Ephraim Casely Hayford (1866-1930) from

⁴⁹Garvey 1963 [1923]; Garvey 1976 [1919]. Ironically, Garvey never set foot in Africa in his entire life.

⁵⁰Sonderegger 2011: 104-105.

⁵¹Cooper 2002: 24.

⁵²Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: 37; see also Birmingham 1998: 3-4; Sonderegger 2011: 102-103.

⁵³Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: 44; see also Sonderegger 2011: 102-103.

⁵⁴Irele 1990: 68.

⁵⁵Senghor November 1961; Senghor 1970 [1966]; Cooper 2002: 24.

Ghana.⁵⁶ He constitutes a crucial link between the global developments of Pan-Africanism and the Ghanaian course of nationalism and anti-colonialism.

Much more than Du Bois, and in striking contrast to Garvey, Casely Hayford thought that the “improvement” of Africans in terms of arts, science, and industry had to come from within Africa, for “... the average Afro-American citizen of the United States has lost absolute touch with the past of his race ...”.⁵⁷ It followed, in his view, that the leadership of the nationalist and Pan-Africanist movements should consist of “real” Africans like him who were born on the continent and rooted in the best of both the “modern” and the “traditional” world. Despite his emphasis on black uniqueness, African authenticity, and the continent's noble, simple, and traditional past, Casely Hayford argued that Africa could selectively adopt the “good” elements of Western culture in order to uplift itself.⁵⁸ Hence, there was also space for the idea of modernisation in his thought.

Most importantly, Casely Hayford argued that representative government was part of Africa's past. To him, functioning pre-colonial representative self-government implied that without colonial rule, Ghana would be prosperous.⁵⁹ Nkrumah made the same argument when he emphasised Africans' capability to govern themselves in the pre-colonial era, which to him meant that they could do so again.⁶⁰

Casely Hayford had already played a dominant role in the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society (ARPS) over the 1910s. Revived discussions about the principle of self-determination during the First World War accelerated anti-colonial ambitions in the following decade. In 1919, Casely Hayford founded the National Congress of British West Africa (NCBWA), longing for regional and subsequent continental cooperation. These goals make it clear that in the eyes of Casely Hayford and other African nationalist and Pan-Africanist activists, nationalism and Pan-Africanism were not considered contradictory. On the contrary: nations were to be the basis on which to establish succeeding continental unity.⁶¹

This idea was also a crucial element in Nkrumah's political thought. Similar to Casely Hayford's argument, African nationalism and global solidarity belonged together in Nkrumah's view. The independence of respective national entities was to be the prerequisite for large-scale international cooperation.⁶²

⁵⁶Sonderegger 2011: 103.

⁵⁷Casely Hayford 1911: 172.

⁵⁸Casely Hayford 1911.

⁵⁹Casely Hayford 1903.

⁶⁰Nkrumah 1979b [1962, written 1945]: 37.

⁶¹Boahen 1975: 124-126; Sonderegger 2011: 103.

⁶²Nkrumah 1979b [1962, written 1945]: 33.

In terms of personal contacts with the NCBWA, Nkrumah stated that "... Mr S. R. Wood who was then secretary of the National Congress of British West Africa (...) first introduced me to politics".⁶³ Apart from engaging in long conversations with Nkrumah about the Gold Coast's political history, Wood supported Nkrumah's idea to study in the US and helped him to get accepted at Lincoln University.⁶⁴

The ARPS had already demanded parliamentary representation in Ghana. Similarly, the NCBWA wanted economic reforms and aimed at changed constitutions so that the people living in the respective colonies of British West Africa would be effectively represented in their governments. The NCBWA continued its work until its fourth and last meeting in 1929/1930.⁶⁵ After Casely Hayford's death in 1930, it became inactive.⁶⁶

Casely Hayford was certainly one of the crucial individuals who contributed to growing sentiments of nationalism in British West African colonies like Ghana. However, the spread of anti-colonial nationalist movements throughout the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s most significantly owed to the fact that local African elites were increasingly dissatisfied with the colonial system. They felt it limited their economic and political scope.⁶⁷

The Ghanaian educated elite in particular had formed over the preceding decades. Some had received European education; furthermore, professions like teachers, clerics, civil servants, educated retailers and the like had come into existence. Furthermore, in the course of urbanisation, several associations, societies like literary clubs, and trade unions had emerged. Especially the latter were crucial elements of the nationalist movements of the 1930s and 1940s.⁶⁸

To be precise, the frustration of British West African, including Ghanaian, elites was about declining prices of their export crops, while at the same time they faced severe competition from European and other foreign companies. Elite members generally blamed the colonial administration for their situation which they felt to be unfair. Additionally, racial discrimination often stood in the way of a free career choice. The elite was also convinced that education was inadequate; furthermore, it felt politically under-represented at all levels.⁶⁹

However, the NCBWA's resolutions, reflecting the sorrows and ambitions of the British West African colonies' educated elites, did not contain demands for complete independence. In the

⁶³Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: 17.

⁶⁴Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: 17-18.

⁶⁵Boahen 1975: 125-127.

⁶⁶Padmore 1972 [1955]: 151.

⁶⁷Boahen 1975: 102-104, 120, 126; Sonderegger 2011: 105-106.

⁶⁸Boahen 1975: 102-103, 105.

⁶⁹Boahen 1975: 126.

1920s, claims for self-government were mainly confined to the local level, like towns. The NCBWA even stressed that it wished to maintain the connections with Britain intact.

It is debatable whether this makes the NCBWA a conservative movement, like Boahen thought, or if stronger demands could simply not be made at that time. For example, Ghana witnessed the introduction of elective representation in 1925, following a similar constitutional reform in Nigeria in 1922.⁷⁰ In this connection, Roger Gocking explains that initially, Casely Hayford opposed this innovation. He considered it to be a continuation of a policy that was more favourable to the chiefs than to the educated elite. Only after several unsuccessful attempts to prevent the actual implementation of the new constitution, Casely Hayford decided to give up and participate in the elections.⁷¹

In my view, this demonstrates that Casely Hayford, one of the most active NCBWA activists, was not so much conservative or moderate in his claims as he was constrained by the political reality of his time. This view is also consistent with his anti-colonial writings mentioned above.

What is certain is that subsequent Ghanaian anti-colonial movements went further in their claims. As we will see, another crucial difference is that later movements were able to win mass support. Improved organisation was to make a difference.⁷²

Over the course of the 1930s, two major nationalist movements came up that were to have an impact on Ghana, and on Nkrumah's intellectual and political life: the Gold Coast Youth Conference, and the West African Youth League.⁷³ The emergence of the Gold Coast Youth Conference in 1929 was largely based on the associations, literary societies, and trade unions which had been established in Ghana's towns throughout the 1920s and 1930s. On an individual level, most of all lawyers who returned to Ghana at the end of the 1920s after studying abroad played a crucial role in the formation of the Youth Conference. A prominent example is Joseph Kwame Kyeretwie Boakye Danquah (1895-1965), who was also to play an important role in Ghanaian politics in subsequent decades. In his publications, he urged the

⁷⁰Boahen 1975: 127-131. Boahen actually contradicted himself regarding the conservative outlook of the NCBWA – at least in the Ghanaian case – by pointing out that the conservative educated elite was opposed to the NCBWA (Boahen 1975: 131-133).

⁷¹Gocking 2005: 59-60.

⁷²Boahen 1975: 134.

⁷³The names of these groups should not be mistaken to imply that they consisted predominantly of people of young age. *Youth* in the context of West Africa in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s refers to "... the educated commoners, that is, those who held no stool or traditional office and consisted mainly of lawyers, shopkeepers, petty traders, public letter-writers, clerks, catechists, school teachers, artisans and so on" (Boahen 1975: 136; see also Gocking 2005: 92).

people to develop a nationalist consciousness, and to act on it.

What distinguished the Youth Conference most from the NCBWA was its aim to unite the chiefs and the educated elite. The Conference partially succeeded in this respect. The members of the Conference considered such unity indispensable in order to achieve national progress. The movement's nationalist outlook was reflected in its emphasis on the connectedness of Ashanti and the Gold Coast colony. The inclusive attitude towards the chiefs was to be a major source of disagreement between Nkrumah and the Conference's successor, whose general secretary he was to become (see below). However, it should also be noted that the Youth Conference emphasised Ghana's need for industrialisation, which certainly provided some common grounds between Nkrumah and the Conference's successor.

Apart from this, most demands were rather similar to those of the NCBWA. In its petitions, the Youth Movement asked for constitutional and administrative reforms, not for complete self-government or independence. It also stressed its intention to maintain the country's ties with Britain. Even though questions of autonomy were addressed during the Youth Conference's later years, it never advocated the extinction of colonial rule as a solution.

The Gold Coast Youth Conference has been given credit for contributing to a more widespread nationalist consciousness; however, it did not manage to prompt the colonial rulers to implement its demands for administrative and economic reforms.⁷⁴ Its initially broad support base vanished over the years, and it became by and large a movement of the educated elite and the “traditional” rulers. In 1947/48, it was transformed into the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC).⁷⁵ Nkrumah started to work as its general secretary in January 1948.⁷⁶ The UGCC had invited Nkrumah to this position to turn it into a popular movement, which will be explained in more detail below.⁷⁷

The second nationalist movement which had an impact on Ghana in the 1930s was the West African Youth League.⁷⁸ It mainly came into existence due to the effort of Isaac Theophilus Akunna Wallace-Johnson (1894-1965) from Sierra Leone. Wallace-Johnson, who had lived in Ghana since 1933, formed the Ghanaian branch of the Youth League in 1934. Most significantly, the Youth League was considerably more radical than the Youth Conference. Wallace-Johnson had spent a few years in Britain and in Moscow, where he experienced pan-

⁷⁴Although, Roger Gocking gives the Youth Conference some credit for putting pressure on the colonisers to introduce reforms in the early 1940s. According to Gocking, not least Danquah's efforts partly contributed to the new constitution of 1946 (Gocking 2005: 79).

⁷⁵For the entire information on the Gold Coast Youth Conference, compare Boahen 1975: 136-143.

⁷⁶Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: 58.

⁷⁷Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: 57.

⁷⁸For the following information on the West African Youth League, compare Boahen 1975: 137, 143-146.

Africanist and communist influences. He came back to West Africa with the intention to overthrow colonial rule. The introduction of an unpopular income tax in Ghana in 1931, in combination with the increase of other already existing taxes, supplied fertile ground for his political activities.

Adopting a radical tone, the Youth League declared that it would not abstain from using any possible means that would help to get rid of the colonial oppressors. The League enjoyed popularity especially among younger people and workers. It attacked not only colonialism, but also the institution of chieftaincy. Not surprisingly, the more moderate Youth Conference and the chiefs strongly opposed the League. Of course, the British rulers did so as well, and Wallace-Johnson was deported from Ghana in 1938. Two years later, the Youth League had vanished too, which demonstrates that it had not managed to organise mass support either.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the League's radical demands constituted an ideological point of reference on which Nkrumah's later movement could build. Nkrumah evidently admired Wallace-Johnson, who had "... established himself as the first labour organiser in West Africa by forming the Youth League".⁷⁹ In fact, Nkrumah described himself as following in the footsteps of Wallace-Johnson and Nnamdi Azikiwe (1904-1996), a Nigerian nationalist who had studied in the US. Nkrumah stated that Azikiwe's newspaper articles had revived his nationalism, and during personal contacts, Nkrumah was "... greatly impressed by him and ... more determined than ever to go to America".⁸⁰ Nkrumah credited an article written by Wallace-Johnson and published by Azikiwe in 1936, in which colonialism was heavily attacked, for arousing nationalist sentiments amongst Ghanaians. Nkrumah drew a direct connection between himself, his political movement, and the efforts of Wallace-Johnson and Azikiwe when he asserted that this article "... was the first warning puff of smoke that a fire had been lit, a fire that would prove impossible to extinguish".⁸¹

It should also be noted that obviously, the overall divide between the more moderate nationalists and the chiefs on the one hand, and the radical nationalists who wanted to overthrow the entire colonial system on the other hand, had been there since at least the mid-1930s. This divide was to be of long-lasting nature: it still accompanied Nkrumah's rise to power, starting in 1947, and it has shaped the basic dualism of Ghana's political discourse (liberalism versus socialism) up to the very present, as we will see in chapter three.

⁷⁹Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: 18.

⁸⁰Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: 18.

⁸¹Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: 19.

Before turning to Nkrumah's rise to actual political power, let me briefly explain the effects of the Second World War on anti-colonialism in Ghana in the 1940s.

As we have seen, demands for the complete extermination of colonial rule had been rather rare in Ghana during the first four decades of the 20th century. This changed during the 1940s, largely due to effects of the Second World War. This does not imply that Ghanaians' preceding nationalist efforts were insignificant: international developments during the war gave a boost to anti-colonial movements in the 1940s, but this boost could not have happened if more moderate nationalist groups had not already been established at that time. Furthermore, it is important to note that calls for independence, voiced by Marxist Pan-Africanists, had already become louder in London since the mid-1930s.⁸²

One result of the war was that the two major colonial powers and Belgium were weakened at several levels, especially economically. Another result was the emergence of the USA and Russia as the two most dominant global powers. For different reasons, both superpowers were opposed to colonialism, which brought the European colonial powers under pressure. Consequently, the principle of self-determination was being discussed more seriously than before, which was reflected in the Atlantic Charter (1941) and in the establishment of the United Nations (1945).⁸³

According to the Atlantic Charter, every people was free to choose its form of government. The British prime minister Winston Churchill and Britain's colonial secretary argued that this principle did not apply to the Crown's African colonies, but US officials and the British Labour Party claimed it did. In addition to anti-colonialists from the West, there were also African anti-colonialists who demanded that the Charter had to be applied to them. The principle of self-determination was also emphasised in the United Nations Charter.⁸⁴ In this new international environment, "... the whole colonial relationship and the right of one people to dominate another even in the short term was being questioned".⁸⁵ It should also be noted that the fact that the colonial populations had helped the mother countries during the war created an atmosphere in which the latter were expected to recompense the former.⁸⁶ More than 65,000 Ghanaians – from the Gold Coast Colony, to be precise – were recruited for military service during the Second World War. This number far exceeded that of Ghanaian

⁸²Sonderegger 2011.

⁸³Boahen 1975: 149-150; Crowder 1984: 28; Gocking 2005: 80-81.

⁸⁴Boahen 1975: 150; Gocking 2005: 80-81; see also Crowder 1984: 22.

⁸⁵Crowder 1984: 22.

⁸⁶Boahen 1975: 150.

servicemen during the First World War.⁸⁷

In terms of the new international environment critical of colonialism, both Michael Crowder and Roger Gocking have argued that it was especially evident in the British Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940. This Act stated that each year, £5 million were to be set aside for development projects in the colonies. As British overseas possessions had to be economically self-sufficient before, the 1940 Act in fact constituted a reversal regarding the economic relations of Britain and her dependencies. In 1942 a five-year development plan was drawn up; a 10-year development plan followed in 1946.⁸⁸

Nevertheless, despite this formal reversal of economic relations, African nationalists like Nkrumah remained distrustful regarding Britain's seemingly good intentions. Nkrumah thought of the new development outlook of Britain as being only theoretical and tactical, a reaction to increased pressure from colonial subjects.⁸⁹ Considering another major economic innovation which the Second World War brought about, Nkrumah's scepticism was not unfounded.

When the Second World War broke out, the way cocoa was marketed in West Africa was fundamentally altered. In 1939, Ghana's colonial government set up a marketing board for cocoa, meaning it established a state monopoly for the export of cocoa and bought the colony's entire cocoa yield. However, the prices paid to farmers were lower than world market prices. The income generated by this difference was initially intended to be used for Britain's war financing. Yet in 1947, this arrangement was made a permanent feature, from then on known as the Gold Coast Cocoa Marketing Board (CMB).⁹⁰ Via the functioning of the CMB, covert taxation on cocoa exports was introduced.⁹¹ Other crops and raw materials were also affected by this new form of marketing.⁹²

Both the establishment of the CMB and the new role of the colonial state as a formal welfare agent were important innovations seen individually. But there was also a connection between them: the former was to be an instrument to fulfil the material obligations resulting from the latter.⁹³ Against this background, it seems that Nkrumah had good reasons for remaining sceptical about Britain's development efforts. Not only did the “development” money come at least partly from the earnings of the CMB, a marketing instrument which obviously put

⁸⁷Boahen 1975: 153; Gocking 2005: 75.

⁸⁸Boahen 1975: 152; Crowder 1984: 25; Gocking 2005: 79.

⁸⁹Nkrumah 1979b [1962, written 1945]: 16-17, 27.

⁹⁰Austin 2005: 40; Buah 1980: 120; Gocking 2005: 68.

⁹¹Rimmer 1992: 202.

⁹²Boahen 1975: 125.

⁹³Rimmer 1992: 200.

Ghanaian cocoa producers at a disadvantage. In addition, a huge majority (circa 88%) of the brokers who were licensed to trade in cocoa and other raw products consisted of large European firms, represented by the Association of West African Merchants (AWAM). Imports were regulated in a similar way. As a consequence, Ghanaians' opportunities to engage in commercial activities were considerably limited.⁹⁴

The Second World War involved further changes in the economic, political, and social spheres of the colonies. Economically, due to Ghana's increased strategic importance during the war, the country's harbours and airports were rapidly developed and extended. Mining and agriculture were also improved; in general, industrialisation was being promoted more strongly than before. New factories were set up, producing construction materials, household goods, furniture and the like. The intention was to reduce dependency on Britain in time of war, and also to secure the supply of raw materials like certain vegetable oils. The latter had become important after Japan had conquered the Far East in the early 1940s. Eventually, the stimulation of the Ghanaian economy during the war led to inflation. In the long run, real wages of Ghanaian workers declined.⁹⁵

Politically, it is worth noting that “[i]n general, the war stimulated an interest in reforms”.⁹⁶ In 1942, Sir Alan Burns, British colonial governor at that time, appointed two Africans to Ghana's Executive Council. Nigeria and Sierra Leone witnessed a similar development. In 1943, two Africans were admitted into senior positions in the Ghanaian civil service. In 1944, Burns published plans for a new constitution in which, for the first time, an unofficial African majority was to be introduced. In 1946, the Burns constitution, as it is commonly referred to, came into effect. Partly, these innovations had happened due to pressure from the Ghanaian chiefs and the intelligentsia.⁹⁷

However, these concessions could not stop discontent from increasing in Ghana. Another factor that contributed to this was the fact that lots of school leavers from villages were looking for employment in the larger towns. Many of them were not successful in their search for jobs, and their anger about this situation eventually made them become active in the nationalist movements of the postwar period.⁹⁸

Another group that was heavily frustrated after the war consisted of the ex-servicemen. Their expectations for proper employment or pensions after their return were not met, which partly

⁹⁴Boahen 1975: 152; Gocking 2005: 77.

⁹⁵Boahen 1975: 151; Gocking 2005: 76-77.

⁹⁶Gocking 2005: 77.

⁹⁷Boahen 1975: 152; Gocking 2005: 77-81.

⁹⁸Boahen 1975: 153.

explains their subsequent involvement in nationalist agitation.⁹⁹

The later 1940s also involved the beginning of Nkrumah's career as an active politician, which will be examined in the following.

2.3 1945-1957: *The formation of Nkrumah's political philosophy and his rise to power*

At the time when the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) asked Nkrumah to become its general secretary, the man who would lead Ghana to independence resided in London, England. Before examining Nkrumah's rise to actual political power, let me briefly introduce some major aspects of his biography which are necessary to understand his politico-intellectual influences as well as his role as a leader.

Nkrumah was most likely born in 1909 in Nkroful, Ghana.¹⁰⁰ In 1926, he began a teaching career at teacher-training colleges in Accra and Achimota. After he had graduated in 1930, he went to Elmina to work as a primary school teacher. There, Nkrumah became active as an organiser, helping found the Teachers' Association. He also formed the Nzima Literature Society, which led to his afore-mentioned contact with S. R. Wood from the NCBWA.¹⁰¹

In 1935, Nkrumah went to study in the US at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, following the example of Azikiwe. In Pennsylvania, Nkrumah continued his engagement in political organisation and founded the African Students' Association of America and Canada. His "... aim was to learn the technique of organisation [because] whatever the programme for the solution of the colonial question might be, success would depend upon the organisation adopted".¹⁰² He acquainted himself with diverse political organisations, ranging from the Republicans to the Trotskyites. A leading member of the latter influenced him especially: Cyril Lionel Richard James (1901-1989), a Pan-Africanist activist from Trinidad.¹⁰³ According to Nkrumah, James taught him how to organise an underground movement. In terms of academic achievements, Nkrumah obtained a Bachelor degree in theology from the Lincoln Theological Seminary, and the University of Pennsylvania awarded him a Master's degree in education as well as another Master's degree in philosophy. He mainly read political, divine (Protestant), and philosophical texts, especially Western philosophers like Kant, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Freud, Hegel, and Descartes.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹Boahen 1975: 153-154.

¹⁰⁰Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: 1-2.

¹⁰¹Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: 11-18.

¹⁰²Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: 37.

¹⁰³Gagnier 2006.

¹⁰⁴Birmingham 1998: 3-4; Davidson 2007: 29-33; Gocking 2005: 85; Nkrumah 1979 [1957]: 26-27, 35-37.

During his time in the US (1935-1945), Nkrumah was looking for a theoretical framework within which the issue of colonialism could be interpreted and solved. Hegel, Mazzini, Engels, Marx, and Lenin were on his reading list. Especially the latter two seemed appropriate to Nkrumah and were to have a long-lasting impact on him. He also encountered, and was strongly influenced by, the Pan-Africanist writings of Marcus Garvey, which I have outlined above.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, Nkrumah began to write a political anti-colonial pamphlet during his time in the US that was strongly informed by Marxist-Leninist ideas, but he did not finish it until 1945 in England.¹⁰⁶ In this connection, it should be noted that already in the 1920s there had been a general rise of Marxism-inspired Pan-Africanism among African students in the US.¹⁰⁷

In May 1945, Nkrumah arrived in London, where he enrolled for law at the London School of Economics (LSE). Furthermore, he was a Ph.D. student in philosophy at the LSE. However, Nkrumah soon devoted the bulk of his attention to political organisation,¹⁰⁸ for which London was the perfect environment.

In the fall of 1925, the West African Students' Union (WASU) had been founded in London, signifying that the English capital was becoming a centre for nationalist West African students.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, Arno Sonderegger explains that “[s]eit Mitte der 1930er Jahre versammelte sich in London eine junge Generation von afrikanischen Nationalisten um George Padmore, welche die wachsende allgemeine Unzufriedenheit in den Kolonien zu nutzen wussten, um ihrem zentralen Anliegen – Freiheit und Gleichheit: nun zunehmend artikuliert in der Forderung nach “Unabhängigkeit” – eine solide und breite Unterstützung zu verschaffen ...”.¹¹⁰

After he had joined WASU, Nkrumah ended up being its vice president. He also met and became friends with George Padmore (c. 1902-1959) from Trinidad. Padmore had been active in the Communist Party of the US, had headed the Red International of Labour Unions' Negro Bureau in the USSR, and he had been the head of the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers in Germany. As a consequence of Hitler's rise, Padmore had to leave Germany and broke with the Communist Party in 1934, as the latter was no longer willing to condemn Western imperialism – a strategy shift that was due to the threat that fascist Germany constituted. Subsequently, Padmore moved to England, where he engaged more seriously in

¹⁰⁵Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: 37; see also Birmingham 1998: 3-4; Sonderegger 2011: 102-103.

¹⁰⁶Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: 37; Nkrumah 1979b [1962, written 1945].

¹⁰⁷Sonderegger 2011: 105.

¹⁰⁸Gocking 2005: 85; Sonderegger 2011: 108.

¹⁰⁹Boahen 1975: 135.

¹¹⁰Sonderegger 2011: 105.

Pan-Africanist activities. In 1937, "... Padmore organized the International African Service Bureau (IASB), designed to promote the pan-Africanist cause",¹¹¹ which was merged with a number of other groups to become the Pan-African Federation in 1944. Padmore was also a crucial figure in the organisation of the Fifth Pan-African Congress, which took place in Manchester in October 1945. Nkrumah assisted Padmore in the planning of this Congress as joint secretary.¹¹²

Padmore, who was engaged in the organisation of international solidarity across "race" boundaries, emphasising the importance of "class", strongly influenced Nkrumah. In Padmore's view, imperialism and capitalism were two sides of the same coin,¹¹³ an argument which can also be found in Nkrumah's booklet *Towards Colonial Freedom*, which he finished in London in 1945.¹¹⁴ This early pamphlet is worth discussing in some more detail, as it already contained most elements that are central to Nkrumah's political thought. I will link my examination of *Towards Colonial Freedom* with Nkrumah's other writings in order to provide a comprehensive account of Nkrumah's political philosophy here.

Discussing the official changes which Ghana and other colonies underwent in the 1940s, Nkrumah argued that in order to achieve full liberation, political independence had to precede economic independence.¹¹⁵ He was convinced that in order to be successful, the anti-colonial struggle had to be based on mass organisation.¹¹⁶ There were two organisational phases to be distinguished: *positive action*, "... a combination of non-violent methods with effective and disciplined political action",¹¹⁷ and *tactical action*, "... a sort of contest of wits"¹¹⁸ in which compromise was to be favoured over confrontation.¹¹⁹ This peaceful strategy was influenced by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi's (1869-1948) philosophy of non-violence, and it had already been recommended in 1945 by the attendants of the Fifth Pan-African Congress.¹²⁰

Even though Nkrumah also wrote extensively on economic matters, he kept his belief in the prime importance of the political over the years.¹²¹ His analysis of the reasons of colonialism, however, was focused on economics. As I have already pointed out in 2.1, Nkrumah was convinced that colonialism had never been about civilising, but only about economic

¹¹¹Brenner 1998.

¹¹²Brenner 1998; Gocking 2005: 85; Padmore 1972 [1955]: 132-133; Sonderegger 2011: 107-108.

¹¹³Sonderegger 2011: 105.

¹¹⁴Nkrumah 1979b [1962, written 1945]: ch. 2.

¹¹⁵Nkrumah 1979b [1962, written 1945]: xv, 20, 42-43.

¹¹⁶Nkrumah 1979b [1962, written 1945].

¹¹⁷Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: vii.

¹¹⁸Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: vii.

¹¹⁹Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: 122-129; see also Gocking 2005: 98.

¹²⁰Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: v-vi; Padmore 1972 [1955]: 129.

¹²¹Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: vii; 1974a [1963]: 108; 1978 [1964]: 98-99.

exploitation.¹²² Based on the Marxist-Leninist theory of imperialism,¹²³ Nkrumah argued that European countries needed a market for their surplus goods and surplus capital – a market which they found in Africa.¹²⁴ In exchange for expensive manufactured goods and capital, the colonies provided Europe with cheap raw materials and cheap labour. In order to avoid competition, European powers intentionally inhibited industrial development in regions like Africa.¹²⁵ Thus, in Nkrumah's view, the root cause of colonialism was European capitalism. Consequently, it made no sense to him to believe in the colonisers' promises of self-government and eventual voluntary withdrawal. Instead, Nkrumah arrived at the conclusion that "... the only solution to the colonial problem [was] the complete eradication of the entire economic system of colonialism, by colonial peoples, through their gaining political independence".¹²⁶

Nkrumah's distrust regarding the colonisers' preparations for gradual retreat was also informed by the Marxist concept of false consciousness.¹²⁷ In 1945, Nkrumah attributed the colonial migrant labour system to the colonisers' intention to prevent a class-consciousness within the African working class.¹²⁸ Furthermore, he was convinced that reforms only served the purpose to appease the oppressed, and were in fact intended to prolong colonial rule.¹²⁹ Almost twenty years later, Nkrumah argued in a similar way that capitalism was characterised by "... pompous plans for niggardly reforms ...",¹³⁰ and that "[r]eform is a tactic of self-preservation".¹³¹

Another aspect of continuity in Nkrumah's writings is his perception of neo-colonialism, which should be seen as a logical continuation of the Marxist-Leninist explanation of imperialism – hence the title of the book *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*. Capitalism did not cease to exist in Europe after Ghana's and other African countries' independence – hence, arguing within a Leninist framework, Europeans' motivation to

¹²²Nkrumah 1979b [1962, written 1945]: ch. 1.

¹²³The crucial point of this theory is that capitalist producers have conflicting interests: they want to minimise wage costs in order to make a large profit, but this also reduces people's spending capacity. The eventual effects of capitalist competition are the emergence of powerful monopolies, an increasing importance of finance capital, and overproduction. As competition takes place not only within, but also between capitalist societies, colonial imperialism is the only way out of this scenario. This is what Lenin called the highest stage of capitalism, which he considered an unavoidable development in capitalist systems (see Nkrumah 1979b [1962, written 1945]: 11-13).

¹²⁴Nkrumah 1979b [1962, written 1945]: xvii, 6.

¹²⁵Nkrumah 1979b [1962, written 1945]: 13.

¹²⁶Nkrumah 1979b [1962, written 1945]: 20.

¹²⁷Compare Wallerstein 1967, who discussed the concept of false consciousness in Nkrumah's *Consciencism*.

¹²⁸Nkrumah 1979b [1962, written 1945]: 15.

¹²⁹Nkrumah 1979b [1962, written 1945]: 16-17, 27.

¹³⁰Nkrumah 1978 [1964]: 72.

¹³¹Nkrumah 1978 [1964]: 74.

colonise did not vanish either. When overt colonialism was no longer feasible, Europe, and increasingly the US, exerted a less obvious, but more dangerous influence on African countries, directing their economic systems and politics from outside by corrupting their leaders.¹³² Balkanisation was the major instrument of neo-colonialism in Nkrumah's view,¹³³ and he was convinced that neo-colonialism could only be fought successfully with pan-African unity.¹³⁴

Expressing his Pan-Africanist influences in 1945, Nkrumah wrote that all the oppressed peoples of the world needed to unite in a solidary way in order to end colonial exploitation.¹³⁵ It has already been mentioned that in his view, similar to Casely Hayford's, the independence of respective national entities was to be the basis on which to achieve large-scale international cooperation.¹³⁶ Nkrumah made the case for global solidarity of the exploited on political-economic grounds, as opposed to racial solidarity. His participation in the Fifth Pan-African Congress mattered in this respect. At this Conference, contrary to earlier ones, attendants from the Caribbean and from Africa constituted the clear majority,¹³⁷ which caused Nkrumah to distance himself from Garvey's ideology: "Like Garveyism, the first four conferences were not born of indigenous African consciousness. Garvey's ideology was concerned with *black* nationalism as opposed to *African* nationalism".¹³⁸

In line with this view, Nkrumah was "... to place developments in Ghana in the broader context of the *African* revolution [and called] for the freedom and unification of *Africa* and its islands."¹³⁹ He was convinced that "[o]nly a united *Africa* through an *All-African* Union Government can defeat ..." ¹⁴⁰ neo-colonial forces, a point which he still stressed after he had already been overthrown.¹⁴¹ The crucial aspect is that even though he frequently called for global solidarity with the oppressed, and even though he argued that the international class struggle incorporated the struggle of "races",¹⁴² Nkrumah's practical Pan-African course of action was a territorial one,¹⁴³ initially focused on West Africa (around 1945), and later on the

¹³²Nkrumah 1978 [1964]: 102; 1984 [1965]: ix-xx.

¹³³Nkrumah 1974a [1963]: 173; 1984 [1965]: xiii.

¹³⁴Nkrumah 1984 [1965]: 36; 1974b [1967]: xi.

¹³⁵Nkrumah 1979b [1962, written 1945]: xvi, 43.

¹³⁶Nkrumah 1979b [1962, written 1945]: 33.

¹³⁷Sonderegger 2011: 108.

¹³⁸Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: 44.

¹³⁹Nkrumah 1974a [1963]: xi. Emphasis added.

¹⁴⁰Nkrumah 1984 [1965]: 36. Emphasis added.

¹⁴¹Nkrumah 1974b [1967]: xi-xii.

¹⁴²Nkrumah 1980a [1970]: 27.

¹⁴³For a similar view, compare Wallerstein 1967: 521.

entire African continent (since at least 1957).¹⁴⁴ My subsequent discussion of Nkrumah's political actions will confirm this. Matching his views on nationalism and Pan-Africanism, Nkrumah identified “tribal” differences as a major obstacle to unity – hence they had to be overcome.¹⁴⁵

Nkrumah's writings on socialism were also informed by a non-racialist outlook. He was convinced that modern African societies were profoundly different from “traditional” Africa in the sense that they had experienced influences from Islam and European Christianity.¹⁴⁶ He argued for Ghana's comprehensive industrialisation, which was to be the basis of socialist modernisation.¹⁴⁷ His views on African socialism were significantly different from those of other African leaders like Julius Kambarage Nyerere (1922-1999) and Léopold Sédar Senghor (1906-2001). Nkrumah attacked especially Senghor's version of African socialism for its tribal and racial elements and argued for an African scientific socialism instead. Even though Nkrumah claimed that there was a spirit of communalism crystallised in the humanism of “traditional” Africa, he held that it was naïve to believe in Senghor's simplified version of an idyllic and classless African pre-colonial society, and that Senghor's idea of Africans who rather feel than think was incompatible with socialism. In Nkrumah's view, socialism was the modern version of communalism, and necessary plans how to bring socialism about had to be based on scientific inquiry – hence the need for scientific socialism.¹⁴⁸

Just like Nkrumah's identification with socialism grew stronger since circa 1960, his criticism towards capitalism increased too. As we have seen, in 1945 he already condemned capitalism for being the root cause of colonialism. However, when it came to the question what role capitalism was potentially to play in an independent Africa, Nkrumah remained somewhat undecided in his early writings. In 1945, he partially explained economic stagnation in Africa with the Marxist idea of development stages: instead of allowing for gradual capitalist development in the sense of truly free competition, modern imperialism introduced the monopoly stage *too early* in the colonies.¹⁴⁹ In 1957, he argued that “[c]apitalism is too complicated a system for a newly independent nation. Hence the need for a socialistic society”.¹⁵⁰ This may well be interpreted as saying that capitalism was *not right for Africa yet*, but it might be in the future. It is interesting enough that with the latter argument, Nkrumah

¹⁴⁴Nkrumah 1979b [1962, written 1945]; 1979a [1957]; 1980b [1973]: 14.

¹⁴⁵Nkrumah 1979b [1962, written 1945]: xv-xvi; 1979a [1957]: vii.

¹⁴⁶Nkrumah 1978 [1964]: 68-70; Nkrumah 1966.

¹⁴⁷Nkrumah 1964 [1963]. See also Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: 128.

¹⁴⁸Nkrumah 1966.

¹⁴⁹Nkrumah 1979b [1962, written 1945]: 14.

¹⁵⁰Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: vii.

turned the classical order of Marxist development stages upside down. But more importantly, this view clearly matches the pragmatic economic policies which Nkrumah pursued in the late 1950s after independence, as my subsequent discussion of Nkrumah's political career in Ghana will demonstrate.

In his later books, Nkrumah adopted a more radical tone towards capitalism. In 1964, he argued that “[c]apitalism is a development by refinement from feudalism, just as feudalism is a development by refinement from slavery. (...) [Thus, c]apitalism is but the gentleman's method of slavery”.¹⁵¹ Obviously, to Nkrumah, the question if capitalism might some day be suitable for African independent nations had been answered by then. Furthermore, four years after he was overthrown, Nkrumah held that “[i]t 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”.¹⁵²

There is a connection between world cocoa prices, Ghana's economic prosperity, and Nkrumah's increasingly hostile view on capitalism. This will become more clear in sub-chapter 2.4 on Ghana's independence under Nkrumah's rule. Let me now return to Nkrumah's political career and the events of 1945.

The declaration of the Fifth Pan-African Congress had a strictly anti-racist and anti-colonial orientation. Its authors demanded that racial discrimination should be prosecuted, and they stressed that the principle of self-determination had to be applied to colonies. Potential violence was justified as a last resort in order to achieve freedom from colonial rule.¹⁵³ Furthermore, Marxist socialism was adopted as the philosophy of the Congress.¹⁵⁴

After the Congress, Nkrumah became the secretary of the West African National Secretariat which most of all aimed at “... implementing the basic policy resolution endorsed by the Pan-African Congress on West Africa ...”.¹⁵⁵ In order to spread the ideas of the Secretariat, Nkrumah published the monthly paper *New African*. Furthermore, he got into contact with African workers and set up the Coloured Workers' Association of Great Britain. Eventually, over the years Nkrumah spent in London, “... he had emerged as one of the leading critics of colonial rule from Britain's African colonies”¹⁵⁶, and his organising experience was also well known.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵¹Nkrumah 1978 [1964]: 72.

¹⁵²Nkrumah 1980a [1970]: 29.

¹⁵³Sonderegger 2011: 108.

¹⁵⁴Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: 44.

¹⁵⁵Padmore 1972 [1955]: 150.

¹⁵⁶Gocking 2005: 85.

¹⁵⁷Gocking 2005: 85; Sonderegger 2011: 108.

In late 1947, the UGCC had come into existence.¹⁵⁸ It had emerged from the Gold Coast Youth Conference, as we have seen. The UGCC was looking for a secretary who would be able to turn it into an effective political organisation, and Nkrumah seemed to be a match. According to himself, when the UGCC's Executive Committee offered him to become the movement's general secretary, Nkrumah was not sure at first whether he should accept or not.¹⁵⁹ He was certainly interested in the job from the beginning, as he "... saw the opportunity that I had been waiting for, the chance to return home and actively help my people by the experience I had gained in party organisation abroad".¹⁶⁰ However, after acquiring more information about the UGCC, he came "... to the conclusion that it was quite useless to associate myself with a movement backed almost entirely by reactionaries, middle-class lawyers and merchants, for my revolutionary background and ideas would make it impossible for me to work with them".¹⁶¹ Similarly, the Executive Committee, especially Danquah, had also expressed doubts concerning the compatibility of Nkrumah's Pan-Africanist ambitions and the UGCC's spatially limited goals.¹⁶²

Nkrumah's assessment of the UGCC was quite accurate. Even though it aimed at self-government within the shortest possible time (meaning in the long run), the elitist UGCC's main immediate goal was to have educated commoners on the Legislative Council instead of chiefs.¹⁶³ After Nkrumah had discussed the question whether he should work for the UGCC with the West African National Secretariat, it was decided that he should accept the offer.¹⁶⁴ This decision launched Nkrumah's career as an active politician involved in the shaping of Ghana's future course.

It should be noted that despite his decision to seize the opportunity to become general secretary, Nkrumah was, as he put it, "... very sure of the policy that I would pursue and fully prepared to come to loggerheads with the Executive of the U.G.C.C. if I found that they were following a reactionary course".¹⁶⁵ He would not fail to act on this promise.

Nkrumah returned to Ghana in late 1947.¹⁶⁶ One of his first actions as the UGCC's general secretary was to develop a plan how to achieve self-government. He also aimed at expanding

¹⁵⁸The exact dating of the formation varies: August 1947 (Boahen 1975: 155; Buah 1980: 153; Gocking 2005: 84); late December 1947 (Sonderregger 2011: 108).

¹⁵⁹Gocking 2005: 85.

¹⁶⁰Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: 50.

¹⁶¹Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: 51.

¹⁶²Boahen 1975: 161; Gocking 2005: 85.

¹⁶³Boahen 1975: 158-160; Gocking 2005: 85.

¹⁶⁴Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: 51.

¹⁶⁵Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: 51.

¹⁶⁶The exact dating varies between November (Buah 1980: 153) and December 16 (Boahen 1975: 161).

the UGCC's activities from the Gold Coast colony to Ashanti, Trans-Volta Togoland (formerly British Togoland), and the Northern Territories – nationalist ideology was supposed to become reality. Within half a year, Nkrumah managed to increase the number of UGCC branches from approximately 13 to more than 500. As this involved a lot of travelling, he got to know the country quite well and, contrary to the UGCC, realised that not only Ghana's intelligentsia, but also many other social groups were unhappy about being excluded from political power under colonial rule. Nkrumah was convinced that the general public could be encouraged to join the nationalist struggle; he believed in the possibility of the politicisation of the youth movements, scholars' unions, and the various societies. Also, he realised that new leadership was arising, which was evident, for example, in the fact that at the time when the UGCC had formed, another more radical organisation, the Asante Youth Association, had come into existence. Eventually, the ideological differences between Nkrumah and the UGCC, in combination with his insight that more radical agitation was possible, had to lead to a split between Nkrumah and the party he worked for.¹⁶⁷

In February 1948, Ghana's ex-servicemen, who faced unemployment and felt the pensions they were receiving were too low, gave vent to their anger in Accra. Some of them had formed a political movement in 1946, the Gold Coast Ex-Serviceman's Union, which had already been active in a boycott campaign against large firms and Lebanese merchants in 1947/January 1948. It was this union that initiated the ex-servicemen's protest in February 1948, and when they clashed with the police, at least two ex-servicemen lost their lives, and several others were wounded. Prior to that, European, Lebanese, and Syrian stores had already been looted and burned, and the shooting of the two ex-soldiers fuelled these riots even more, making them spread all over Accra. A prison was attacked, some prisoners were released, and as the news of the disturbances spread quickly, similar rioting occurred in other parts of Ghana within days. Eventually, the riots were stopped by the government with the help of troops which were brought in from Nigeria. The Accra riots of 1948 gave a significant boost to nationalist anti-colonial agitation in Ghana, and they enabled more radical and impatient leaders to push themselves to the fore.¹⁶⁸

The UGCC was unjustifiably being accused of being responsible for the riots, but the party

¹⁶⁷Boahen 1975: 161-162; Buah 1980: 154; Gocking 2005: 86-87. Not surprisingly, Nkrumah's split from the UGCC can be interpreted differently, depending on one's view of his personality. But no matter if one sees Nkrumah as truly motivated by radical anti-colonialism (like Buah, see 3.3), or if one thinks that he was most of all interested in power and self-aggrandisement (like Omari, see 3.2) – in both views, the split was inevitable: either because Nkrumah was truly dissatisfied with the UGCC's ideology, or because he believed that a leading position in a more radical organisation was more promising for himself in the late 1940s.

¹⁶⁸Boahen 1975: 162-163; Buah 1980: 154-155; Gocking 2005: 82-84, 87-88.

had certainly taken advantage of them: both Danquah and Nkrumah had used them as an opportunity to call for political reforms. Most importantly, they wanted a Ghanaian constituent assembly to work out a new constitution. The colonial governor reacted by having Danquah, Nkrumah, and four other UGCC leaders arrested and detained for approximately six weeks. The Watson Commission, named after its chairman A. K. Watson, was set up and assigned to investigate the causes of the riots. When the detainees had to appear before the commission, Nkrumah was used as a scapegoat, and nearly all of the other detainees disassociated themselves from him.¹⁶⁹

After he was free again, tensions between Nkrumah and the UGCC became increasingly evident. Nkrumah “... established the Ghana National College for students who had been expelled from their colleges and secondary schools for going on strike in protest against the arrest of the [UGCC leaders] in 1948”¹⁷⁰, an initiative of which the UGCC's Working Committee did not approve. Additionally, Nkrumah openly criticised the party for which he worked. He did so in articles that were published in a radical Ghanaian newspaper, the *Accra Evening News*, which Nkrumah had established himself.¹⁷¹

He also became a liability for the UGCC because he was considered to be a communist. This was due to the fact that when he was arrested after the riots, he had an unsigned card of the British Communist Party with him, next to a document in which the goals of *The Circle* were defined. In London, Nkrumah had been the chairman of this student group, which aimed at the creation of an independent West African nation as well as socialist republics in Africa. Nkrumah's radical aura was also supported by his verbal attacks on colonialism and the bourgeois reactionaries within a Marxist rhetorical framework.¹⁷²

Furthermore, the UGCC was unhappy about Nkrumah's establishment of the Committee on Youth Organisation (CYO) (February 1949), an umbrella organisation for several youth organisations from the Gold Coast Colony and Ashanti. These youth organisations were disappointed by the UGCC's conservatism and elitism, and felt more attracted to Nkrumah's radical ideas. The different agendas of the UGCC as compared to Nkrumah and the CYO were illustrated by their slogans: the CYO wanted *Full self-government now*, whereas the UGCC had the more moderate goal of *Self-government within the shortest possible time*. The UGCC advocated to use only constitutional means, whereas the CYO was ready to use

¹⁶⁹Gocking 2005: 84, 87; Nkrumah 1980b [1973]: 55.

¹⁷⁰Gocking 2005: 92.

¹⁷¹Gocking 2005: 92-93.

¹⁷²Gocking 2005: 91.

unconstitutional measures in order to achieve its aims.¹⁷³

It became obvious that the cooperation of Nkrumah and the UGCC could not be long-term. Plans to expel Nkrumah from the party had already been made, but he circumvented this move by breaking with the UGCC. On 12 June, 1949, in front of a crowd of circa 60,000 people, Nkrumah transformed the CYO into the Convention People's Party (CPP), whose chairman he became.¹⁷⁴ The CPP's constitution stated, most importantly, that the party aimed at achieving and maintaining Ghana's independence, establishing a democratic government, and securing national unity.¹⁷⁵ Internationally, it intended “[t]o work with other nationalist democratic and socialist movements in Africa and other continents, with a view to abolishing imperialism, colonialism, racialism, tribalism ...”,¹⁷⁶ and all sorts of related oppression and inequality. Furthermore, it supported “the demand for a West African Federation and of Pan-Africanism by promoting unity of action among the peoples of Africa and of African descent”.¹⁷⁷ It seems Nkrumah's personal emphasis on *African* nationalism as opposed to Garvey's *black* nationalism was sacrificed in order to appeal to as many people as possible.

The legal basis on which the CPP was to become Ghana's most successful party in the 1950s was created in 1949, too. Similar to Danquah's and Nkrumah's earlier demands, the Watson Commission had recommended that a new constitution should be drawn up, by a committee consisting entirely of Ghanaians. The British government agreed, and assigned the Coussey Committee, named after its chairman J. H. Coussey, with this task. On the basis of this Committee's suggestions, a new constitution became effective on January 1, 1951, which was to be the basis of the February 1951 elections.¹⁷⁸

The Coussey Committee had recommended a government form with an executive council consisting of eight elected ministers and a nationally elected assembly. Three additional members of the council, however, were to be selected directly by the colonial government, which clearly went against the CPP's claim for *self-government now*. Nkrumah hyped this demand by promising that with self-government, his party would turn Ghana into a paradise within ten years. Consequently, Nkrumah opposed the Coussey Committee's suggestions and declared that *positive action* was needed in order to force the colonial government to give up its plans to directly select members of the executive council to come. In practical terms, *positive action* meant different forms of civil disobedience such as propaganda, agitation,

¹⁷³Boahen 1975: 168; Gocking 2005: 92.

¹⁷⁴Boahen 1975: 164-169; Buah 1980: 155-159; Gocking 2005: 91-93; Nkrumah 1980b [1973]: 57.

¹⁷⁵Nkrumah 1980b [1973]: 58.

¹⁷⁶Nkrumah 1980b [1973]: 59.

¹⁷⁷Nkrumah 1980b [1973]: 59.

¹⁷⁸Boahen 1975: 163-165; Buah 1980: 158-159; Gocking 2005: 84-87.

boycotts, non-cooperation, and strikes.¹⁷⁹

Nkrumah officially launched *positive action* in January 1950. However, it should be noted that in fact, the Trades Union Congress (TUC), an association of trade unions which had come into existence in 1945, had been proactive in this respect. When Nkrumah was still meeting with colonial officials and using *positive action* as a threat in January 1950, the TUC went ahead and declared a general strike. The next day, Nkrumah announced that *positive action* was to start at midnight.¹⁸⁰

Contrary to the Accra riots of 1948, the government had had time to prepare this time, and quickly, members of the CPP and the TUC were arrested, and Nkrumah was imprisoned. He was convicted on several charges and sentenced, altogether, to three years in prison.¹⁸¹ *Positive action* had also contributed to increased and long-term hostility between Nkrumah and the chiefs. Like the conservative intelligentsia, the chiefs had not approved of Nkrumah's plans to challenge the constitutional authorities. Nkrumah, in turn, had reacted by encouraging commoners to get rid of their “traditional” rulers.¹⁸²

Nkrumah's party enjoyed strong popularity. In April 1950, the CPP “... won all the seven seats in the Accra Municipal Council elections ..., which was followed by several by-election successes. Finally, it won all the seats in the Kumasi Town Council elections held in November 1950”.¹⁸³ In February 1951, a general election was to be held – the first one to be based on adult franchise. Furthermore, the voting age was reduced from 25 to 21, which clearly aided the CPP that was very popular among the youth. It is plausible to assume that the colonial government intended to establish order and stability by allowing elections.¹⁸⁴

The CPP participated in the general election, even though Ghana's new constitution had not been modified according to the party's wishes. Nkrumah himself also decided to stand for election, even though he was still in prison.¹⁸⁵ Compromise paid well: the CPP turned out to be the major winner of the election. Of 33 available seats, it won 29 – the UGCC only scored two. Nkrumah scored one of the two seats available in Accra. Five other parties had also prepared for the election, but remained insignificant. The governor realised that the new

¹⁷⁹Boahen 1975: 165 and 167; Buah 1980: 159; Gocking 2005: 93 and 116.

¹⁸⁰Gocking 2005: 93-94; Mohan 1967: 194; Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: 96-97.

¹⁸¹Gocking 2005: 94; Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: 103-104. Note that Gocking mentions a sentence of only two years.

¹⁸²Gocking 2005: 94.

¹⁸³Boahen 1975: 171. Gocking seems to rely on slightly different numbers, as he writes that the CPP “... was almost as victorious in the Kumasi Town Council elections” (Gocking 2005: 95), meaning Nkrumah's party won nearly, but not all the seats in Kumasi.

¹⁸⁴Boahen 1975: 171; Gocking 2005: 93-95.

¹⁸⁵Boahen 1975: 171; Gocking 2005: 97; Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: 110.

constitution could only work if the CPP was invited to form the government. Nkrumah was evidently ready to take the opportunity, and, after being released from Fort James prison on February 12, 1951, became leader of government business.¹⁸⁶

The CPP was officially allowed to fill seven ministerial posts with party members. Nevertheless, after discussions with the colonial governor Sir Charles Noble Arden-Clarke (1898-1962), Nkrumah recommended that only five of these posts should be given to CPP members. The idea was to include one representative of Ashanti and the Northern Territories respectively. The CPP was less popular in these parts of future Ghana than in the Gold Coast Colony. In southern Togoland, anti-CPP forces who opposed the idea of unity with the Gold Coast were at work.¹⁸⁷

Self-government was achieved nominally, but several powers – for example, the control of the police and army – remained under British control.¹⁸⁸ Hence, *dual rule* seems like a more appropriate term to describe the first government in which Nkrumah and the CPP participated. For Nkrumah, parliamentary democracy implied a shift from *positive action* to *tactical action*, meaning compromise was now to be favoured over confrontation with Britain.¹⁸⁹ In more concrete terms, *tactical action* meant to work through the British colonial government's ordinary channels in order to achieve complete liberation from colonial rule.¹⁹⁰ The good relationship which Nkrumah developed with Arden-Clarke should probably be seen as part of this tactical agenda. What is certain is that in 1952, Arden-Clarke agreed to change Nkrumah's title from leader of government business to prime minister.¹⁹¹

Already in the first round of CPP government participation, lasting from 1951 to 1954, the local systems of “traditional” authority were attacked by the introduction of local, urban, and district councils. “Traditional” rulers still made up one-third of these councils' membership, but the rest were elected representatives, with a majority of CPP members.¹⁹²

Economically, the first period of Nkrumah's participation in government was marked by unprecedented growth. The price for cocoa increased from £139 per ton in 1948 to more than £300 per ton in 1952 and circa £350 in 1954. As the prices of other Ghanaian export

¹⁸⁶Fitch and Oppenheimer 1966: 36; Gocking 2005: 97-98; Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: 112-114; see also Boahen 1975: 171-172 and Buah 1980: 157-158, who present slightly different numbers.

¹⁸⁷Gocking 2005: 97-98; Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: 114.

¹⁸⁸Fitch and Oppenheimer 1966: 38.

¹⁸⁹Gocking 2005: 98; Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: 122-129.

¹⁹⁰Fitch and Oppenheimer 1966: 37. For an alternative interpretation of *tactical action*, see Mohan 1967, who describes it as “... nothing more than the label attached to the CPP's strategy of neo-colonial accommodation” (Mohan 1967: 196).

¹⁹¹Boahen 1975: 172; Austin 1964: 153; Gocking 2005: 99.

¹⁹²Gocking 2005: 99.

commodities also rose, and as state revenue was mainly based on export taxes, there were sufficient resources available for funding reforms. Wages of unskilled workers were increased, and the civil service was expanded and significantly “Africanised” – notably, non-members of the CPP were also included. The Ten-Year Development Plan which had originated under colonial rule, and aimed at spending £11.5 million, was transformed into a 5-year development plan geared towards spending £120 million. Nkrumah and the CPP continued already existing infrastructure projects and began several new ones; they finalised housing projects and provided loans for housing; they took care of health projects, like the comprehensive provision of clean drinking water in both urban and rural areas; and they improved education. Compulsory primary education was free, and the resulting increase in the number of pupils was taken care of by establishing more teacher-training colleges. The number of secondary schools also grew, and the University College of the Gold Coast was established near Accra. In Kumasi, the government set up the College of Arts, Science, and Technology. Furthermore, the first CPP government took measures to rehabilitate Ghana's agriculture, in particular its cocoa industry.¹⁹³

However, these indisputably positive developments did not stop criticism from emerging in Ghana. In the early 1950s, the opposition argued that, since the members of the CPP had secured good jobs for themselves, they had deserted their claim for *self-government now*. Internally, Nkrumah also came under pressure due to his strategy of *tactical action*. Some CPP members expressed the opinion that he had failed to resist the adulation on the part of the British press. Disagreement between Nkrumah and his internal opponents became so strong that by 1952, several high-ranking CPP officials quit their party membership – others were expelled. In 1953, however, Nkrumah was able to defend *tactical action* internally by pointing to recent developments in British Guiana, where British warships had removed the new prime minister from power, as he was too radical in the British government's view.¹⁹⁴

Opposition forces, however, could not be convinced. In 1952, the former CPP members who had not left the party voluntarily joined remainders of the UGCC to establish the Ghana Congress Party (GCP), led by Dr Kofi Abrefa Busia (1913-1978) who taught sociology at the University College at that time. In the north, where people were afraid that radicals from the south might dominate them, the Northern People's Party (NPP) was formed in 1954. In that same year, Muslims who lived in the larger towns and were also afraid of being discriminated against established the Moslem Association Party (MAP). Furthermore, in the Ghanaian part

¹⁹³Boahen 1975: 173-178; Buah 1980: 168-181; Gocking 2005: 99-100; Rimmer 1992: 54 and 200.

¹⁹⁴Gocking 2005: 100-101, 113.

of Togoland, the afore-mentioned opposition to the CPP continued. Part of the Ewe population aimed at recreating the territorial borders of former German Togoland. The Togoland Congress (TC) had been working towards this goal since 1949, which clearly went against Nkrumah's aim to incorporate Trans-Volta Togo into an independent Ghana. Rather insignificantly (in terms of seats contested), the Anlo Youth Organisation (AYO) worked towards an Ewe nation comprising all Ewe people in the Trans-Volta Region, British Togoland, and French Togo.¹⁹⁵

Another issue of debate in Ghana in the early 1950s was the financing of one of Nkrumah's most controversial large-scale industrialisation projects: the Volta River Project. The idea to build a dam at the Volta in order to produce electricity and then utilise it in an aluminium smelter did not originate from Nkrumah, but he considered the dam indispensable in the country's industrialisation process. The aluminium smelter had the primary function to create immediate demand for electricity, as contemporary demand in West Africa would have been insufficient to make the dam profitable. The smelter was also supposed to make use of Ghana's raw materials and create jobs. The problem was that the capital necessary to finance the project had to be lent from Britain, which put the British government in a favourable negotiation position. The plan was that Britain should subscribe to more than 60% of the necessary capital, but on the condition that it controlled 74.8% of the aluminium smelter. Newspapers and politicians, including CPP members, criticised these plans as selling out Ghana's recent progress towards political and economic freedom.¹⁹⁶

Charges against the CPP were also made in terms of corruption.¹⁹⁷ Even Nkrumah himself was accused of having abused official money for paying the costs of importing a Cadillac. A commission of inquiry set up by the government revealed that several ministers were almost certainly involved in corrupt activities, and even Nkrumah described his party's leadership as egoistic careerists.¹⁹⁸ Nkrumah himself was exonerated by the commission of inquiry.¹⁹⁹

Partly, corruption was due to the CPP's growing resource constraints. This is not to argue that CPP corruption was not about personal enrichment, but to demonstrate that there was more than only one incentive to take bribes. Even though the party's size increased, it had more and more financing difficulties. Foreign businessmen who wanted to buy favours from influential CPP members provided a welcome contribution to the party's funds. Furthermore, state owned

¹⁹⁵Boahen 1975: 179-181; Buah 1980: 160-161; Gocking 2005: 103. Information on the TC's founding date varies.

¹⁹⁶Boahen 1975: 177; Gocking 2005: 101, 119.

¹⁹⁷Boahen 1975: 179.

¹⁹⁸Gocking 2005: 101.

¹⁹⁹Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: 213-214.

companies became crucial reservoirs in the CPP's search for income. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to assume that the Ghanaian people's knowledge about the party's obvious corruptness caused its popularity to decrease. Even though the “bad” side of corruption – personal enrichment and its public display – was more visible than the attempt to finance the party, the former in fact caused the high-ranking members' status to increase.²⁰⁰

Additionally, it should be noted that international recognition also helped Nkrumah's domestic cause. He went to the USA in 1951, as Lincoln University was going to award him an honorary doctor title.²⁰¹ In general, the American and British public showed significant interest in the Ghanaian anti-colonial struggle. Not even Nkrumah's most serious enemies – like, for example, supporters of apartheid – could deny the continent-wide impact of his nationalist movement.²⁰²

In 1954 another major election was held in Ghana, following an electoral reform based on the Coussey Constitution. Prior to the election, Nkrumah not only had to cope with the opposition forces described above, but especially with internal struggles about who was to be nominated as a CPP candidate. As there were more claimants than candidate positions, a solution in everybody's interest was impossible, so that eventually 160 CPP members stood as independent candidates against the official CPP candidates. Furthermore, it should be noted that even apart from these outlier candidates, the CPP by no means constituted a homogenous entity. As it became more and more obvious that official positions brought several benefits with them, localism increased. Especially in rural areas, politicians were able to mobilise support based on group sentiments – non-local candidates had no chance. Hence, let me emphasise that during the election preparation period, strong rivalries both within Ghana's 104 constituencies and between locally focused politicians and the national headquarters had developed.²⁰³ This is crucial for understanding what several authors who will be discussed in chapter three mean by the challenge of nation building which Nkrumah faced.

Nevertheless, Nkrumah's party won 72 of the 104 constituencies. The independent candidates scored 16 seats; the GCP scored only one seat, as did the MAP and the AYO. The TC won three seats. The NPP, which had allied with MAP, won 12 seats. Contrary to the rest of the opposition, the NPP had a regional base and was able to win the support of a number of chiefs and educated people. However, the CPP had managed to maintain influence in Ghana's north

²⁰⁰Austin 1964: 194; Gocking 2005: 102.

²⁰¹Many of Nkrumah's admirers have referred to him as *Doctor* Nkrumah, whereas his critics have emphasised that he did not receive this title for academic achievements.

²⁰²Gocking 2005: 102.

²⁰³Gocking 2005: 102-103.

and in the country's Muslim communities, exploiting rivalries between northern chiefs, and between the diverse ethnic groups of which the Muslim population consisted. In Togoland, a similar strategy had worked.²⁰⁴

And yet, it would be wrong to assume that the CPP's victory signified that Ghana was just one step away from national unity. The GCP was the only opposition party that did not stand on regional, ethnic, or religious grounds – and it was not a very successful opposition party. Furthermore, even though the CPP undoubtedly enjoyed mass support in 1954 and some more years to come, and despite the “political games” just described, we would be mistaken to derive from this the existence of an entirely politicised population. Even though 60% of the people who had registered as voters actually went to the poll (as compared to only 40% in 1951), they still represented only 31-32% of the adult population of the Gold Coast Colony.²⁰⁵

Shortly after the second general election, new opposition to Nkrumah's goal of national unity was forming. Contrary to the government that had been formed after the 1951 election, the opposition was not officially recognized this time. But what caused more anger among many Ghanaians was the passing of the Cocoa Duty and Development Funds (Amendment) Bill of 1954, which introduced the fixation of the price that the Cocoa Marketing Board (CMB) paid to cocoa producers. The latter were to receive 72 shillings per 60-pound haul, which was only 42% of the former price.²⁰⁶ The official reasoning was that given high prices on the world market, this policy served to prevent inflation. Furthermore, it was argued that the income generated by keeping producer prices low could be used to support development efforts, thereby benefiting the entire country.²⁰⁷

However, against the background that the CPP had promised higher producer prices during the election propaganda, it was exactly the combination of rising world market prices and lower prices paid to local producers that made Ghana's cocoa farmers highly dissatisfied with the 1954 cocoa bill. Anger was most widespread in Ashanti, where nearly 50% of the entire country's cocoa were produced.²⁰⁸

The initial opposition initiative came from the AYO, whose members argued that the government was too centralised and corrupt. In September 1954, the AYO organised a public

²⁰⁴Boahen 1975: 181-182; Gocking 2005: 103-104. According to Buah 1980: 161, the CPP even won 79 of the 104 constituencies.

²⁰⁵For these numbers, compare Gocking 2005: 104 and Mohan 1967: 195. According to Mohan, in 1951 55.4% of the adult population were registered in Ashanti, and 64.1% in the municipalities.

²⁰⁶Frimpong-Ansah 1992: 85; Gocking 2005: 104.

²⁰⁷Gocking 2005: 104; Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: 179.

²⁰⁸Gocking 2005: 104-105.

rally in which thousands of people participated. In the same month, calls for Ashanti separatism became louder. The developing movement was supported by farmers, GCP members, and those sections of the intelligentsia who had formerly given their support to the UGCC. Some weeks later, more than 40,000 Asantes met in Kumasi and established the National Liberation Movement (NLM). The chiefs of Ashanti gave their support to the movement, as their power had been declining since the CPP's participation in government.²⁰⁹

From Nkrumah's point of view, a separatist and secessionist movement constituted a dangerous threat to his government.²¹⁰ After a CPP member had murdered the NLM's propaganda secretary, violence on the part of the NLM escalated in the form of assaults and firebombings on CPP supporters. The Asanteman Council, which supported the NLM, asked the queen to investigate if a federal form of government could be implemented in the Gold Coast. The NLM increasingly employed techniques of mass organisation, turning itself into a political party rather than a movement. It also set up a paramilitary organisation and managed to extend its sphere of influence. At least since the NLM had started to receive support from outside Ashanti, the CPP began to have a hard time justifying its claim that it was the party that was ready and able to lead the colony into independence.²¹¹

After trying to set up an informal meeting with NLM leaders had failed,²¹² Nkrumah started public rhetorical attacks against his opponents, arguing that they had been corrupted by imperialist and reactionary forces. The plan on the part of the CPP to divide Ashanti into two regions was controversial in several respects. Obviously, separation did not fit the claim to be working towards national unity. Furthermore, the separation idea was based on tensions between chiefs in the Kumasi and Brong regions. These tensions had originated in the pre-colonial era and had continued to exist during colonial rule. Consequently, the CPP was accused of using "tribalism" to fight the NLM.²¹³

Some NLM members were calling for a more constitutional approach. In July 1955, two delegates, one of whom was Busia, were sent to London to convince the British secretary of state responsible for the colonies, Alan Tindal Lennox-Boyd (1904-1983), to send a

²⁰⁹Boahen 1975: 183-185; Gocking 2005: 105. It is an issue of debate how strongly ethnicity mattered to the NLM, and how much the movement was about economic and political interests. Without doubt, both aspects mattered – economic and political claims were put forward within an ethnic framework (Mohan 1967: 204-205; see also Gocking 2005: 104-105, who describes a similar mechanism, but puts more emphasis on the importance of ethnicity). In my view, the possibility to put claims in an ethnic dress implies that an ethnic sense of belonging mattered at least to those followers of the NLM who were not involved in cocoa production (for the existence of such followers, see Gocking 2005: 105).

²¹⁰Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: 180-181.

²¹¹Boahen 1975: 186; Gocking 2005: 106-107.

²¹²Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: 198.

²¹³Gocking 2005: 106-107.

constitutional adviser to Ghana to investigate the demands of the various regions.²¹⁴ In Ghana, the NLM claimed that a new general election had to be held, and it attempted to unite the entire opposition against the CPP.²¹⁵

Hostility between the CPP and the NLM continued to increase. There was a bomb attack on Nkrumah's residence in Accra in November 1958;²¹⁶ in Kumasi, violence escalated, too. In September 1955, the constitutional expert, Sir Frederick Chalmers Bourne (1891-1977),²¹⁷ arrived in Ghana. He favoured a compromise solution, which encouraged the NLM constitutionalists to confront the British government with their demand to hold another general election – successfully. Lennox-Boyd informed Nkrumah in March 1956 that another general election was to be held, which the latter had tried to prevent.²¹⁸

Prior to the election, the NLM had managed to ally with the NPP, the MAP, and the TC in order to secure votes beyond Ashanti. Busia, the former leader of the GCP, led the NLM. In the Gold Coast Colony, the CPP's trump card against the NLM was to portray the latter as another attempt of the Asante to invade the south. The strategy in the north was to win the chiefs' support by enhancing their status. In the British part of Togoland, a recent plebiscite concerning the trusteeship's future had not indicated a clear preference for or against unity with the Gold Coast, which made both the CPP and the NLM hope that they could score votes there.²¹⁹

Like in the elections before, only around 30% of the adult population were registered as voters, and in the election of July 1956, only 50% of them actually voted. The result was nearly the same as in 1954: the CPP won 71 of 104 seats. It was most successful in the Colony, but it even did well in Ashanti, the north, and the British part of Togoland. In August 1956, Nkrumah used the mandate which this victory gave him to propose a motion demanding independence. The British government had announced that independence could only be granted if the CPP was able to score a decent majority – a requirement that had been fulfilled.²²⁰

The NLM, however, refused to cooperate in the legislative assembly, and especially the AYO was not willing to accept the course which events were taking and once again called for secession. The NLM leadership unsuccessfully asked the British government for an

²¹⁴Nkrumah claimed that it was him who requested a constitutional adviser (Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: 200).

²¹⁵Boahen 1975: 186; Gocking 2005: 107-108.

²¹⁶Abugri 2012.

²¹⁷British Library.

²¹⁸Boahen 1975: 186-187; Gocking 2005: 108; Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: 204-209.

²¹⁹Gocking 2005: 108-109.

²²⁰Boahen 1975: 188; Gocking 2005: 109-110; see also Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: 202-203.

intervention. Soon after he had met with the NLM delegation, the British secretary of state declared that Ghana would become independent on March 6, 1957.²²¹

Nevertheless, internal struggle in Ghana continued. In November 1956, Nkrumah's government published its constitutional plans which completely ignored the demands of the opposition. Causing most anger, Nkrumah still aimed at the creation of two separate Ashanti regions. The NLM, the NPP, and the Asanteman Council were so upset about this that they demanded the creation of a separate nation which was supposed to unite Ashanti with the Northern Territories in a separate independence. However, this went against the interests of both Nkrumah's and Britain's government. The NLM was controlled by its moderate forces, who were not prepared to risk open conflict about this issue. Instead, they preferred to believe Lennox-Boyd, who assured them that regional autonomy as well as chieftaincy would find protection in the new constitution. Yet, the final version of the British parliament's draft of Ghana's future constitution did not confirm this. Nkrumah had won – for now.²²²

2.4 *Ghana's independence under Nkrumah's rule*

The course Ghana took after it had achieved independence was only partly determined by the political and economic goals which Nkrumah and the CPP had in mind. Other complex national and international social, political, and economic forces made up the framework within which Nkrumah's policies had to be implemented, and Nkrumah constantly had to reconsider his strategies and adapt them to new challenges. Hence, before taking a closer look at Nkrumah's actual policies, let me first examine some crucial socio-economic factors that shaped Ghana at independence and in the years to come.

In the period 1955 to 1962, Ghana's economy grew at 4.8% per annum. However, wealth was not distributed equally: southern areas, where cocoa was grown, had several advantages as compared to the northern savanna region. In the south, people were richer not only in terms of income, but also regarding the availability of services. More children went to school, water supply and transportation were better, and, as most towns and cities were situated in Ghana's south, economic activities could best be pursued in that region. A significant amount of northerners migrated to the south, especially to Ashanti's cocoa-farming areas. Northerners also went to the south's urban areas, which led to high population increase there. In this connection, it should be noted that in the 1950s, Ghana was generally characterised by strong

²²¹Boahen 1975: 188; Gocking 2005: 110-111.

²²²Gocking 2005: 111-112.

population growth (2.5% per year).²²³ Consequently, the average age was low – circa 18; almost half the population was younger than 15 years.²²⁴

Income levels not only varied significantly between the north and the south, but also within the southern urban centres. Such variations were not new, but they became more severe during the fast urban growth that characterised the 1950s. This, then, was the socio-economic environment in which Nkrumah had to continue to act on his promise to deliver material wealth to the Ghanaian people, a promise which he had already made back in 1949.²²⁵ Necessarily, as Nkrumah had argued that after political freedom was achieved, everything else – including material conditions – would be improved,²²⁶ expectations were even higher after March 1957.

It has already been mentioned that Ghana's most important economic activity was cocoa farming, and that the taxing of the export of this crop was the state's most important source of revenue. Over the early 1950s, world cocoa prices had been increasing. This, as we have seen, had enabled the CPP to achieve several successes in areas which it considered relevant for development (e.g. free education and higher wages). In addition to overtly taxing cocoa export, the CMB's policy of paying cocoa producers less than the price achieved on the world market had enabled the Ghanaian government to covertly accumulate a large sum of reserves (more than \$470 million in 1957).²²⁷ This practice was continued during the CPP's independent rule.²²⁸ However, it is important to note that before independence, these reserves had not been used for funding development. In order to understand why this practice was changed, we need to focus on cocoa prices.

International cocoa prices started to deteriorate from 1955/56, falling from £355.1 per ton in 1954/55 to £221.8 in one year. Apart from a temporary re-rise in 1957/58, the downward trend continued throughout the entire period of independent CPP rule, touching bottom in 1964/65.²²⁹

Obviously, the course which cocoa prices took posed a challenge to Nkrumah's development goals. His government reacted by increasing income tax, some import duties, and the price

²²³This was caused most of all by high fertility rates, but also by immigration from other West African areas (Gocking 2005: 115).

²²⁴Gocking 2005: 115-116.

²²⁵Gocking 2005: 116.

²²⁶Killick 1978: 34; Mohan 1967: 194.

²²⁷Gocking 2005: 117-118. The distinction between covert and overt taxation is based on Rimmer 1992.

²²⁸In the period of dual rule, the CMB paid the farmers between 37.5% (1953/54) and 78.7% (1956/57) of the realised price. After independence, cocoa farmers received between 40% (1958/59) and 80.7% (1964/65) of the price yielded by the CMB (own calculations, based on Rimmer 1992: 54, 76).

²²⁹Rimmer 1992: 54 and 76.

which people had to pay for official services. Yet, especially the decision to use Ghana's reserves for development purposes was to have a severe and long-term effect on the country. Eventually, it was to lead to Ghana's virtual bankruptcy.²³⁰

With declining cocoa prices, it also became obvious that development had to be planned more systematically. In September 1957, Arthur Lewis (1915-1991), a Saint Lucian professor of economics, became the economic adviser of Nkrumah's government. Lewis was known for his view that increased agricultural productivity in combination with improved infrastructure would be most suitable for the Ghanaian economy. In his position as economic adviser, he made a significant contribution to Ghanaian economic planning by arguing against strong government involvement in the country's industrialisation. Instead, Lewis put more emphasis on foreign investment. And indeed, Nkrumah realised that his government would only be able to fund its ambitious development goals if it turned to the global financial markets.²³¹

Such a realisation must have been quite painful for Nkrumah, considering that prior to independence he had identified foreign debt as one of the measures with which colonial aggressors bind their annexed territories to them and prevent economic development in the latter.²³² Furthermore, as we have seen, Nkrumah had argued in his *Autobiography* that newly independent countries needed socialism, not capitalism.²³³

Nevertheless, the deterioration of global prices for raw materials like cocoa was a fact, and so Nkrumah's independent government, in its early years, decided to embark on the liberal road of foreign investment. Consultants from the US were hired, and one of their challenges was to convince potential investors that Ghana would not nationalise their plants. The Nkrumah administration decided to grant tax holidays to foreign investors. Additionally, "... company tax was reduced from 45 to 40 percent, and there were very liberal provisions for the repatriation of profits".²³⁴ After independence, the CPP's initial policies towards economic affairs other than foreign investment were also rather liberal. Production was mainly an affair of foreign and domestic private enterprise, the Ghanaian pound (introduced after independence in 1957) was freely convertible into Sterling, and import restrictions were rare. In line with Arthur Lewis' recommendations, money for development was largely spent on infrastructural investments: about 80% of planned government expenditures accrued to social

²³⁰Gocking 2005: 118.

²³¹Gocking 2005: 118-120; Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: 128-129.

²³²Nkrumah 1979b [1962, written 1945].

²³³Nkrumah 1979a [1957]: vii; compare also Gocking 2005: 120.

²³⁴Gocking 2005: 120.

overhead capital projects.²³⁵

Financing difficulties in terms of development goals also affected Nkrumah's centrepiece, the Volta River Project. As we have seen, there had already been plans that the British government should finance a substantial part of this project. However, by 1956, it had become clear that, for a variety of reasons, Britain's government as well as British and other companies were not willing to actually get involved with the Volta project. It only came back to life after Nkrumah had interested Edgar Kaiser from Kaiser Aluminum in the project in 1958. Yet, Kaiser would only agree to build the smelter based on conditions which Nkrumah had not foreseen: the US company was going to use imported aluminium only. Nevertheless, Nkrumah agreed to Kaiser's terms, and construction work began in 1961. The World Bank and several US government agencies agreed to fund 50% of the building costs of the dam;²³⁶ the other half of the costs of the dam was not backed by loans, so that Nkrumah's government had to raise the remaining \$98 million more immediately.²³⁷

To put it in a nutshell, after independence Nkrumah faced the following economic situation: an increased and continuously increasing population had increased expectations towards material improvements. In order to meet these expectations at least partially, and to achieve its development goals, the CPP increased its development expenditures at a time when the world market prices of its main source of revenue, cocoa, declined continuously.²³⁸ Nkrumah aimed at Ghana's rapid industrialisation so as to decrease the economy's reliance on mainly one crop, but the actual process of industrialisation was too slow to achieve this goal. As it turned out, there was not nearly as much foreign investment pouring into Ghana as had been expected, meaning there were significantly less factories established than Nkrumah had hoped for. Increased taxation and lower domestic producer prices could not offset Ghana's budgetary problems, and in the long run, the country's reserves were not sufficient to make up for this trend either. In 1961, Ghana faced a serious balance-of-payments crisis.²³⁹

Against the background of insufficient foreign investment and declining state revenue, liberal policies seemed increasingly inadequate. Nkrumah, who had expressed sympathy for a socialist approach to economics since 1945 (see 2.3), reacted by moving closer to the communist bloc from around 1960, which was expressed in more frequent mutual visits of

²³⁵Beckman 1976: 16; Gocking 2005: 120; Killick 1978: 45.

²³⁶It is worth noting that John F. Kennedy pressured the World Bank to invest in the project, as he was afraid that otherwise the USSR might do so (Gocking 2005: 119).

²³⁷Gocking 2005: 101, 118-119; see also Boahen 1975: 198-199.

²³⁸The money which the CPP spent on development projects increased from circa \$47 million in the years 1957/58 to circa \$73 million in 1958/59 to \$126 million from 1960 to 1962 (Gocking 2005: 120).

²³⁹Beckman 1976: 16; Gocking 2005: 120-122, 133.

high-ranking states officials, including Nkrumah himself.²⁴⁰ In *Some Aspects of Socialism in Africa* (1963), Nkrumah argued that socialism was the only tool by which material benefits could be delivered quickly to the Ghanaian masses. Socialism, according to Nkrumah, would lead to high living standards, and the socialist agenda had to affect every aspect of everybody's life. He considered industrialisation a prerequisite of socialism, and he held that Ghana needed import substitution industrialisation (with a special emphasis on heavy industry), electricity, and mechanised agriculture. To achieve all this, planning had to be centralised in his view.²⁴¹

This agenda of socialist modernisation was in fact implemented. Since 1961, socialists were in key positions in every politically relevant element of Ghana's society, like the CPP itself, the newspapers, the TUC, the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute, and the banks. Foreign banks were domesticated, mining industries were nationalised. The parity of Ghana's currency with the pound sterling was ended in 1961, followed by currency overvaluation and increased export taxes and import restrictions, which led to inflation. Other taxes were also massively increased. The government's investments in manufacturing increased, and the state generally played a more important role in the economy, which was evident in the growing number of state enterprises and state farms based on mechanised technology. The Volta River Project, finished in September 1965, was the only major element of the economy that was not affected by Ghana's socialist transformation.²⁴²

In the context of Nkrumah's increasing political radicalisation, it is furthermore necessary to highlight his foreign policy and changes regarding his position in Africa as a leader. Being the head of a newly independent country who no longer had to take into account the restrictions of dual rule, he was determined to increase his efforts to work towards African unity. In 1957 he called upon George Padmore to advise him on African affairs. In 1958, Accra hosted the initial Conference of Independent African States, followed by the All-African Peoples Conference in the same year. The latter was a huge meeting of African nationalist parties and organisations. It was meant to encourage Africans who were living in still dependent territories to intensify the anti-colonial struggle. A permanent secretariat was established, and it was decided to hold similar conferences annually.²⁴³

Furthermore, Nkrumah came to consider Ahmed Sékou Touré (1922-1984), who was the president of the Republic of Guinea since it had achieved independence in October 1958, an

²⁴⁰Gocking 2005: 131.

²⁴¹Nkrumah 1964 [1963].

²⁴²Beckman 1976: 16; Gocking 2005: 132-134; Rimmer 1992: xi, 205-214.

²⁴³Gocking 2005: 125-126.

important confederate.²⁴⁴ In November of that year, the Ghana-Guinea Union was formed, which was to involve a sum of \$28 million that Ghana granted to its poorer ally. In late 1960, the Republic of Mali joined the union, and the three states developed a charter that outlined this Union of African States' legal basis and was supposed to serve as the fundament of the United States of Africa. In early 1961, reacting to the Congo's political crisis, the African states which supported the Congo's prime minister Patrice Émery Lumumba (1925-1961) held a meeting in Casablanca. At this meeting, the foundation of the Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union (the Union of African States) was proclaimed; Nkrumah became its president, which indicated the leading role that Ghana played in the Pan-Africanist movement at that time.²⁴⁵

But this leading role was soon to be challenged. Following the independence of the remaining French colonies in West Africa in 1960, other countries emerged that demanded a guiding role in Africa – most notably Nigeria. Intense rivalry between the rather conservative Nigeria and the more socialist Ghana developed. Ghana exploited internal Nigerian divisions and interfered directly in the country's affairs by supporting Nigerian socialists, which went as far as training them in techniques of subversion.²⁴⁶

The struggle between radical and more conservative forces also involved other African countries. Those states with a socialist orientation – the Casablanca group, named after the meeting mentioned above – were confronted with the Brazzaville/Monrovia group. Whereas the former wanted the Soviet Union to act as a counterbalance to what they considered Western neo-colonialism, the latter, which included Nigeria, had a more friendly attitude towards the West and opposed Nkrumah's claim for immediate African political union. Eventually, the conservatives won the factional dispute. The foundation of the Organization of African Union (OAU) at a conference in Addis Ababa in May 1963 constituted a clear victory for those who gave priority to national sovereignty and economic cooperation, as opposed to political unification. In contrast to his earlier role as a Pan-Africanist leader, Nkrumah had increasingly become diplomatically isolated. What added to this was the fact that the main scenes of the anti-colonial struggle had moved southwards, which made more southern countries a more convenient operation basis for liberation fighters.²⁴⁷

In combination with his inability to affect the political situation in the Congo, which he attributed “... to the evil maneuvers of the western and capitalist powers”,²⁴⁸ and his

²⁴⁴Gocking 2005: 126; Sonderegger 2011: 109.

²⁴⁵Gocking 2005: 126-128.

²⁴⁶Gocking 2005: 127-129.

²⁴⁷Gocking 2005: 129-130; Sonderegger 2011: 109.

²⁴⁸Boahen 1975: 208.

realisation that there would not come as much financial aid from the West for industrialisation as he had hoped for, Nkrumah's declining role concerning African leadership contributed to his stronger identification with communist countries and socialism.²⁴⁹

This is not to say that before 1960, Nkrumah was not a socialist – I have already shown that he certainly was. The crucial difference since the late 1950s was that, in addition to being sympathetic towards socialism and the communist bloc, the international economic and political situation made it almost impossible for Nkrumah not to move closer to the left.²⁵⁰

The decline of international cocoa prices, of Ghana's economic prosperity, and of Nkrumah's leading role in Africa was accompanied by a domestic decline of political freedom. Discontent with CPP policies led to growing opposition, especially in the southern Volta region, where open rebellion and killings occurred already shortly after independence. But also directly in Accra, where a group of Gas was convinced that they were disadvantaged as compared to Akan people, a political movement against the government, the Ga Standfast Association, formed in July 1957. Nkrumah was afraid that local opposition might pose a serious threat to CPP rule; consequently, the Ghana Nationality and Citizenship Bill was introduced, which stated that it was up to the minister of the interior alone to decide who was a Ghanaian citizen and who was not. In combination with the Deportation Act (July 1957), this legislation enabled Nkrumah's government to expel opposition members who had been officially declared non-Ghanaian. In both Ghana and Great Britain, the public discussed the CPP's dictatorial tendencies.²⁵¹

In fact, ministers of the Nkrumah administration were openly using the potential establishment of a dictatorship as a threat against opposition violence at a CPP rally in Accra in October 1957. Nkrumah himself claimed that “[a]ll talk of dictatorship was absurd; he would lead Ghana along the path of parliamentary [democracy]”.²⁵² However, in line with his ministers, he was also recorded to hold that “[t]he opposition was plotting; any attempt at assassination or violence would be ruthlessly crushed”.²⁵³ In October, people were already aware of Nkrumah's plan to propose a “... bill to make illegal any party based on tribe, religion or region ...”,²⁵⁴ and in December this plan became reality with the passing of the Avoidance of Discrimination Act.²⁵⁵ Prior to its passing, this act had been “... met by the

²⁴⁹Gocking 2005: 126-127, 131-132.

²⁵⁰Killick 1978: 34.

²⁵¹Gocking 2005: 122; see also Omari 2009 [1970]: 52 for the Deportation Act.

²⁵²*New Statesman*, October 19, 1957.

²⁵³*New Statesman*, October 19, 1957.

²⁵⁴*New Statesman*, October 19, 1957.

²⁵⁵Gocking 2005: 123.

opposition merging its component parts that might have come within this ban and forming a United Party ...”²⁵⁶ (UP), whose popularity spread quickly.

In July 1958, the CPP reacted with the passing of the Preventive Detention Act, which allowed the government to keep anybody under arrest for five years without trial who was accused of intending to do harm to Ghana's defence, outside relations, or state security. It was obvious that this legislation's main purpose was to curb political opponents, as it mostly affected opposition members. However, it should also be mentioned that the Nkrumah administration knew about three reports based on which its fear of subversive activities was not unfounded. These reports suspected a) that an Austrian intended to bring 1,000 tons of grenades into Ghana; 2) that the general secretary of the UP had bought military equipment in England; and 3) that the French government financially supported Busia's alleged plans to perform a coup d'état.²⁵⁷

In Ghana's rural areas, Nkrumah consolidated the CPP's power by exchanging the regional officers with CPP members. In Ashanti, chiefs who supported the NLM were downgraded, whereas those who were on the CPP's side were upgraded. One high-ranking Asante chief was destooled. There were also constitutional changes, regulating that chiefs were only allowed to be concerned with chiefly matters. In 1959, the earlier threat to divide Ashanti into two regions became reality with the creation of the Brong-Ahafo Region. The chiefs had lost their direct political influence, and they were no longer in control of chiefly revenue.²⁵⁸

Yet, the CPP's attack on “traditional” authority did not lead to the latter's extinction, but to a revised chieftaincy sanctioned by the government. This system also involved the additional spending of government revenue on chiefly loyalty in a situation in which government revenue became increasingly scarce. Furthermore, Nkrumah set out to bring into line Ghana's civic organisations, like the TUC. Following the Industrial Relations Act (1958), organisations like those of the ex-servicemen, of Ghanaian women, and of students were brought under CPP control.²⁵⁹

In April 1960, the Nkrumah administration conducted an election-like plebiscite to enable Ghanaians to determine if Ghana should become a presidential republic. Even though the opposition had been severely weakened, 35% of the voters in Accra supported Dr Danquah, the UP's presidential candidate. Nevertheless, significant vote rigging in the rural

²⁵⁶*New Statesman*, October 19, 1957.

²⁵⁷Beckman 1976: 15; Boahen 1975: 186, 194-195; Buah 1980: 184-185; Gocking 2005: 123; Omari 2009 [1970]: 53, 70-78.

²⁵⁸Gocking 2005: 123-124.

²⁵⁹Gocking 2005: 124.

constituencies ensured a CPP victory, so that Nkrumah became president. The new constitution strongly increased his powers; for example, it allowed him to decide who was chief justice, and he could dismiss members of the police and the judicial service.²⁶⁰

Opposition had become increasingly difficult and dangerous, which probably explains subsequent attempts to assassinate Nkrumah. In August 1962, someone threw a grenade at him in Kulungugu, a town in Ghana's north. One person was killed, and several others, among them Nkrumah, were wounded. Over the following weeks, several bombs exploded in and near Accra. Nkrumah's reaction was to have several hundred suspects detained, twelve of whom were eventually trialled. Five of these twelve were found guilty, but three of the convicts were acquitted in December 1963, as the evidence that linked them to the Kulungugu incident was too weak to enforce the death sentence. Obviously, this was not in Nkrumah's interest, who reacted by dismissing the chief justice, followed by the passing of the Law of Criminal Procedure, based on which Nkrumah could nullify any decision of the supreme court. The judiciary was further dismantled by a constitutional amendment that allowed Nkrumah to dismiss judges.²⁶¹

Another constitutional amendment was to turn Ghana into a one-party state.²⁶² In January 1964, before the referendum concerning this issue was held, a police constable fired five shots at Nkrumah which all missed him. After this incident, the police were no longer permitted to carry firearms, and once more several of Nkrumah's political opponents, among them Danquah, were arrested. Danquah died in prison a year later.²⁶³

It should also be noted that in the course of Ghana's increasing centralisation, *Nkrumahism* developed. In 1961, Nkrumah had established the Ghana Young Pioneers, a youth organisation that was supposed to denounce teachers and parents in cases of anti-Nkrumahist disposition. The young members of this organisation worshipped Nkrumah like a godly messiah and considered him the future president of Africa.²⁶⁴

All this found little enthusiasm with the bulk of the Ghanaian population. The Nkrumah regime realised that due to its increasing unpopularity, holding another election would be too dangerous – hence the 1965 elections were cancelled. In that same year, the white Rhodesian minority declared independence, which, in Nkrumah's view, Britain should have prevented. Nkrumah wanted a military intervention with significant Ghanaian involvement, an idea

²⁶⁰Boahen 1975: 210-211; Gocking 2005: 124-125; Omari 2009 [1970]: 77.

²⁶¹Gocking 2005: 135-136; Omari 2009 [1970]: 94-96.

²⁶²Buah 1980: 190.

²⁶³Gocking 2005: 136-137; Omari 2009 [1970]: 95.

²⁶⁴Boahen 1975: 219; Gocking 2005: 133.

which the Ghanaian military disliked. Another unpopular decision of Nkrumah was to force senior army officers to retire. If Akwasi Amankwaa Afrifa (1936-1979) is to be believed, then especially this action led to Nkrumah's overthrow in a military-police coup on February 24, 1966, while Nkrumah was on a diplomatic mission outside of Ghana. Afrifa played a leading role in this coup.²⁶⁵

What was most remarkable about the coup was that there was almost no resistance to it. There were fights between the plotters and Nkrumah's Presidential Guard, but on the whole, the coup took no longer than 24 hours and was in fact greeted with enthusiasm by a significant share of the Ghanaian population.²⁶⁶

After the coup, Nkrumah found refuge in Guinea, where the country's president Sékou Touré bestowed the title of honorary co-president upon him. Nkrumah was to live in Conakry, where he devoted most of his time to writing projects and waited for an opportunity to return to Ghana – an opportunity that would never come. In his opinion, the coup had been due to “... the same external forces which have ... tried to prevent progress towards real independence in the Congo”,²⁶⁷ meaning he attributed the coup to “... certain members of the army and police, acting in co-operation with neo-colonialists ...”.²⁶⁸ Nkrumah died of cancer in Bucharest, Romania, on April 27, 1972.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁵Boahen 1975: 211, 220; Gocking 2005: 137-138.

²⁶⁶Boahen 1975: 222-224; Gocking 2005: 138-139.

²⁶⁷Nkrumah 1974b [1967]: x.

²⁶⁸Nkrumah 1974b [1967]: x.

²⁶⁹Boahen 1975: 224; Buah 1980: 191; Gocking 2005: 138-139.

3. Contextualising and analysing Ghanaian post-1966 interpretations of Nkrumah's writings and politics

3.1 *Dominant views from the West: the state of the literature*

The fact that the CPP – a party which had once enjoyed mass support – could be overthrown rather easily in a coup that was in fact greeted with enthusiasm by the Ghanaian population, stimulated an academic debate in the later 1960s/early 1970s about the reasons for Nkrumah's overthrow. Against the background of the evident economic demise in Ghana, this debate focused on the allegedly superficial nature of the CPP's attempt to transform Ghana into a socialist republic, and was largely led amongst Marxist scholars from the West.²⁷⁰

Fitch and Oppenheimer (1966) based their interpretation on dependency theory and argued that the CPP was the party of Ghana's petty-bourgeois stratum. In their view, this stratum had no radical chains to escape from, hence Ghana's petty-bourgeoisie had no revolutionary potential. They described Nkrumah as the perfect agent of both Ghanaian petty-bourgeois and Western (neo-)colonial interests, at least throughout the 1950s, and claimed that his writings were deliberately vague so as not to offend the British. In Fitch and Oppenheimer's view, Nkrumah was a power-hungry opportunist who adjusted his official statements to political needs. They identified a socialist shift in Nkrumah's strategy after 1961, but held that this shift was merely due to necessity, as opposed to ideology. By and large, they neglected Nkrumah's intellectual side.²⁷¹ Clearly, their view is most of all weakened by its simplistic class-determinism.

Other highly negative accounts of Nkrumah's rule were written by Douglas Rimmer (1966; 1969; 1992). However, Rimmer approached the subject within the paradigm of neo-classical economics. In *Staying Poor: Ghana's Political Economy, 1950-1990* (1992) he argued that Ghanaian officials during Nkrumah's rule were mainly motivated by their individual interest in self-advancement. Rimmer's view of Nkrumah himself was only slightly more sympathetic. He held that Nkrumah was truly motivated by Pan-Africanist and socialist ambitions, but Nkrumah ignored or even supported patronage at home. Comparably to Fitch and Oppenheimer, Rimmer was convinced that Nkrumah adjusted expressions of his agenda to what he considered politically necessary. According to Rimmer, by the end of his rule

²⁷⁰For this assessment, compare Beckman 1976: 19-29; Gocking 2005: 139; Mohan 1967: 191.

²⁷¹Fitch and Oppenheimer 1966.

Nkrumah's major interest was to keep the patronage machine going that kept him in power.²⁷² Rimmer certainly deserves credit for pointing out the issue of patronage under Nkrumah's rule. However, it seems that his almost exclusive focus on economic matters and the damaging effects of some elements of the CPP's economic policies forced him into drawing overly negative conclusions that fail to take into account numerous aspects without which a proper assessment of Nkrumah's rule as a whole cannot be achieved. I will come back to this below in my discussion of Tony Killick's work.

Roger Genoud's (1969) account of Nkrumah's economic policy is more focused on ideological matters, albeit in a one-sided way. Genoud argued that CPP rule was a nationalist experience, as opposed to a socialist one. In his view, Nkrumah's main goal was economic and social development; the tool for achieving this aim was nationalism. Genoud saw the entire period of Nkrumah's rule as one single decolonisation experience. According to Genoud, Nkrumah's political strategy was characterised by nearly inevitable compromises, manoeuvring between the extremes of a liberal neo-colonial path, and one of radical socialist transformation.²⁷³

Genoud rejected Fitch and Oppenheimer's depiction of Nkrumah as an agent of (neo-)colonialism, arguing that Nkrumah's "... refusal of a passive and neocolonial course is illustrated by the strategic infrastructural investments and their sheer size".²⁷⁴ The liberal policies in the 1950s made sense because Nkrumah saw that Ghana could gain economically and politically from them, and he was under pressure to deliver material welfare to the masses quickly, as this had been promised during the struggle for independence. But the situation changed when cocoa world prices deteriorated from around 1959. However, contrary to Fitch and Oppenheimer, Genoud claimed that Nkrumah's agenda after 1961 did not constitute a significant change in strategy. Instead, Genoud saw the post-1961 policies as an acceleration of a strategy which had been in place since the beginning of CPP rule – industrialisation via infrastructure investments.²⁷⁵

If Rimmer's negative view of Nkrumah's rule derived most of all from elements characteristic of Nkrumah's later years, Genoud's highly positive view seems strongly informed by Nkrumah's early years. Rimmer's over-emphasis on patronage distorts the picture, but so does Genoud's exclusion of such issues. Nationalism, as important as it were, was not the only driving force behind Nkrumah's actions.

²⁷²Rimmer 1992.

²⁷³Genoud 1969.

²⁷⁴Genoud 1969: 148-149. With infrastructure, Genoud refers to education, public health, and economic infrastructure (Genoud 1969: 99).

²⁷⁵Genoud 1969.

Explanations of Nkrumah's economic policies that are not mono-causal seem hard to find. Tony Killick's interpretation constitutes the exception to the rule. Killick convincingly incorporated nationalism, Pan-Africanism, socialism, Nkrumah's ambition to modernise, the international economy, and patronage as explanatory factors into his analysis. His book *Development Economics in Action: A Study of Economic Policies in Ghana* (1978) provides a non-reductionist, balanced view of Nkrumah's economic strategy that also acknowledges the complexity of the historical circumstances. Contrary to Fitch and Oppenheimer, and Rimmer, Killick focused on the question if the respective policies constituted a reasonable choice *at the time of their implementation*.

Thus, when Killick discussed the differences between the CPP's policies of the 1950s and 1960s, he also explained why socialist policies seemed to be an adequate alternative around 1960: "Private enterprise, after all, had been the rule since the Gold Coast was first created and yet it remained a backward economy. Against this history the successes of the Soviet Union in modernising its own economy almost literally in a single generation must have seemed an attractive alternative".²⁷⁶ Killick also argued that by the early 1960s, Nkrumah both *had to* and *wanted to* break with the former policies stemming from the colonial era. This view matches Ghana's economic situation as well as Nkrumah's writings. Furthermore, Killick held that picking 1961 as the year of change was somewhat arbitrary. Instead, he viewed the years 1959-1962 as a transitional phase in terms of ideology and policy.²⁷⁷

Based on empirical evidence, Killick argued that there were three major motivation factors of the 1960s policies: nationalism (or economic independence), socialism, and a modernisation effort.²⁷⁸ Elaborating on these factors, and on how they tied in with each other, he provided direct criticisms concerning Genoud's and Rimmer's (earlier) interpretations. Killick agreed with Genoud that the emphasis on economic independence had a nationalistic component, but "... to deny any serious content to Nkrumah's socialism and to attribute all he did to nationalism is to overstate the case".²⁷⁹ In Killick's view, Nkrumah's nationalism, socialism, and modernisation effort were a closely connected intellectual package. Therefore, he held, an analysis of the policies cannot gain from dealing with them separately.²⁸⁰

With regard to Rimmer's patronage arguments, which he had already made in earlier articles (1966; 1969), Killick held that, as corruption was evident under Nkrumah's rule, and as jobs

²⁷⁶Killick 1978: 42.

²⁷⁷Killick 1978: 34.

²⁷⁸Killick 1978: 41-42.

²⁷⁹Killick 1978: 40.

²⁸⁰Killick 1978: 39-41.

were created based on uneconomic criteria, patronage was part of the story, but “... major aspects of the policies ... simply do not fit Rimmer's framework. [Among other examples, the] big push, the intensity of the drive to industrialise, the shift away from infrastructural investments, the emphasis on the need to transform the colonial structure of the economy, the pan-African crusade are not factors which can easily be explained in terms of a desire to redistribute wealth in favour of those in power”.²⁸¹ To my knowledge, Killick's interpretation of Nkrumah's economic strategy is the most balanced one that has so far been published.

In addition to the debate about Nkrumah's economic policies, and the generalisations that were often derived from economic affairs, Western authors have also published influential biographical works on Nkrumah. Basil Davidson (2007 [1973]) argued that due to Nkrumah's long absence in America and England, he did not understand much of Ghanaian everyday-life when he returned. His vision called for a socialist revolution and a united Africa, but most of his fellow countrymen were advocates of gradualism. Davidson claimed that Nkrumah “... was a man of soaring vision more often than of calculating thought”.²⁸² According to Davidson, Nkrumah was more interested in Pan-Africanist summits than in domestic politics. In Davidson's view, Nkrumah “... made great things happen. But he was not ... a clever politician. In quite a large sense, he was not a politician at all”.²⁸³

Several aspects of this perspective are problematic. First of all, considering the numerous strategic battles which Nkrumah had to fight in order to prevail against opposition forces, Davidson's neglect of Nkrumah's political talents, especially in terms of domestic affairs, seems untenable. Even if we do not insinuate that the racial assumption of the “irrational African” is at the heart of Davidson's interpretation, it does not do justice to Nkrumah's tactical skilfulness at any rate. Furthermore, there is an apologetic component in Davidson's view: as a visionary, Nkrumah is credited for his achievements, but as he was not a strategic politician, he can hardly be held accountable for any problematic developments in Ghana, at least not in the sense of having *consciously* caused them.

Richard Rathbone (2000) opposes Davidson's view and claims that Nkrumah “... was a ruthless as well as a great politician”.²⁸⁴ Rathbone takes Nkrumah seriously, especially as a nationalist and as a moderniser. His main argument is that Nkrumah, based on his ambition to achieve national unity, attempted to dismantle chiefly power. The nationalism and

²⁸¹Killick 1978: 51-52.

²⁸²Davidson 2007 [1973]: 14-15.

²⁸³Davidson 2007 [1973]: 15.

²⁸⁴Rathbone 2000: ix.

modernisation effort went hand in hand. Strong chiefs implied regional dispersion, so Nkrumah had to attack them politically. But in Rathbone's view, this was also an assault on traditionalism, meaning the political fight against the chiefs demonstrates Nkrumah's ambitions both as a nationalist and as a moderniser.²⁸⁵

David Birmingham argues in a similar fashion. As the title of his book indicates, he considers Nkrumah *The Father of African Nationalism* (1998). He sees Nkrumah as the man who launched independence and democracy in sub-Saharan Africa. Birmingham also pays attention to Nkrumah's Pan-Africanist vision and his belief that African unity was the only way to fight colonialism, and later neo-colonialism. The strongest argument in Birmingham's book is that Nkrumah was inexperienced as a real politician when he returned to Ghana in 1947. Hence, from 1951, he first had to learn how to play the political game, or “the art of government”,²⁸⁶ similar to the other Ghanaian officials. According to Birmingham, Nkrumah and the CPP made many mistakes in this respect, but – contrary to Davidson – this does not lead him to conclude that Nkrumah was rather a visionary than a real politician.

Let me now turn to June Milne's writings. The reason why I discuss her last is not that I think she wrote the most convincing interpretation of Nkrumah's political and intellectual life – on the contrary. She did, however, put forward a view that, in substantial parts, matches the dominant outlook in Ghanaian interpretations of Nkrumah's writings and rule that were published recently on the occasion of Ghana's 50th birthday. Hence, her view is of crucial importance to the present thesis.

Within the group of major works on Nkrumah produced by scholars from the West, June Milne's writings constitute an outlier-position due to her personal connection with Nkrumah. Her books are a straight-forward continuation of Nkrumah's own views. Milne, who was born in 1920 in Australia, taught at the University of the Gold Coast from 1949 until 1952. Since 1957, she had worked closely together with Nkrumah as his research and editorial assistant. In 1968, Nkrumah instructed her to found Panaf Books in order to “... publish the new books he wrote during his time in Conakry, Guinea, and to keep his existing works in print”.²⁸⁷ By Nkrumah's will, Milne became his literary executrix after his death.²⁸⁸ Since then, she has produced four books on Nkrumah.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁵Rathbone 2000: 150-164.

²⁸⁶Birmingham 1998: 39.

²⁸⁷Milne 2000: v [indication of page missing].

²⁸⁸Milne 2000: v [indication of page missing].

²⁸⁹*Kwame Nkrumah* (1974), *Forward Ever* (1977), *Kwame Nkrumah: The Conakry Years: His Life and Letters*

In Milne's view, the bourgeois media has deliberately contributed to a distorted picture and an underestimation of Nkrumah and other African revolutionaries. Milne, through Panaf, wants to strive against this and make people realise and appreciate the great achievements of Nkrumah and other African revolutionaries.²⁹⁰ She expounded the quintessence of her interpretation of Nkrumah's life and rule exemplarily in *Forward Ever* (1977).

The main message is that Nkrumah's political activity should be remembered in an exclusively positive light – not because his achievements outweigh his more problematic decisions, but because he did *everything* right. She admitted that the CPP was not able to solve all of Ghana's problems, but the party certainly did not create any new ones. Nkrumah and the CPP laid the correct foundations, which, in Nkrumah's (and therefore also Milne's) opinion is even more remarkable if one considers the difficult state of Ghana at the eve of independence.²⁹¹

Milne portrayed Nkrumah as a hero who bravely and diligently removed countless obstacles in the way to personal success and national independence. The most interesting aspect of her view of Nkrumah's rule is how she accounts for the decline of personal freedom and similarly controversial political changes in Ghana after independence.²⁹² Not surprisingly, Milne considers Nkrumah's drastic measures completely justified. Her discussion of Ghana's political restructuring begins with a description of several plans and attempts to assassinate Nkrumah. As there was no doubt that the opposition was behind the attacks, and as “[b]y then some thirty innocent people had been killed in bomb-throwing incidents”²⁹³ (she does not indicate a specific date), Nkrumah had no chance but to “... stop newspapers from printing distorted and untruthful news items”²⁹⁴ so as to restore order. The Preventive Detention Act was a similarly necessary measure in Milne's view.

With respect to Ghana's transformation into a presidential republic, Milne claims that it expressed the will of the bulk of Ghanaians. Based on the CPP's victories in three general elections, she practically equates the party with the Ghanaian people. Correspondingly, in her view, saying that the CPP turned Ghana into a republic and voted Nkrumah president is tantamount to saying the Ghanaian people did it. Milne also states that “[i]n 1964, Ghanaians

(1990), and *Kwame Nkrumah: A Biography* (2000).

²⁹⁰Milne 1974: back side cover.

²⁹¹Milne 1977: 44-45.

²⁹²Milne's view regarding Ghana's political transformation after independence has not changed since the 1970s; see *Kwame Nkrumah: A Biography* (2000): 169-176.

²⁹³Milne 1977: 48.

²⁹⁴Milne 1977: 49.

voted to make the CPP the only party in Ghana”.²⁹⁵

Milne tries to make the reader believe that democracy never declined in Ghana during Nkrumah's rule. However, what is really at the core of her argument is her opinion that democracy was not suitable for Africa at that time. This becomes obvious when she claims that former colonies attempting to achieve rapid economic catch-up growth “... cannot allow small, selfish groups to stand in the way of measures designed to improve living standards for all the people”.²⁹⁶

With regard to the CPP's development policies, Milne argues that they were appropriate and successful in all areas, that is housing, health, education, industrialisation, and agriculture.²⁹⁷ Executing Nkrumah's will, Milne presents the Volta River Project as a major success for all of Africa.²⁹⁸ The dam was not only to provide sufficient electricity for Ghanaian homes and factories, but also for other African countries. In order to form the huge lake behind the dam, forced displacement of people was inevitable. But, in Milne's view, this did not bother people, as “... soon everyone settled down happily in the new villages”.²⁹⁹

The inauguration of the Volta River Project on 23 January 1966, then, provides the basis for Milne's argument that the February 1966 coup happened at a time when Ghana was just about to achieve economic independence.³⁰⁰ She disputes that the coup was generally welcomed in Ghana, and stresses that most Ghanaians were unarmed and hence defenceless against the putschists.³⁰¹ Quoting Nkrumah, whose writings constitute the major source of all of her three biographies about him,³⁰² Milne argues that the coup was committed by neo-colonial imperialists and their African helpers.³⁰³ She also claims that “[i]t is now generally accepted that the USA Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was involved in planning the coup”³⁰⁴, meaning the CIA financed it.

At times, Milne's apologetic interpretation of Nkrumah's actions dwindles into bizarreness – for example, she states that his motivation to have a zoo built in the grounds of his Accra office was his love of animals. She largely leaves out aspects of power-political calculus and prestige, or simply aspects of miscalculation, on the part of Nkrumah – obviously because this

²⁹⁵Milne 1977: 49.

²⁹⁶Milne 1977: 49.

²⁹⁷Milne 1977: 38-41.

²⁹⁸Compare Milne 1977: 41-42 for her view of the Volta River Project.

²⁹⁹Milne 1977: 42.

³⁰⁰Milne 1977: 52.

³⁰¹Milne 1977: 63.

³⁰²Milne 1974; Milne 1977; Milne 2000.

³⁰³Milne 1977: 56.

³⁰⁴Milne 2000: 182; see 177-188 for the coup in general.

would not fit her premise that Nkrumah was infallible.

As we will see in 3.3 and 3.4, several Ghanaian authors have published contributions to the Nkrumah controversy in which they put forward a view quite similar to Milne's. This, however, does by no means imply that Milne originated this view – instead, it goes back to the Nkrumahist worship of the first Ghanaian head of state during his actual rule. The following discussion and analysis of several Ghanaian publications on the Nkrumah controversy begins with authors who take up a completely different view.

3.2 *The post-NLC era, c. 1969-1975: Ghanaian liberals' expectations of the future and their condemnations of Nkrumah's rule*

The following three Ghanaian works to be discussed are T. Peter Omari's *Kwame Nkrumah: The Anatomy of an African Dictatorship* (1970), Albert Adu Boahen's *Ghana: Evolution and Change in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (1975, finished 1971/72), and John Kofi Fynn's *A Junior History of Ghana* (1975). These books were published in a period which I call the post-NLC era, lasting from late 1969 to circa 1975.

The National Liberation Council (NLC) was the military government that had succeeded Nkrumah in February 1966. Acting on its early promise to return to civilian rule quickly, it arranged a general election held in August 1969. One month later, the military rulers handed over power to a government under the leadership of Busia's new Progress Party, which had emerged in the election as the strongest political power. However, this liberal government only lasted until January 13, 1972, when it was overthrown in yet another military coup by General Ignatius Kutu Acheampong (1931-1979). Contrary to the military-police alliance that overthrew Nkrumah, Acheampong and his National Redemption Council (NRC; from October 1975: Supreme Military Council, SMC) had no intention to voluntarily return power to a civilian government. This time, military rule was here to stay.³⁰⁵

Initially, the post-NLC period was characterised by careful optimism. Especially those Ghanaians who supported the victorious Progress Party were looking forward to a better future in which democratic participation in politics would be secured – a future devoid of military rule and Nkrumahist authoritarianism. But in order to make sure that dictatorship and military coups would remain experiences of the past, Ghanaian historians felt it was necessary to remind the people of the evils of Nkrumah's rule. This is evident in Omari's (1970) and Boahen's (1975 [1971/72]) books.

³⁰⁵Boahen 1975: 222-240; Buah 1980: 194-202.

However, in January 1972, hopes for a democratic future were ruthlessly crushed, making the latest phase of the post-NLC period one of frustration and disappointment. Nevertheless, the hopes that had budded during Progress Party rule, and the personal experiences with the Nkrumah era, continued to have an effect on contemporary Ghanaian academics. Against the background of Acheampong's coup, Fynn (1975) was convinced that lessons of the past had not been learned – but the lessons he wanted to make understood were still informed by the same view on Ghana's recent past that also Omari and Boahen had put forward. The general outlook on what to make of Nkrumah's rule changed later, which will be discussed in 3.3 below.

All three books to be examined in the following were written by authors who had experienced Nkrumah's rule personally, but shared (or still share) the political ideology of the Danquah Busia tradition, that is political and economic liberalism. Due to their similar political orientation, their similar views on the Nkrumah period, and their partially similar careers I grouped them together and treat their works as constituents of an epoch. I attempt to give a fully comprehensive and convincing interpretation of their works by enriching the general contextualisation of the post-NLC era (the political context between circa 1969 and 1975) with biographical information on each author. I will proceed chronologically.

T. Peter Omari was born in 1930 in Mpraeso, Ghana. His father was a computer programmer and an educator,³⁰⁶ meaning Omari's family background was rooted in the educated Ghanaian elite. After he had studied and received a Ph.D. in the US, he returned to Ghana in 1956 and worked for the government as mass education officer in the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development in Accra. From 1958 to 1962, he was a lecturer at the University of Ghana in Legon near Accra, followed by the position of senior lecturer in sociology from 1962 to 1963. Subsequently, he remained scholarly active by, inter alia, editing and authoring most titles of a series of monographs on *Social Welfare Services in Africa* that was published by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). *Kwame Nkrumah: The Anatomy of an African Dictatorship* was published in 1970.

However, from 1963, Omari discontinued his academic teaching career and became head of the Social Development Section as well as social affairs officer at UNECA in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), a position which he occupied until 1969.³⁰⁷ From 1969 to 1971, Omari

³⁰⁶The biographical source does not contain information on the profession of Omari's mother (Contemporary Authors Online 2001).

³⁰⁷Doing my research for this thesis, I came to assume that Omari may have left Ghana in 1963 due to the

commanded a similar post at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. Since 1971, he worked again for UNECA as the Commission's Executive Secretary's special assistant. Furthermore, Omari was a consultant to development foundations and agencies. Nowadays he lives in Addis Ababa, where he holds an office as Executive Secretary at UNECA.³⁰⁸

Omari made it clear in 2000 that he had written *Anatomy* for the Ghanaian public.³⁰⁹ The book is "... dedicated to the memory of Dr. J. B. Danquah ...",³¹⁰ whom Omari considered important because he had opposed Nkrumah at a time when most others gave in to bribery and corruption. He credited Danquah for having "... tried on several occasions to have the Preventive Detention Act declared unconstitutional ...".³¹¹ In Omari's view, future leaders should draw inspiration from genuine figures like Danquah.³¹²

This takes us directly to Omari's main motivation for writing *Anatomy*: he wanted to contribute to building a better Ghana, which to him meant a more liberal and democratic Ghana. In his view, Nkrumah was guilty of dismantling democracy, personal freedom, and human rights in the country. Omari considered Nkrumah's authoritarian measures, like the Preventive Detention Act, unjustified and stressed the importance of liberal democracy throughout the entire book. Emphasising his liberal convictions, he held that "[i]t is impossible to build a decent society, and much less an honest political body, without a competent and free press".³¹³ He also highlighted the importance of freedom of speech and the rule of law.³¹⁴

Regarding his motivation for writing the book, Omari also argued that Nkrumah reflected the *Ghanaian personality* with all its good and bad aspects, and that the totalitarian tendencies in the later Nkrumah years might repeat themselves if Ghanaians were to allow the legend of a positive rule of Nkrumah to live on. Omari aimed at demonstrating that except for Nkrumah's belief in the need for African unity, there was nothing genuine or admirable about him – and even this ambition was linked to a more selfish goal, namely becoming the leader of the entire African continent. In order for Ghana to prosper, it had to change its national character, which,

dismissals that were associated with the country's socialist transformation, or because he was afraid to be affected by the Preventive Detention Act. Unfortunately, I was not able to find any evidence for or against this assumption. What seems to reflect Omari's own disappointment with the increasingly authoritarian government is his finding that after 1957, "[m]any of the intellectuals ... left the country" (Omari 2009 [1970]: 3).

³⁰⁸Contemporary Authors Online 2001.

³⁰⁹Omari 2009 [written in 2000]: IX.

³¹⁰Omari 2009 [1970]: XIII.

³¹¹Omari 2009 [1970]: 73.

³¹²Omari 2009 [1970]: 11.

³¹³Omari 2009 [1970]: 6.

³¹⁴Omari 2009 [1970]: 8.

in Omari's view, made a complete disillusionment concerning Nkrumah's rule and the dangers of patronage and corruption indispensable.³¹⁵

For this purpose, Omari attacked not only Nkrumah's politics, but his personality as a whole. One of Omari's crucial points is that Nkrumah was opportunistic. In his opinion, Nkrumah only became a politician because he realised that, for several reasons, he could not achieve greatness as an intellectual.³¹⁶ Most of all, Omari claimed that Nkrumah could only absorb the significance of ideas to which he could relate personally.³¹⁷ The author emphasised that Nkrumah had not received a Ph.D. degree during his overseas studies, and that the doctorate was conferred to him much later in 1951.³¹⁸ He portrayed Nkrumah as a chronic underachiever who became a megalomaniac after, by chance, he had become the leader of independent Ghana.³¹⁹ According to Omari, "... Nkrumah was psychologically unstable – a coward who sought to cover up his inadequacies with power and still more power".³²⁰ By and large, Omari held that Nkrumah was not really an intellectual, and that his main motivation was to win glory and prestige – no matter in which professional area, and no matter how.

The one area where, in Omari's view, Nkrumah was truly talented were politics: "Nkrumah was essentially a politician. As a politician he was shrewd, his timing was perfect, and his touch sure".³²¹ Within this field, drawing on how well Nkrumah had controlled the party machine, Omari considered organisation Nkrumah's greatest gift. However, this did not apply to the organisation of the national economy.³²² Even more so, Omari held that Nkrumah neglected domestic needs, for he was more interested in international affairs: "Nkrumah sacrificed Ghana on the altar of Pan-Africanism, and for his grandiose dreams of African leadership. Millions of dollars of Ghanaian money were squandered in the cause of Nkrumah's policy of non-alignment, and in pretentious and extravagant schemes and projects".³²³

To be sure, Omari was aware of potential objections to his negative view of Nkrumah's management of national affairs and listed several things which Nkrumah might be credited with. Among them were the Volta River Project, a road building programme, and the

³¹⁵Omari 2009 [1970]: chs. 1 and 6.

³¹⁶Omari 2009 [1970]: 135.

³¹⁷Omari 2009 [1970]: 140.

³¹⁸Omari 2009 [1970]: 141; see also Gocking 2005: 102.

³¹⁹Omari 2009 [1970]: 151.

³²⁰Omari 2009 [1970]: 6.

³²¹Omari 2009 [1970]: 144.

³²²Omari 2009 [1970]: 144-145.

³²³Omari 2009 [1970]: 2.

educational improvements, to name but a few.³²⁴ And yet, Omari attempted to scotch such objections by arguing that – given that Ghana had already been prosperous prior to Nkrumah's rule, and furthermore considering the country's resource abundance – Nkrumah actually achieved much less than he could have and should have.³²⁵

Worst of all, in Omari's view, was the spread of patronage and corruption under Nkrumah. Apart from the moral damage associated with corruption, it constituted a drain on Ghana's resources, as Nkrumah (and others) used public money for buying political support. According to Omari, there was a connection between Nkrumah's attitude towards corruption and his megalomania: like other successful independence leaders after him, Nkrumah thought that he alone had created modern Ghana, and that he owned “his” country.³²⁶

In this connection, Omari also argued that, even though “... the views expressed in his books were his own”,³²⁷ Nkrumah's words and actions were very different.³²⁸ He had “... built up a leviathan of political organization in his ... Party, which he financed out of deals with crooked 'capitalists' and industrialists, for whom he often publicly declared his contempt ...”.³²⁹

In a nutshell, Omari's view of Nkrumah is best summarised in a quote from Kofi Baako, a long-term political follower and minister of Nkrumah who, after the latter had been overthrown, had said at a press conference that “... Nkrumah was not a genuine leader but a fraud of the highest order”.³³⁰ In Omari's opinion, Nkrumah was not an intellectual, neither a socialist, nor a real nationalist – he was most of all an opportunist interested in power and prestige, and even his somehow genuine Pan-African ambitions were contaminated by his hunger for power.

There are several problematic aspects of Omari's interpretation to be identified. Most obviously, his book is highly suggestive. Many of the assertions on which his strongly negative view of Nkrumah relied were in fact based on speculation. It is one thing to derive from Nkrumah's actions a certain instinct for power; it is quite another thing to claim to know about his concrete dreams, hopes, expectations and so on.

But there is also a methodological problem. The “evidence” Omari provided for his attack on Nkrumah's personality is mainly made up of statements of former high-ranking CPP members. However, as Omari actually noted himself, these former political followers of Nkrumah “...

³²⁴Omari 2009 [1970]: 13.

³²⁵Omari 2009 [1970]: 1, 6, 148.

³²⁶Omari 2009 [1970]: 148, 153.

³²⁷Omari 2009 [1970]: 142.

³²⁸Omari 2009 [1970]: 150.

³²⁹Omari 2009 [1970]: 3.

³³⁰Baako 1966, cited in Omari 2009 [1970]: 6-7.

chose to deny him as soon as he was overthrown ...”.³³¹ For example, using Kofi Baako's post-coup accusation against Nkrumah as a reliable source seems rather dubious if we consider that a former CPP minister had a vital interest in disassociating himself from Nkrumah after his overthrow. Similarly, Nkrumah's “... closest adviser on African affairs, Dei-Anang, also realized immediately after the coup, apparently, that Nkrumah had all along been ... a 'political incubus'. Yet Dei-Anang himself had helped to enunciate such policy ...”.³³² It seems clear that many sources that Omari “relied” on were in fact trying to save their skin after political tides had turned. Omari himself was obviously aware of this, but convincing the Ghanaian people of Nkrumah's bad character seems to have been more important to him than methodological correctness. Pursuing an agenda, he seems to have been convinced that the ends justify the means.

The most problematic aspect of the *Anatomy*, at least at first sight, is Omari's conception of the Ghanaian personality, as it amounts to an almost racist, at least culturally essentialist view. According to Omari, Nkrumah “... knew the weaknesses of his fellow countrymen – the Ghanaian love of exhibitionism, position and money – and skilfully exploited them”.³³³ Furthermore, he held that “Ghanaians are by nature too loath to criticise others openly ...”,³³⁴ and that Nkrumah reflected all the good and bad aspects of the Ghanaian personality.³³⁵ Clearly, this constitutes a highly simplistic and homogenising way of looking at Ghanaian political culture. Even though Omari held that human nature and the national character are capable of development,³³⁶ meaning that there was hope for Ghana, it seems clear that his view of culture is too reductionist to possess much analytical power.

However, an academically flawless analysis was not what Omari was primarily after. It is not clear whether he actually believed in the existence of a common Ghanaian personality or not. To be sure, in an article on *Changing Attitudes of Students in West African Society toward Marriage and Family Relationships* (1960), he had equated Ghanaian and West African society, and expressed a rather simplistic view that relied on binaries (the modern West vs. traditional Africa) as well. But nevertheless, he discussed nuances, variations, and transformations with too much care and attention to detail as to fall for the idea of a Ghanaian personality some years later. In 1960, he had written that “[w]hat people *think* they should

³³¹Omari 2009 [1970]: 154.

³³²Omari 2009 [1970]: 7.

³³³Omari 2009 [1970]: 151.

³³⁴Omari 2009 [1970]: 11.

³³⁵Omari 2009 [1970]: 154.

³³⁶Omari 2009 [1970]: 154.

believe is, of course, ... sociologically significant”.³³⁷ In contrast, his assertion in 1970 that “Ghanaians are by *nature* too loath to criticise others openly ...”³³⁸ does not live up to what we would expect from a former senior lecturer in sociology. Thus, it seems to me that Omari's focus on the Ghanaian personality in the *Anatomy* was an attempt to make the book accessible to the public.

But the intention runs even deeper. In the appendices, Omari included a speech on Nkrumahism, given by Kofi Baako in 1962, in which Baako had put forward the view that a national constitution with strong powers for one leader served the needs of the Ghanaian mind, as Ghanaians “... believe that they must always have a leader, or a chief ...”.³³⁹ This demonstrates that Omari was convinced that the Nkrumah administration had played the *national character card* in an attempt to justify its authoritarian policies.

This, then, is the background against which we should read Omari's claims that “[w]hat happened in Ghana under Nkrumah cannot be attributed wholly to the doings of one man alone”,³⁴⁰ “[b]esides corrupt politicians, there were also (...) [others who] succumbed to bribery and corruption themselves, or failed to act against it”.³⁴¹ In Omari's view, Nkrumah was an evil genius who nevertheless, “... given a more sophisticated and demanding citizenry, could have been contained more successfully than was the case”.³⁴² Thus, it seems to me that making the “negative” aspects of an alleged Ghanaian personality a key subject of discussion was most of all Omari's way of trying to implement liberal ideas in Ghanaian society. He aimed at stimulating a stronger awareness and appreciation of liberal-democratic principles like individual freedom and respect for the rule of law.

When Omari finished writing the *Anatomy* in October 1969,³⁴³ the National Liberation Council (NLC) – that is the military government that had succeeded Nkrumah – had just returned power to a civilian government one month earlier, following elections in August 1969 from which Busia had emerged as prime minister.³⁴⁴ At that time, Busia led the Progress Party, which was the ideological successor of the United Party, Ghana Congress Party, and UGCC tradition (see chapter two of this thesis). In late 1969, Omari hoped that the administration of Ghana's second republic, whose political ideology matched his own, would

³³⁷Omari 1960: 199 (my emphasis).

³³⁸Omari 2009 [1970]: 11 (my emphasis).

³³⁹Baako 1962, cited in Omari 2009 [1970]: 191.

³⁴⁰Omari 2009 [1970]: 4.

³⁴¹Omari 2009 [1970]: 5.

³⁴²Omari 2009 [1970]: 8.

³⁴³Omari 2009 [1970]: 177.

³⁴⁴In Ghana's second republic, actual power was held by the prime minister, not the president. The latter played a rather ceremonial role (Buah 1980: 197).

work. He wanted to avoid a second fall into authoritarianism, and for this purpose he appealed to the Ghanaian people not to be deceived by demagogues like Nkrumah again, and not to give in to the temptations of bribery, and also not to tolerate corrupt leaders. In my view, Omari resorted to the concept of the Ghanaian personality in order to make his point accessible to the common people who would not have been able to relate to an academic book about political discourse.

Let me now discuss another author who also interpreted Nkrumah's political life, especially from mid-1960, in a strongly negative light. Examining this historian's own political career is crucial if we want to make sense of his writings.

Albert Adu Boahen was born in 1932 in Osiem, Ghana. After he had attended the prestigious Mfantipim secondary school, Boahen was further educated at the University of Ghana (at that time: the University College of the Gold Coast), from which he received a B.A. (honours) degree in History in 1956, and at the London University School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), which awarded him a Ph.D. in African History in 1959. That year, in October, he returned to Ghana and became a lecturer at the University of Ghana, where he rose to the rank of professor of History in 1971. *Ghana: Evolution and Change in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* was published in 1975. Boahen had finished writing this book, which includes his negative view of Nkrumah that I will discuss below in more detail, in late December 1971 – about two weeks before Ignatius Kutu Acheampong (1931-1979) was to seize power in a military coup against prime minister Busia from the Progress Party (see above), which had been successful in the afore-mentioned August 1969 elections. Boahen was a member of the Progress Party.

Until he became professor emeritus in 1990, he worked as visiting professor at several universities, many of which are located in the USA. Additionally, Boahen was responsible for numerous administrative tasks, and he was a member in several learned societies and associations. Furthermore, he was part of the editorial board of a number of reputable journals on African History and African Studies. Academically, he is perhaps best known for refuting Eurocentric perspectives on African History by demonstrating the political, social, and economic dynamism of pre-colonial African societies.

Apart from his academic career, Boahen was also a political activist. Ideologically, he identified with nationalism, liberal democracy, individual freedom, and the market economy with a focus on private enterprise. In 1978, Boahen participated in founding the (first) People's Movement for Freedom and Justice (PMFJ) that aimed at ending Acheampong's

military dictatorship and returning to constitutional rule and multi-party democracy. In 1979, Boahen disassociated himself from the Progress Party's successor, the Popular Front Party (PFP),³⁴⁵ and helped in the founding of another liberal party, the United National Convention (UNC), which in the same year stood for election after the junta under Jerry John Rawlings (born 1947), who had seized power in a military coup in June 1979, had agreed to elections.³⁴⁶ These, however, were mainly won by Hilla Limann (1934-1998) and the People's National Party (PNP), the ideological successor party of Nkrumah's CPP.³⁴⁷

Boahen's continued political activism in the 1980s needs to be understood not so much in relation to the PNP's victory as to Rawlings' second successful coup which was executed in December 1981 and ended the *third republic* under Limann. Not surprisingly, Boahen was opposed to Rawlings' military regime. In February 1988, he delivered the public J. B. Danquah Memorial Lectures that have been said to have significantly contributed to breaking the *culture of silence* under Rawlings by publicly criticising military rule. Subsequently, Boahen was monitored by government agents.

In 1990, Boahen co-founded the (second) Movement for Freedom and Justice (MFJ) of which he became the interim president. The aims were the same as those of the first (P)MFJ, only this time the name of the dictator was Rawlings, not Acheampong. Boahen also became a founding member of the Danquah Busia Club early in 1991, which was transformed into the New Patriotic Party (NPP) in 1992 so as to be able to participate in the presidential election that was to take place that year. The NPP aimed at uniting all members of the liberal tradition à la Busia and Danquah. In the December 1992 election, Boahen was the NPP's presidential candidate, but he lost to Rawlings. Boahen was not nominated a second time.

Following hospitalisation as a consequence of a stroke in 2001/2002 (dates vary), Boahen died in Accra in 2006.³⁴⁸

The main agenda in his book *Ghana: Evolution and Change in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (1975) is in fact comparable to Omari's. Demonstrating his nationalist sentiments, Boahen directly addressed Ghanaians and intended to recall the dangers of Nkrumah's socialist authoritarianism. He justified the military-police coup in which Nkrumah was overthrown by arguing that it was the only alternative to assassinating the dictator. Boahen attempted to convince his audience of the importance of liberal-democratic values, and he

³⁴⁵For the PFP, compare Buah 1980: 204.

³⁴⁶The leadership dispute inside the first Rawlings junta, as well as the fact that there had been an earlier unsuccessful coup by Rawlings, do not have to be discussed in detail here.

³⁴⁷This election outcome will play a more central role in my subsequent discussion of Francis K. Buah's work.

³⁴⁸For the entire information provided in this biographical overview, see Agyeman-Duah 2006; Akurang-Parry 2006; Contemporary Authors Online 2008; Fordwor 2006; Gocking 2005: 207-212, 287.

clearly welcomed the 1969 election victory of Busia's Progress Party. By the time Boahen finished the book under review, he hoped that Ghana would continue its journey towards a bright future under liberal leadership. Let me now turn to his particular interpretation of Nkrumah's rule.

According to Boahen, at independence “Ghanaians ... looked forward to an era of economic prosperity, full employment, social justice and individual liberty”.³⁴⁹ He began his chapter on *Ghana under Kwame Nkrumah* with these expectations in order to demonstrate later on that they were crushed. In Boahen's view, Ghanaians' expectations around 1957 were reasonable, as their country had large sums of foreign reserves, moderate foreign debt, and the international cocoa price was favourable.³⁵⁰ Thus, similar to Omari, Boahen made the point that Ghana's economic decline was not inevitable – it was due to Nkrumah.

Boahen distinguished two periods of Nkrumah's rule: in the first period, that is between March 1957 and July 1960, Nkrumah's policies had been informed by Western democracy, free trade, and capitalism. In the second period, from roughly July 1960, when the Republican constitution was adopted and the Congo crisis broke out, Nkrumah shifted towards African socialism, economic control, and state-owned means of production.³⁵¹

According to Boahen, in the first period “Nkrumah's internal political activities were governed by the conditions of the day and were aimed primarily at strengthening his own positions as well as that of his government”.³⁵² Outside Southern Ghana, the CPP was actually weak. When the Ga Standfast Association formed in Accra in 1957 and allied with other opposition groups, the CPP felt surrounded. Boahen argued that the authoritarian measures introduced by Nkrumah in the first period – for example, the Deportation Act, the Avoidance of Discrimination Act, the separation of the Ashanti region, and the Preventive Detention Act³⁵³ – should be viewed against this background.³⁵⁴

In consequence of this contextualisation, Boahen put forward a rather balanced view regarding the Preventive Detention Act. He criticised that, like the preceding Acts, it was intended “... to cripple the opposition”,³⁵⁵ but he also conceded that there were reports around in mid-1958 based on which the government had reason to be afraid of subversive activities (see 2.4). Boahen made it clear that in his view, the authoritarian measures of Nkrumah killed

³⁴⁹Boahen 1975: 191.

³⁵⁰Boahen 1975: 191-192.

³⁵¹Boahen 1975: 192.

³⁵²Boahen 1975: 192.

³⁵³See 2.4 for a detailed examination of these Acts and their effects.

³⁵⁴Boahen 1975: 192-193.

³⁵⁵Boahen 1975: 194.

the opposition (the United Party under Busia), meaning it also killed parliamentary democracy, and “... a feeling of fear and insecurity began to grow in the country”.³⁵⁶ Nevertheless, he held that due to the establishment of order and stability in combination with the CPP's restrained application of the Preventive Detention Act, the first period of Nkrumah's rule in terms of internal political activities was in fact beneficial to Ghana.³⁵⁷ As will become more clear below, this indulgent view of Nkrumah's first period also served the purpose to cast an even darker shadow on the second, socialist period.

Boahen held that Nkrumah's most remarkable achievements in the first period were in the social field, especially in education, health, and social services. He took Nkrumah seriously as a Pan-Africanist who aimed both at the complete liberation of Africa from colonial rule, and at the political unification of the continent's independent states. In this connection, Boahen highlighted the numerous practical steps Nkrumah took towards achieving these aims.³⁵⁸ Concerning Nkrumah's policies towards the rest of the world, Boahen thought that they were mainly informed by the principles of world peace and non-alignment, which in practical terms, however, turned out to be a rather Western-friendly strategy.³⁵⁹

With regard to Nkrumah's economic policies during the first period, Boahen also gave a rather sympathetic summary, even though he conceded that Nkrumah's liberal strategy was not capable of breaking Ghana's economic domination by foreign firms. Drawing on Nkrumah's 1945 pamphlet *Towards Colonial Freedom* (see 2.3), Boahen argued that Nkrumah had been a true socialist since the beginning of his political career. But, Boahen continued, Nkrumah was also influenced by Arthur Lewis and believed that Ghana could only industrialise with the help of foreign investment. This was especially so regarding the Volta River Project, and attempting to attract foreign capital for this project was, in Boahen's view, Nkrumah's main motivation for maintaining and even intensifying liberal economic policies within the first three years of independence. This strategy, Boahen found, led to a success regarding the financing of the Volta River Project, but on the whole, there was no real economic development, only growth. Furthermore, there was more capital floating out of Ghana than into it, which, in combination with falling international cocoa prices, led to a reduction of foreign reserves.³⁶⁰ Interestingly, Boahen held “... that, sooner or later, such an economic

³⁵⁶Boahen 1975: 195.

³⁵⁷Boahen 1975: 193-196.

³⁵⁸These steps have been discussed in sub-chapter 2.4 of the present thesis.

³⁵⁹Boahen 1975: 200-205.

³⁶⁰Boahen 1975: 196-200.

policy would have to be altered or abandoned”.³⁶¹ This important insight, however, was swept under the carpet in his subsequent account of Nkrumah's second period.

In sum, Boahen credited Nkrumah with great achievements in the first period both internally and externally, but also emphasised “... a growing feeling of fear coupled with disturbing signs of dictatorship and arbitrary use of power ...”³⁶² in Ghana. In Boahen's opinion, Ghana would have been better off if Nkrumah's rule had ended in mid-1960.³⁶³

Emphasising that around six years later, Nkrumah's overthrow was welcomed enthusiastically in Ghana even among CPP ministers and members, Boahen argued that something must have changed during the second period of Nkrumah's rule. In Boahen's view, there were three main reasons for the coup and its popularity: 1) the methods and principles adopted during the second period were different from those of the first period; 2) Nkrumah's character and personality changed; 3) Nkrumah's activities in the second period in the political, social, and economic fields had disastrous outcomes.³⁶⁴

Let us recall Boahen's political-ideological stance. By the time he wrote the account of Nkrumah's rule under review, Boahen was already a strong supporter of Busia's liberal Progress Party, meaning he certainly was not sympathetic to socialist policies. Boahen's account of what he considered Nkrumah's disastrous failures in the second period of CPP rule should be read against this background.

In terms of Nkrumah's second period, Boahen held that one crucial difference as compared to the first period was Nkrumah's actual implementation of socialism from 1960 onwards.³⁶⁵ It has already been mentioned that in Boahen's view, Nkrumah had been a true socialist since at least 1945 – a view which is in line with my own findings regarding Nkrumah's political philosophy discussed in 2.3. Concerning reasons for Nkrumah's policy change since 1960, Boahen mainly argued that this change was now possible, as foreign capital for the Volta River Project had been secured. Furthermore, Ghana's economic demise and Lumumba's murder, which Nkrumah attributed to neo-colonial forces, “... served to reinforce Nkrumah's belief in socialism and African unity ...”³⁶⁶

This view largely corresponds to the one that I put forward in 2.4, with the exception that Boahen de-emphasised the necessity to “close” the economy – even though he had hinted this necessity earlier himself (see above). In his account of Nkrumah's second period, Boahen

³⁶¹Boahen 1975: 200.

³⁶²Boahen 1975: 205.

³⁶³Boahen 1975: 205.

³⁶⁴Boahen 1975: 206.

³⁶⁵Boahen 1975: 206.

³⁶⁶Boahen 1975: 208.

presented the introduction of measures like import restrictions as a question of ideology, not necessity, which corresponds to Boahen's ideological opposition to socialism. Assuming that Nkrumah both wanted to and had to close Ghana's economy at around 1960 seems more convincing to me. I will return to this issue below in my discussion of Boahen's view regarding the rather liberal policies of the NLC.

Even though Boahen aimed at demonstrating that the introduction of socialism was wrong in general, which will become more clear in the following, he proceeded more subtle. Discussing the three reasons for the coup and its popularity mentioned above, he argued first that Nkrumah made a tactical mistake when he introduced socialism, for only a minority within the CPP supported this shift. As a consequence, Nkrumah had a hard time maintaining party unity.³⁶⁷

Second, as a sort of interlude, Boahen claimed that Nkrumah's character and personality actually changed after 1960. Throughout the 1950s, Nkrumah had been accepted as morally upright, whereas from 1960 onwards, he became obsessed with ambition and power, and with a personality cult revolving around him, bearing witness to his megalomania. Worst of all, "... he became superstitious, corrupt and immoral".³⁶⁸ In Boahen's view, Nkrumah became increasingly convinced that he owned both the CPP and Ghana. Similar to Omari, Boahen based this view on assertions of former political followers of Nkrumah, meaning the same criticism that I raised regarding Omari's methodology applies to Boahen's as well.³⁶⁹

Third, Boahen held that "[t]he most important reason for Nkrumah's overthrow ... was the disastrous outcome of his activities in the economic, social and political fields between 1960 and 1966".³⁷⁰ Not surprisingly, in the political field, Boahen attacked especially the Republican constitution and the rigged plebiscite which its introduction was based on. He emphasised that this constitution turned Nkrumah into a legal dictator, and he drew attention to a growing atmosphere of insecurity that went along with the arbitrary dismissal of public servants and a more frequent use of the Preventive Detention Act. Boahen drew a direct connection between Nkrumah's socialist principles and his decision to turn Ghana into a one-party state. In Boahen's view, especially after elections had been cancelled in 1965 and Nkrumah had simply announced the composition of the new parliament via the radio, these authoritarian changes left the Ghanaian people with only two possibilities – either to assassinate Nkrumah (which had been tried unsuccessfully several times), or to remove him

³⁶⁷Boahen 1975: 207.

³⁶⁸Boahen 1975: 209.

³⁶⁹Boahen 1975: 209-210.

³⁷⁰Boahen 1975: 210.

by a coup d'etat.³⁷¹

The strongest changes after 1960 which Boahen identified were the economic ones, marked “... by active state control of and participation in all sectors of the economy and ... by a strong emphasis on industrialisation”.³⁷² In more detail, Boahen stressed “... a new system of purchase tax, a compulsory savings scheme of 5 per cent deducted from wages and incomes over £120 per annum, a complicated system of exchange control and an import licensing system”.³⁷³ He criticised that the state sector received most development assistance, and that mining, banking, and many other economic activities were brought under state control.³⁷⁴

Boahen conceded that there had been notable successes in the economic field – the control of Ghana's economy by foreign capitalists had been broken, and the Volta River Project had been completed by 1965. However, in Boahen's view, the negative effects of Nkrumah's socialism outweighed the positive ones. This constitutes the weakest part of his assessment of Nkrumah's rule, as Boahen de-emphasised one crucially important aspect in order to make an anti-socialist interpretation of Nkrumah's economic policies work.

Undoubtedly, many state owned enterprises and farms worked inefficiently and were incorporated into a patronage machinery. Boahen was also correct to point out that Ghana's foreign exchange reserves were rapidly declining, and there is no doubt that, given the deterioration of international cocoa prices, there was too much money being spent on the attempt to industrialise quickly. Eventually, all this led to disastrous food shortages.³⁷⁵ Yet, in my view, there is one aspect that received insufficient attention in Boahen's story: a liberal government would have been just as helpless in a situation in which the price for Ghana's main source of income, cocoa, was falling significantly.

Boahen cannot be criticised for pointing out Nkrumah's failure to react to this situation adequately. But the fact that when Boahen discussed the economic disaster of the 1960s on four pages, he only mentioned deteriorating cocoa prices in one embedded sentence, seems suspicious – especially when we take a further look at his account of the subsequent rule of the National Liberation Council. Boahen celebrated the NLC's liberalism, which, in his view, turned the atmosphere of insecurity into one of security and saved Ghana's economy from total collapse by, for example, lifting import restrictions and turning to the West for financial help. When it came to negative effects of NLC rule, Boahen was more indulgent than in the

³⁷¹Boahen 1975: 210-212.

³⁷²Boahen 1975: 212.

³⁷³Boahen 1975: 213.

³⁷⁴Boahen 1975: 213-214.

³⁷⁵Boahen 1975: 214-217.

case of the CPP. He conceded that there was a “... negative outcome of *some* of the economic policies of the NLC”,³⁷⁶ like increasing unemployment and rising prices of imports. However, even though he attributed the economic problems of Nkrumah's second period almost entirely to socialism, the problematic aspects of the NLC's policies did not signify to Boahen that liberalism was no panacea to Ghana's economic weaknesses either. Instead, he held that they demonstrated that the military government was not capable of dealing with complex political issues. This, of course, signalled the importance to return to civilian rule as quickly as possible.³⁷⁷

In general, it seems to me that Boahen paid insufficient attention to the overall negative trend of international prices for raw materials in order to be able to better attack Nkrumah's radical left-wing policies. Boahen's clear distinction between a positive, liberal, and Western-oriented period as compared to a negative, socialist, and Eastern-oriented period substantiates my suspicion. Against the background that Boahen was an active supporter of Busia's Progress Party by the time he wrote *Ghana: Evolution and Change in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, I expected him to be strongly biased, and I was not disappointed. The author's bias is also evident in his characterisation of Busia, whom he described as “[s]incere, honest, dedicated ...”.³⁷⁸ Furthermore, in an attempt to explain the Progress Party's election victory in 1969, Boahen argued that it was partly due to the better qualifications and education of the Progress Party candidates.³⁷⁹

Further criticism needs to be raised. In Boahen's view, Ghana's independence “... was primarily the work of two political parties ...”,³⁸⁰ that is the UGCC and the CPP. To Boahen, the difference between the (initial) CPP and the UGCC was a generational one, not an ideological one.³⁸¹ Given the crucial differences between the UGCC and the CPP in terms of when and how to achieve independence, and in terms of class affiliation of the respective members (see 2.3), this attempt to neglect ideological differences between a conservative and a more radical party seems unconvincing. Furthermore, it is doubtful that Ghana would have achieved independence as early as 1957 if the more moderate UGCC had prevailed.

The importance of class differences between the UGCC and the CPP has in fact been pointed out by Boahen himself. In his view, “[t]he general election of 1951 (...) marks the shift in the political balance of power from the traditional aristocracy and the upper elite of professional

³⁷⁶Boahen 1975: 234 (my emphasis).

³⁷⁷Boahen 1975: chapter 22.

³⁷⁸Boahen 1975: 236.

³⁷⁹Boahen 1975: 239.

³⁸⁰Boahen 1975: 155.

³⁸¹Boahen 1975: 170.

men and the intellectuals to the lower middle class and the common people".³⁸² As Boahen strongly opposed Nkrumah and situated himself in the Danquah Busia tradition, this implies that he would have preferred a continuation of elite politics. Additionally, this suggests that Boahen's equation of the UGCC and the CPP regarding their role in the struggle for independence was most of all an attempt to reap credit for the liberal conservatives that is actually due to the more radical commoners that were active in the CYO, and then in the CPP. To be sure, Boahen's book is an outstanding piece of work that contains an immense amount of facts and will remain a standard reference for Ghanaian history. Yet, Boahen's explanatory framework and periodisation regarding Nkrumah's rule are heavily influenced by his political-ideological affiliation with liberalism, and by his personal background in the Ghanaian academic elite.

A third author who wrote within the liberal paradigm that dominated post-coup, post-NLC Ghanaian academic publications was John Kofi Fynn. Fynn was born on September 21, 1935 in the Abura Dunkwa traditional area, Ghana. Like Boahen, Fynn attended the well-known Mfantipim secondary school and subsequently, from 1957 to 1961, studied History at the University of Ghana. Based on external degree arrangements, he received his B.A. degree from the University of London, with high honours. In 1961, Fynn started to work on a Ph.D. on African History at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London which he completed successfully in 1964. After that, he returned to his country of origin in October 1964 and from then on filled numerous academic positions at the University of Ghana, including an appointment as associate professor in African Studies and History. In 1989, Fynn became a full professor of History. Apart from lecturing, he also filled several administrative positions related to his academic career, served on editorial boards, and was a member in historical associations.

Again similar to Boahen, Fynn was a supporter of Busia's Progress Party. In fact, Fynn started a career as an active Progress Party politician as a member of parliament for the Abura constituency. After this first step into politics, the Busia government appointed Fynn to become the deputy minister for Local Government Administration, a position which Fynn held from November 1969 until January 1971. From January 1971 onwards, he served as deputy minister of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports until the Busia government was overthrown by Acheampong on January 13, 1972.

³⁸²Boahen 1975: 172.

In 1985, Fynn returned to politics. Building on his family background in the royal house of the traditional Abura Dunkwa area, Fynn became enstooled and officially recognised by the Ghanaian government as a chief of the Abura area. As the *Nifahene*, he led the traditional right wing of the region.³⁸³ Thus, we can establish that Fynn was a highly active member of Ghana's traditional, political, and academic elite. Especially his party political career suggests an ideological affiliation with political and economic liberalism.

Fynn also remained academically active until his death. He died in Accra on August 25, 2005, leaving at least one major project on African History unfinished.

Fynn's book under review in the present thesis, *A Junior History of Ghana*, was published in 1975 and has served as a text book in Ghanaian schools. Thus, it is not surprising that Fynn directly addressed his audience, writing "... about the history of *our* country which *we* call Ghana".³⁸⁴ The remarkable thing about the *Junior History* is that it constitutes a strongly elite-centred and elite-friendly account of the Ghanaian anti-colonial struggle and of the Nkrumah era.

After discussing the necessity to end colonial rule, as it had affected Africans adversely, Fynn credited educated Africans for resisting Europeanisation and insisting on the importance of African culture. He also emphasised that it was educated Ghanaians who agitated successfully for a new constitution that came into effect in 1946 (the Burns Constitution). Fynn described Danquah as a "... great Ghanaian philosopher, lawyer, historian and politician ...",³⁸⁵ and he indirectly drew attention to the different academic achievements of *Dr* Danquah and *Mr* Nkrumah.

Nevertheless, Fynn was anxious to remain impartial in his explanation of why Nkrumah broke away from the UGCC. He held that Nkrumah "... felt that it would take too long for the U.G.C.C. to achieve self-government",³⁸⁶ whereupon the latter and some followers organised the CPP with the aim of Self-Government Now. As this idea appealed to the majority of Ghanaians, the CPP won the 1951 election.³⁸⁷

But even though Fynn avoided strong definite statements, the elements he chose to include in his account of CPP rule reveal his critical stance towards Nkrumah. For example, he wrote that after the 1954 election, "... it was clear that there was going to be trouble in the country. Some people began to suspect that Kwame Nkrumah wanted to be a dictator, a person who

³⁸³For the entire biographical information on Fynn, see Assensoh and Alex-Assensoh [release date unknown].

³⁸⁴Fynn 1975: 1 (my emphasis).

³⁸⁵Fynn 1975: 82.

³⁸⁶Fynn 1975: 82.

³⁸⁷Fynn 1975: 82-83.

rules without taking opinion and advice from Parliament or the people”.³⁸⁸ Keeping in mind that Fynn wrote this during the time of Acheampong's military rule, this can also be read as an indirect critique of the political status quo in 1975.

Fynn went on to mention potential corruption of CPP leaders, and to inform his readers about Ghanaian cocoa farmers' discontent regarding their payment received by the government. He justified the NLM's federalist ambitions by pointing to Danquah's and Busia's belief that a federal constitution was the only way how the CPP's hold on the Ghanaian people could be broken. But, in his attempt to present a balanced view on recent Ghanaian history, Fynn also mentioned violence on the part of both the CPP and the NLM, and he even included the British government's reluctance to grant independence in the face of the NLM's demands for federalism.³⁸⁹

Similar to the other liberal authors reviewed in this thesis, Fynn criticised that after the introduction of the one-party system in 1964, there was no more parliamentary opposition in the country. In Fynn's view, “Ghana was the C.P.P. and the C.P.P. was Ghana”.³⁹⁰ Regarding Nkrumah's goal of immediate African unity, Fynn argued in favour of the position of the Brazzaville/Monrovia group, which, according to him, “... recognised that because Africa was very big and the peoples within it very different, it was not easy to set up African continental government without long and careful preparation ...”.³⁹¹ Nevertheless, he also criticised the OAU for having failed to achieve African unity and liberation.³⁹²

Fynn praised the CPP for implementing several important development projects, most notably the Volta River Project, but he was quick to point out that “... the army and the police of Ghana overthrew the Nkrumah government with the full backing of the people”.³⁹³ The former deputy minister of the liberal Busia government gave six reasons for the coup and its popularity: 1) corruption; 2) rising living costs due to corruption and misuse of public money; 3) Nkrumah's neglect of rural areas; 4) in a situation of rising living costs, Ghanaians did not approve of the large sums Nkrumah spent on African freedom fighters; 5) Nkrumah's dictatorial way of ruling, especially the Preventive Detention Act and the abolishment of the freedom of the press; 6) Nkrumah supported communist nations and abused Western countries when he called them imperialists and neo-colonialists. Similar to Boahen, Fynn held that initially, Nkrumah was a great and inspiring leader, but later on abused his powers so severely

³⁸⁸Fynn 1975: 83.

³⁸⁹Fynn 1975: 83.

³⁹⁰Fynn 1975: 84.

³⁹¹Fynn 1975: 85.

³⁹²Fynn 1975: 86.

³⁹³Fynn 1975: 87.

that only a coup d'etat could restore basic rights and justice.³⁹⁴

Not surprisingly, Fynn presented the subsequent electoral success of the Progress Party in a positive light, and it is easy to read between the lines that he did not approve of the view of Acheampong's military government when he wrote that “[t]he reasons given for the overthrow of the Busia regime were corruption, unjust dismissal of civil servants, interference with the Judiciary, the Press and the Unions ...”³⁹⁵ and economic mismanagement. Discussing lessons for the future, Fynn emphasised that “[f]uture politicians will have to show more respect for the views of the electorate”.³⁹⁶

Thus, apart from a critique of Nkrumah's authoritarian policies, Fynn's book also constitutes an attempt to contribute to a return to parliamentary democracy at a time when Ghana suffered through the long-lasting rule of a military government that, contrary to the one that overthrew Nkrumah, did not intend to hand over power to civilians voluntarily. It is this experience of long-term military rule that leads over to Francis K. Buah's interpretation of Nkrumah's rule that was published in 1980. The view he put forward can best be described as a paradigm shift regarding the institutionalised memorisation of the Nkrumah period. Even though Buah's positive view of Nkrumah was not new by itself, its presence in a major Ghanaian publication on Nkrumah was a novel phenomenon indeed. The main question is how to account for this change.

3.3 The PNP interlude, 1979-1981: the election victory of the Nkrumahists and the rehabilitation of Nkrumah

In July 1978, Acheampong was overthrown in a counter-coup, which led to the short rule of Lieutenant General Frederick William Kwasi Akuffo (1937-1979). In another military coup in June 1979, Akuffo was overthrown and succeeded by Rawlings. The latter soon agreed to elections which, as has already been mentioned, were mainly won by Limann's People's National Party (PNP), the ideological successor of the CPP. But Limann's civilian rule did not last long: after the PNP had formed the government in September 1979, Rawlings staged yet another coup in December 1981 and was to rule Ghana as a military dictator until January 1993.³⁹⁷

Francis K. Buah's book *A History of Ghana* (1980) was written and published during the short

³⁹⁴Fynn 1975: 88-89.

³⁹⁵Fynn 1975: 90.

³⁹⁶Fynn 1975: 91.

³⁹⁷Buah 1980: 202-207; Gocking 2005: 178-217.

period of PNP rule which was characterised by the hope that military dictatorship was overcome, and by the desire that Ghana would now embark on a journey towards a better and freer future. Thus, the immediate situation in which Buah wrote his interpretation of recent Ghanaian history is, in general, comparable to the situation in which Omari's and Boahen's works were written – the obvious difference being that in 1980, a leftist pro-Nkrumah party had won the election.

However, the different political stance of the incumbents (as compared to that of the liberal anti-Nkrumah administration of 1969-1972) is not a sufficient explanation for the highly positive view of Nkrumah which Buah put forward in his version of Ghanaian history. The crucial difference between 1970 and 1980 is the additional experience of almost a decade of military rule. It remains uncertain whether it was this experience that prompted Buah to author a major rehabilitation of Nkrumah, or if he rather seized the moment to put forward a view which he had had all along. Biographical information on Buah below will demonstrate that the latter is more likely. What is certain is that the general political mood and the new power relations in Ghana around 1980 made such a rehabilitation both desirable and feasible, as will become more clear in the following.

The biographical information on Buah that I could obtain is, unfortunately, not as comprehensive as in the case of the other authors discussed above. Nevertheless, the information available adds to our understanding of *A History of Ghana*. Francis K. Buah, who was born in 1922, founded Tema Secondary School (Temasco) in Tema, Ghana, which was opened in September 1961, and served as its first headmaster until 1975/76. He had done a Ph.D., most likely in London, probably in History. Buah collaborated with Basil Davidson in the writing of *A History of West Africa 1000-1800* (first published 1965), and produced several books on African and World History on his own, among which were History books for schools and colleges. An admirer who, in the course of studying Education in the late 1960s at the University of Ghana, read texts written by Buah has described him as one of the most influential Ghanaian historians of the 1960s and 1970s. In this admirer's view, Buah's texts were more accessible than those of "... the intellectually redoubtable Professor Adu A. Boahen ...".³⁹⁸ Buah died in 2005 at the age of 83.

The most important biographical information that I could obtain on Buah is that he worked as minister of education in the Limann administration.³⁹⁹ It seems crucial that by the time he

³⁹⁸Okoampa-Ahoofe 2005.

³⁹⁹For the entire biographical information on Buah see Appiah-Donyina 2006; Davidson 1981 [1965]; Modern Ghana July 2005; Okoampa-Ahoofe 2005; Temasco 2012.

wrote a strongly Nkrumah-friendly *History of Ghana*, he was politically active in a strongly Nkrumah-friendly government. Buah's involvement with the PNP also reveals his ideological proximity to left-wing ideas, as it is unlikely that someone who worked as a minister for the self-proclaimed successor party of the CPP was opposed to socialist principles. In the 1979 elections, as has already been mentioned, Ghana's liberals were represented by the Progress Party and by the United National Convention (UNC). Furthermore, the fact that Buah had remained headmaster of Temasco during the entire time of Nkrumah's ideological purges in the 1960s also suggests that Buah had long been a genuine supporter of the CPP's socialist, and of course Pan-Africanist policies.

Buah's highly positive view of Nkrumah leaps to the eye right at the beginning of *A History of Ghana*: the book is dedicated “To my teacher – Kwame Nkrumah – Founder of modern Ghana”.⁴⁰⁰ Nkrumah's role as *father of the nation* is a dominant theme running through the entire book.

Contrary to the liberal authors discussed above, Buah did not consider the UGCC and the CPP as equally important in the anti-colonial struggle. According to Buah, the UGCC's “... enlistment of Kwame Nkrumah brought a new lease of life into the country and was the turning point in its fight for independence”.⁴⁰¹ The UGCC served as the platform on which Nkrumah returned to Ghana, but in Buah's view, there was no doubt that the main credit for Ghana's independence was due to Nkrumah, who “... was the leader the people really needed in the fight to overthrow the colonial system”.⁴⁰² In general, Buah described the CPP leaders as genuinely dedicated to the nationalist cause in a selfless way, which set them apart from the elitist and conservative UGCC.⁴⁰³

It was also Buah's characterisation of Nkrumah which differed significantly from the view that had dominated Ghanaian publications in the post-NLC era. According to Buah, Nkrumah had been a courageous visionary. The author drew special attention to Nkrumah's non-elitist socio-economic background: “... unlike most of the other leaders in the nationalist struggle for self-determination, Nkrumah rose from humble parentage and beginnings ...”,⁴⁰⁴ which was the reason for his popular touch. In strong contrast to Omari, Buah presented Nkrumah as a learned man who had studied seriously in the US and in the UK. Of course, Buah also

⁴⁰⁰Buah 1980: iii (indication of page number missing).

⁴⁰¹Buah 1980: 153.

⁴⁰²Buah 1980: 154.

⁴⁰³Buah 1980: 157.

⁴⁰⁴Buah 1980: 153.

emphasised the leading role which Nkrumah had played in the Pan-Africanist movement.⁴⁰⁵

Regarding the Busia-led NLM, Buah considered all of its claims illegitimate and most of all emphasised that it had the effect of delaying independence. As he could not dispute that the price paid to cocoa farmers was reduced after the 1954 election, he resorted to questioning if the CPP had really promised a raise during the preceding election campaign. Discussing the events that led to the election of 1956, Buah completely ignored Nkrumah's attempts to circumvent another electoral contest. Furthermore, Buah emphasised the opposition's reluctance to cooperate even after the elections, but he did not mention provocativeness on the part of the CPP.⁴⁰⁶

In terms of the periodisation of several independence phases, Buah followed Nkrumah's own suggestions, arguing that the fight for self-rule had to be followed by a second struggle for true, that is economic independence. He held that Nkrumah had taken the appropriate measures needed for achieving this goal. Buah did not neglect that initially, Ghana's financial situation (a large amount of foreign reserves as against moderate foreign debt) and international cocoa prices were highly favourable anyway, but he added that "... there is no doubt that the tremendous developments in Ghana *up to 1966* owed very much to the vision, dynamism and courage of the first leader, Kwame Nkrumah".⁴⁰⁷ Obviously, Buah made no distinction between different periods of Nkrumah's rule. Comparable to Genoud's view discussed above in 3.1, he treated the entire CPP term as one single and consistent block of policies. In Buah's words, "[f]rom the 1950s when Ghana gained control over national affairs, Nkrumah's government drew up comprehensive programmes designed to promote a Welfare State ...".⁴⁰⁸

Buah described Nkrumah as "... an enlightened economist ..."⁴⁰⁹ who wisely introduced a policy of mixed economy after independence. He praised Nkrumah for Ghana's enormous achievements in several economic and social fields between 1957 and February 1966. Interestingly, Buah conceded that, for example, "... Nkrumah's agricultural programme and schemes did not yield maximum results ..., and indeed, in many cases were a liability on public funds because of unsatisfactory planning, management and operation ...".⁴¹⁰ But nevertheless, Buah was convinced "... that these programmes had an appreciable impact on

⁴⁰⁵Buah 1980: 153-154.

⁴⁰⁶Buah 1980: 161-163.

⁴⁰⁷Buah 1980: 168 (my emphasis).

⁴⁰⁸Buah 1980: 176.

⁴⁰⁹Buah 1980: 169.

⁴¹⁰Buah 1980: 171.

the nation's economy and on the attitude of people towards agriculture ...".⁴¹¹ He put forward a similarly positive view on Nkrumah's industrial projects, state-owned financial institutions, state-owned service industries, transport and communications, and the development of social services with a special emphasis on education, health services, and housing and rural services.⁴¹²

Buah's main point regarding Nkrumah's economic policy was that the latter had realised both the importance to attract foreign investments and to be economically independent. In Buah's account of Nkrumah's administration, the second issue was mostly about domestic control of Ghana's financial institutions, which Nkrumah successfully achieved.⁴¹³ Buah made it seem as if Nkrumah's liberal policies and his subsequent increase of state involvement in the economy had been implemented simultaneously. Even though he did mention the government's socialist programme,⁴¹⁴ he did not discuss the increase of socialist economic practices from around 1960 onwards.

With regard to political developments, Buah did not distinguish between different phases of Nkrumah's rule either. He did, however, agree that there was a gradual increase in measures which were considered harsh by Nkrumah's opponents. Concerning these critics, Buah informed his reader that they accused Nkrumah of crippling the opposition in domestic politics, and of being too heavily involved in foreign affairs at Ghana's expense. Buah answered to these charges by arguing that Nkrumah's *seemingly* dictatorial practices especially in his latter years were "... largely dictated by the circumstances of the time including *nefarious* activities of his opponents ...".⁴¹⁵ The author went on to concede that *some* men in key positions were responsible for mismanagement and fraudulent practices, but he did not agree with critics who held that Nkrumah had wasted Ghana's reserves. Buah explicitly formulated the obvious agenda himself: "A re-appraisal is necessary for a proper understanding of Nkrumah's post-independence political achievement, both at home and in the African and the wider international scene".⁴¹⁶

In terms of political developments, then, Buah argued that severe pressure to succeed weighed on Nkrumah. As Ghana was "... the first in the black world to re-gain sovereign independence ...",⁴¹⁷ it constituted a sort of test case, meaning its failure would have

⁴¹¹Buah 1980: 171.

⁴¹²Buah 1980: 171-181.

⁴¹³Buah 1980: 169, 173-174.

⁴¹⁴Buah 1980: 170.

⁴¹⁵Buah 1980: 180 (my emphasis).

⁴¹⁶Buah 1980: 182.

⁴¹⁷Buah 1980: 182.

negatively affected the future of other regions still under colonial domination.⁴¹⁸

Some of the main obstacles to success which Nkrumah had to deal with were, in Buah's view, secessionist activities in Ashanti and the southern Volta Region, and strong opposition to the government in Accra. I agree that at least the NLM and the Togoland Congress constituted a threat to national unity, which, as we have seen in chapter two, Nkrumah regarded as indispensable if the fight against colonialism was to be successful in the long run. However, in Nkrumah's decision to curb the opposition, there was also power-political calculus involved – an aspect that Buah's interpretation is lacking. Backed by Britain, Nkrumah refused to incorporate any of the opposition's demands into independent Ghana's constitution (see 2.3). In Buah's view, this was merely because the CPP re-assessed the pros and cons of a federal administration after independence and arrived at the conclusion that federalism would have harmed unity.⁴¹⁹ Decisions on the part of Nkrumah and the CPP are portrayed as altruistic and well-intended *for the nation only* throughout Buah's entire book. Any of Nkrumah's controversial decisions were, in Buah's view, necessary and in Ghana's best interest. For example, he explained the increased restriction of freedom of the press in the later years of Nkrumah's rule with some writers' "... less and less constructive ... comments against government policies and acts".⁴²⁰

Like most parts of *A History of Ghana* that deal with the Nkrumah years, Buah's explanation for the passing of Nkrumah's controversial series of legislation (the Deportation Act, the Avoidance of Discrimination Act, the Preventive Detention Act etc.) constitutes a reproduction of Nkrumah's own justification of these Acts. Buah held that "[i]n the face of intensified opposition, sometimes backed by unwholesome activities, the government felt a firm line must be taken to bring about the security and peace which was so necessary for the development and progress of the new nation".⁴²¹ With regard to the Preventive Detention Act, Buah emphasised the three reports about subversive activities that were discussed in 2.4 above. CPP members who replaced non-CPP civil servants were, in Buah's view, not only party, but also development agents.⁴²²

Ghana's republican transformation in July 1960 was, in Buah's view, not about concentrating power in the hands of Nkrumah, but about finally breaking political ties with Britain. Buah mentioned that Nkrumah beat Danquah in the presidential elections, but he skipped vote

⁴¹⁸Buah 1980: 182-183.

⁴¹⁹Buah 1980: 183.

⁴²⁰Buah 1980: 195.

⁴²¹Buah 1980: 183-184.

⁴²²Buah 1980: 184.

rigging on the part of the CPP (see 2.4).⁴²³ Not surprisingly, Buah justified the 1964 referendum that turned Ghana into a one-party state by pointing to opposition violence and the attempts to assassinate Nkrumah. However, his argument that “[l]ong before this stage of political development, people were organized by unidentified groups ...”⁴²⁴ is exceptionally cynical, as people were forced to organise in unidentified groups as a consequence of Nkrumah's earlier measures to oppress the opposition.

With regard to Nkrumah's foreign policy, Buah highlighted Nkrumah's official approach of non-alignment. The fact that Nkrumah entertained more intensive relations with the West until circa 1960, and moved closer to the communist bloc afterwards, was apparently not worth mentioning to Buah. He drew attention to Nkrumah's Pan-Africanist initiative, visible in the numerous conferences the latter organised after independence, and in the political unions he had established with Guinea and Mali. Buah also discussed the different standpoints of the Casablanca and the Monrovia group. In this connection, he held that Nkrumah had played a crucial role in the formation of the OAU, but he omitted the fact that Nkrumah's political union approach did actually not prevail.⁴²⁵

Against the background of Buah's highly positive view of Nkrumah, the question why such a great ruler was overthrown necessarily posed a challenge to the author. He argued that partly, Nkrumah was overthrown because he was misunderstood: he did not want to become the president of Africa, and he did not pay insufficient attention to domestic affairs either. The latter misunderstanding arose, according to Buah, from Nkrumah's strong Pan-African commitment. Another reason for the coup was, in Buah's view, that many of Nkrumah's controversial but necessary Acts had the *effect* (as opposed to the intention) of paralysing the opposition. Indiscriminate application of the Preventive Detention Act *sometimes* happened, but Nkrumah did not always know about this.⁴²⁶

Aside from more conventional explanatory factors for the coup, like Nkrumah's impatience, *some* CPP members' corruption, and the shortages resulting from import restrictions,⁴²⁷ Buah also held that “[b]y 1964, circumstances had compelled Nkrumah to assume absolute control of the CPP ...”⁴²⁸ This, which is again a more conventional argument, led to an atmosphere in which nobody dared to contradict Nkrumah, so that he was often insufficiently informed about state affairs and lost touch with the general public. Buah also emphasised that

⁴²³Buah 1980: 182.

⁴²⁴Buah 1980: 185.

⁴²⁵Buah 1980: 186-188.

⁴²⁶Buah 1980: 189.

⁴²⁷Buah 1980: 189.

⁴²⁸Buah 1980: 190.

Nkrumah's policies had offended the West, which thus probably supported the coup.⁴²⁹ It should be noted that Buah did not mention the celebrations in Ghana which followed Nkrumah's overthrow in a single sentence.

In the final part of his discussion of Nkrumah's administration, Buah directly answered to Boahen's withering view examined above.⁴³⁰ After presenting Boahen's opinion that it was unfortunate that Nkrumah's rule did not end after the first three years of independence, Buah commented "... that Nkrumah did not end his political mission abruptly in 1960 ... because he still had more to offer to his own country, Africa and the world".⁴³¹ This was followed by pointing to Nkrumah's post-1960 achievements, like the completion of the Volta River Project. Answering to Boahen's opinion that Nkrumah was a failure as a Ghanaian leader, Buah emphasised that Nkrumah was successful even though he came from a non-elitist background – which is, in fact, unrelated to Boahen's point. All things considered, Buah's polemic against Boahen is weak. He only mentioned *that* Boahen thought Nkrumah had failed, but he did not bother to explain *why* Boahen had put forward this view, and simply claimed that Boahen was wrong.⁴³²

This, as we have seen, is one of the most noticeable and problematic aspects of Buah's book in general: it is characterised by a highly selective use of information. Another problematic aspect in terms of academic quality is that Buah often made statements rather than arguments. I will demonstrate below in 3.4 that these are features which all strongly positive interpretations of Nkrumah's political and intellectual life share. It should be clear from my discussion of the interpretations published during the post-NLC period (see 3.2) that I do not wish to argue that the liberals were right, or objective, but I do hold that deliberate omission is stronger in the pro-Nkrumah works.

In order to conclude this discussion of Buah's book, let me return to the issue raised above concerning the desirability of a rehabilitation of Nkrumah around 1980. I have already argued that it is likely that Buah himself had been a supporter of Nkrumah all along. Thus, it is not surprising that in his view, the NLC's performance "... could not fully justify their removal of the previous government".⁴³³ In general, Buah held that "[e]vents in Ghana since his overthrow in 1966 have amply demonstrated that it has been easier to criticise President

⁴²⁹Buah 1980: 190.

⁴³⁰Interestingly, Buah referred to Boahen as "... a Ghanaian historian, one of the president's greatest critics ..."
(Buah 1980: 190) in the continuous text. Buah only revealed Boahen's actual name in his notes (p. 193).

⁴³¹Buah 1980: 191.

⁴³²Buah 1980: 190-191.

⁴³³Buah 1980: 197.

Nkrumah than to replace him”.⁴³⁴ But what about the opinion of the bulk of the Ghanaian electorate? What helped the successor party of the CPP win a general election in 1979, whereas Nkrumah's political arch enemies had won just a decade earlier?

The crucial point is that, even though Buah's description of the political mood in the late 1970s of a substantial (though not the majority) part of the Ghanaian population was pro-Nkrumah filtered, he captured the essence of this mood quite well. Admittedly, in 1979, only 36% of the people who had registered to vote actually went to the poll, whereas in 1969, it had been 63.5%.⁴³⁵ Nevertheless, the election victory of the PNP in 1979⁴³⁶ supports the latter part of Buah's assertion that “[a]s time wore on, the people became disillusioned and began to revive the memory of Kwame Nkrumah ...”.⁴³⁷

Experiencing Busia's overthrow and two more successful military coups within a relatively short time, a nostalgia for the “good old days” seems to have developed among a significant part of the people in Ghana by the late 1970s. Gocking pointed out that “[t]he PNP's victory was an indication of how alive the Nkrumahist tradition remained. (...) The Nkrumahists could point to the CPP's achievements and promised to restore Ghana to its earlier position of prominence in African affairs. Busia's three years in office seemed threadbare in comparison”.⁴³⁸ Economic hardship that was due to declining cocoa production and prices in the later 1970s⁴³⁹ most likely added to such nostalgic sentiments. Thus, by 1980, there was a popular *demand* for a rehabilitation of Nkrumah. At the same time, it was clearly in the interest of the PNP and its minister of education, i.e. Buah, to *supply* this rehabilitation. The fact that *A History of Ghana* was written in plain language and designed as a study book supports this suggestion.⁴⁴⁰

However, while focusing on the demand for a rehabilitation of Nkrumah around 1980 can explain the *success* of a reconsideration of Nkrumah's rule *at that time* (this success being evident in the 1979 election results), the obvious question that remains unanswered is: why did Nkrumah's supporters in Ghana's academia not attempt to rehabilitate him *earlier*? Why did Ghanaian academics who kept faith with Nkrumah after the coup not supply their positive view of the country's first president *before* wide-spread demand for a re-appraisal arose?

The answer that between 1966 and 1980, there were no political followers of Nkrumah left in

⁴³⁴Buah 1980: 192.

⁴³⁵Gocking 2005: 155, 181.

⁴³⁶Buah 1980: 204.

⁴³⁷Buah 1980: 200.

⁴³⁸Gocking 2005: 180.

⁴³⁹Gocking 2005: 185.

⁴⁴⁰The book contains exam questions relating to its respective chapters.

the Ghanaian intelligentsia, seems implausible – I have demonstrated above that, just to give an example, Buah's career suggests that he had had a positive view of Nkrumah all along. Furthermore, Gocking claimed that Nkrumah's death in 1972 had “... stimulated the already sympathetic reexamination of the Nkrumah past that had begun in the Busia period”.⁴⁴¹ Unfortunately, Gocking did not elaborate on this early re-examination. He probably referred to newspaper articles.

Thus, what is more likely than a lack of Nkrumah loyalists between 1966 and 1980 is that such a rehabilitation simply could not be published in Ghana before 1980, due to restrictions imposed by the respective administrations and regimes. After all, “Acheampong and his fellow soldiers were members of the same military that had overthrown the Osagyefo in 1966, and publicly Acheampong acknowledged that this coup had been necessary ...”.⁴⁴² But what about publishing abroad?

In 1973, Kwame Arhin wrote an essay in which he put forward a rather balanced view of Nkrumah, emphasising his achievements as well as his shortcomings. Most likely due to domestic restrictions, this essay was published in translation abroad.⁴⁴³ Furthermore, Boahen's liberalist interpretation (1975) of Nkrumah's rule was published in London. The assumption that no foreign publishing company would have been willing to publish a one-sided rehabilitation of Nkrumah written by a Ghanaian before 1980 is misleading: June Milne's Panaf would have been the perfect address. Thus, it remains to be seen in future research why Ghanaian adherents of Nkrumah did not produce books intended to rehabilitate the former president before 1980.

For now, the crucial point is that by 1980, the country's basic political dualism – liberalists versus socialists, dating back to factional disputes within the nationalist movement in the 1930s (see 2.2) – had been extended to major Ghanaian academic writings on the Nkrumah period.⁴⁴⁴ Two extreme positions had been established: especially Omari condemned Nkrumah's rule and personality entirely, Buah on the other hand celebrated him as the greatest man who had ever lived.

The establishment of these extreme positions within Ghanaian academic writings was followed by the release of more moderate interpretations of Nkrumah's rule. In 1990, Arhin's

⁴⁴¹Gocking 2005: 170.

⁴⁴²Gocking 2005: 170.

⁴⁴³Arhin 2010 [1990].

⁴⁴⁴Note that this trend is not confined to Ghanaian academia. The same fundamental political-economic convictions were also extended to, for example, the European and US-American writings on Nkrumah.

A View of Kwame Nkrumah, 1909-1972: An Interpretation was published by Sedco in Accra. As has already been mentioned, this essay that had already been written in 1973 contained a rather balanced view of the Nkrumah period, but it had been published outside of Ghana. In 1989, Arhin wrote that he wanted to make his essay available to Ghanaians with the intention “... to contribute to the ongoing debate on the merits and demerits of Kwame Nkrumah's attempts at nation-building, and the response of the Ghanaian people to those efforts”.⁴⁴⁵

In 1992, Jonathan H. Frimpong-Ansah's (1930-1999) book *The Vampire State in Africa: The Political Economy of Decline in Ghana* was published. Frimpong-Ansah had started to work for the Bank of Ghana and the country's diamond as well as cocoa marketing boards under Nkrumah.⁴⁴⁶ In his book, which is based on neo-classical economics, Frimpong-Ansah emphasised the adverse effects of the CPP's cocoa policies in terms of killing economic incentives, and highlighted the negative effects of Ghana's currency independence. However, Frimpong-Ansah also identified positive aspects of Nkrumah's policies. For example, he held that the state enterprises which were damagingly used for patronage had emerged out of a reasonable thought: in the 1950s, Nkrumah could not nationalise the dominant foreign companies due to Western sensitivities which he could not leave unconsidered. Therefore, he created state enterprises, with the genuine intention that they should be able to compete against the large foreign organisations. Furthermore, Frimpong-Ansah argued that even though Nkrumah's decision in 1961 that Ghana's currency should no longer be convertible to pound sterling had adverse effects (especially overvaluation of the Ghanaian pound), Nkrumah's intention to create scope for self-determination with this move was not unreasonable.⁴⁴⁷

Yet, after this trend towards rather balanced views of Nkrumah's various policies, extreme positions situated on the pro-Nkrumah side of the spectrum boomed again in 2007/08. I will now examine this remarkable recent moment in the Ghanaian academic discourse on the Nkrumah period.

⁴⁴⁵Arhin 1990: Preface.

⁴⁴⁶Frimpong-Ansah and Frimpong-Ansah 1999.

⁴⁴⁷Frimpong-Ansah 1992: 74-75.

3.4 *The new generation of Pan-Africanists and Ghana's 50-year anniversary: further attempts to rehabilitate Nkrumah in 2007/08*

The 50th anniversary of Ghana's independence from British colonial rule was accompanied by a clearly noticeable increase in publications of articles written by Ghanaian academics who have a highly positive view of Nkrumah. The celebrations of the nation's 50th birthday provided the fertile ground on which Nkrumah's current admirers could emphasise the first president's achievements. But contemporary Ghanaian-born Nkrumah devotees go further than stressing the indisputably positive aspects of Nkrumah's rule. Building on Milne's and Buah's interpretations, a rather young generation of academic Pan-Africanists aims at an all-encompassing rehabilitation of Nkrumah that acquits him of even the most well-founded charges made against him.

Thus, in terms of their primary geographical and political focus, the initiative among Ghanaian academics to rehabilitate Nkrumah shifted from nationalists to Nkrumahist Pan-Africanists. Authors like Buah, despite their emphasis on Nkrumah's positive Pan-African commitment, were foremost concerned with the improvement of the domestic situation. In comparison, the main agenda of the present group of Nkrumah's Ghanaian-born, academically active followers is to implement Nkrumah's vision of the politically United States of Africa. This shift should be understood in relation to long-term political stability which Ghana has been experiencing since the 1992 presidential election. After Rawlings had given in to demands for a return to democratic rule, political waters have been comparatively calm in Ghana.⁴⁴⁸ In this situation, Nkrumah's disciples could revert to his long-term goal of continent-wide political union.

As not even Nkrumah's harshest critics, like Omari, would dispute his anti-colonial achievements as well as his Pan-African commitment,⁴⁴⁹ the major obstacle to a total rehabilitation of Nkrumah is the way he dealt with domestic affairs. Therefore, Ama Biney set out to re-interpret Nkrumah's internal authoritarianism from a more sympathetic angle.⁴⁵⁰ Boni Yao Gebe claimed that the coup in 1966 was *mainly* due to the USA's hostility towards Nkrumah's socialist and anti-Western regime.⁴⁵¹ Charles Quist-Adade put the current trend among Ghanaian Pan-Africanists to canonise Nkrumah into the larger context of their agenda

⁴⁴⁸For Ghana's political development from the 1992 election until roughly 2004, see Gocking 2005: 217-278.

⁴⁴⁹Omari 2009 [1970]: XI-XII (Preface, written 2000).

⁴⁵⁰Biney 2008.

⁴⁵¹Gebe 2008.

to implement Nkrumah's dream of the United States of Africa.⁴⁵² The media framework within which these most recent re-examinations of Nkrumah's life and rule were published was provided by the US-based *Journal of Pan African Studies*, whose first volume was released in 1987.⁴⁵³ Let me begin my discussion of the recent Pan-Africanist works with Biney.

Ama Biney, whose date of birth I could not detect, left her native country Ghana to study African Studies at the University of Birmingham in the United Kingdom. After she had successfully completed this Bachelor's degree, she did a Master's course in Government and Politics of West and Southern Africa at SOAS. Biney received her Master's degree in 1988, which makes it likely that she was born sometime in the 1960s. The University of London awarded her a Ph.D. for a doctoral thesis entitled *Kwame Nkrumah: An Intellectual History*. She worked at Kensington and Chelsea College (Middlesex University), Oxford University, and Birkbeck College (University of London), lecturing on the History of Africa and the Caribbean, African-American History, and 20th century World History.

Apart from being an academic, Biney has been described as a Pan-Africanist, an activist, and a journalist. Especially her article *Why I won't vote for Barack Obama*, published in the controversial Pan-Africanist magazine *New African*,⁴⁵⁴ received wide-spread attention. To my knowledge, Biney still lives in the United Kingdom.⁴⁵⁵

Even though there is, unfortunately, not much biographical information available about Biney, it is possible to make sense of her work nevertheless, as the agenda can easily be deduced from the text.

In 2008, Biney's article *The Legacy of Kwame Nkrumah in Retrospect* was published. The introduction starts off with a fallacy in argumentation. Biney argues that "... Kwame Nkrumah, who was once the Nelson Mandela of the 1950s and 1960s is *less known* to a new generation of Africans on the African continent and in the Diaspora. *Therefore* it is essential that the achievements, relevance and a *reassessment* of Kwame Nkrumah's role and contribution to African history are acknowledged".⁴⁵⁶ However, there is no logical connection between a lesser degree of Nkrumah's fame today and a necessity to acknowledge a *reassessment* of his historical role.

⁴⁵²Quist-Adade 2007c.

⁴⁵³Journal of Pan African Studies 2012.

⁴⁵⁴Note that this contemporary journal's name indicates an ideological indebtedness to Nkrumah, who had published a monthly paper of the same name (see 2.3).

⁴⁵⁵Biney 2010; Tlaxcala 2012.

⁴⁵⁶Biney 2008: 129 (my emphasis).

Biney criticises that “... Nkrumah's historical reputation is shrouded in considerable ambivalence and controversy”.⁴⁵⁷ She claims that Nkrumah needs to be contextualised, by which she means that Nkrumah's motivations can only be understood against the background of the colonial era and racist ideas of white supremacy.⁴⁵⁸ Given that all the authors discussed above paid attention to the colonial context, this claim seems redundant. What is more, throughout her entire article, she does not mention racism a second time.

Biney goes on to outline Ali Al'amin Mazrui's (born 1933 in Kenya)⁴⁵⁹ distinction between *positive* and *negative Nkrumahism*.⁴⁶⁰ Positive Nkrumahism refers to Nkrumah's role as a source of “... inspiration and motivation for a better future for Africa and African people. In essence, Nkrumah can be said to have provided a vision for achieving ... a United States of Africa”.⁴⁶¹ Negative Nkrumahism, however, refers to Nkrumah's authoritarian style of government and his creation of a one-party state.⁴⁶² Biney aims at a re-interpretation of Nkrumah's authoritarianism from a sympathetic point of view. She attempts to achieve this by comparing Nkrumah to some of his contemporary colleagues who, in her view, performed worse than him.

In a short part on debates in the literature, Biney cites several Africans who had been active in the anti-colonial struggle and gave testimony to Nkrumah's crucial transnational role in this fight. Other citations of several academics, among them Killick (see 3.1), demonstrate that Biney agrees with the view that there really was a shift towards socialist policies in Ghana in circa 1961. Yet, quoting a number of colleagues again, Biney emphasises that this was a general trend in Africa at that time, and that the decision “to go socialist” was rational. In this context, she also draws attention to the fact that Nkrumah distanced himself from the idealistic and pseudo-traditional brand of socialism that, for example, Nyerere advocated (compare 2.3).⁴⁶³

This leads over to a discussion of the connection between ideology and actual politics. Drawing on the work of Crawford Young, whose book *Ideology and Development in Africa* (1982)⁴⁶⁴ she wrongly cites as *Ideology and Development*, Biney argues that even though he was ideologically motivated, Nkrumah also had to make pragmatic policy decisions. In those cases where these decisions *appeared* to be inconsistent with his ideology, this inconsistency

⁴⁵⁷Biney 2008: 130.

⁴⁵⁸Biney 2008: 130.

⁴⁵⁹Binghamton University 2012.

⁴⁶⁰Mazrui 2004.

⁴⁶¹Biney 2008: 131.

⁴⁶²Biney 2008: 131.

⁴⁶³Biney 2008: 131-134.

⁴⁶⁴Young 1982.

should be rationalised as a temporary and unavoidable departure that does not annihilate the overall importance of Nkrumah's worldview. Thus, Biney infers, examining Nkrumah's ideological vision is essential.⁴⁶⁵

Even though I agree with Biney's assessment that it is impossible to make sense of Nkrumah's life and rule without examining his ideology, I reject to the problematic implication of her deliberations. Rationalising any dissonance between Nkrumah's writings/speeches and his actions as a necessary and temporary departure of his true intentions is tantamount to rendering his actions irrelevant. A strong focus on Nkrumah's positive ambitions as stated in his writings and speeches clearly serves Biney's agenda to absolve Nkrumah from any wrongdoings, and it should make us worry that she emphasises ideas over actions.

What is even more problematic is the way Biney then proceeds in her examination of Nkrumah's ideological vision. She stresses that "... Nkrumah writes in his *Autobiography* that it was *The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey*, published in 1923 that impacted on him profoundly",⁴⁶⁶ but she does not mention that in that very same *Autobiography*, Nkrumah clearly distanced himself from Garvey's racist version of Pan-Africanism (see 2.3). Given that Biney is an expert on Nkrumah, this is not a small slip, but a deliberate distortion of Nkrumah's opinion on Garvey. The intention – apart from turning Nkrumah into a sacrosanct figurehead of Pan-Africanism – seems to be to create the myth of a homogeneous, non-factional Pan-Africanist past that simply did not exist (see chapter two of this thesis).

Selectivity is characteristic of the article. Turning to Omari, Biney only mentions his accusation that Nkrumah, trying to achieve his Pan-African goals, wasted Ghanaian money. She responds that in Nkrumah's view, things were different: to him, there was no difference between Ghana's and Africa's destiny.⁴⁶⁷ Even though she is right about this, a critique of Omari has to address more than just one of his many charges against Nkrumah in order to be convincing. This is not to say that Omari was right and Biney is wrong – I have raised criticism towards Omari's book myself in 3.2. However, holding only Nkrumah's Pan-African ambitions against one of his major critics is too thin.

Biney's section on Nkrumah's ideological vision, which in fact reduces this vision to Pan-Africanism, supplemented with a little bit of socialism, is followed by a discussion of Nkrumah's authoritarianism. Based on the premise that the bulk of the literature on Nkrumah

⁴⁶⁵Biney 2008: 134.

⁴⁶⁶Biney 2008: 135.

⁴⁶⁷Biney 2008: 135.

agrees that his “... legacy for African political practice was largely a negative one”,⁴⁶⁸ Biney sets out to refute this dominant view, ironically claiming that “[w]e can now *objectively* reassess and answer ...”⁴⁶⁹ the question if it is fair to accuse Nkrumah of establishing a model autocratic state. Methodologically, Biney aims at a rehabilitation of Nkrumah by comparing him to other West African heads of state who resorted to authoritarianism earlier, and performed worse than him. One is left to wonder how Kenya and Uganda made their way into her comparison of West African states.

Most of all, Biney reacts to Mazrui's charge that Nkrumah started the trend towards one-party systems in post-independent Africa.⁴⁷⁰ Biney concedes “... that Nkrumah instituted a one-party state in the face of the challenge of building a nation-state ...”,⁴⁷¹ but emphasises that other African rulers used similar methods at that time. Even more importantly, she argues that Sékou Touré developed a one-party ideology *independently* from Nkrumah, and that Léopold Senghor introduced a united, or single party in Senegal as early as in 1959.⁴⁷² Based on the work of Aristide R. Zolberg, Biney stresses that in Ghana, the one-party state was introduced *later* than in most other West African countries, and in a more transparent and visible way: Ghana “... was the only country to have written the one-party state into law ...”⁴⁷³

Biney goes on to draw attention to Zolberg's assumption that the availability of more evidence of authoritarianism under CPP rule, as compared to other West African regimes, does not mean that Nkrumah's Ghana was necessarily more authoritarian – on the contrary: greater obviousness of authoritarianism in Ghana may imply less authoritarianism than in neighbouring states. Furthermore, Biney emphasises that, contrary to the right-wing ruler of the Ivory Coast, Félix Houphouët-Boigny (1905-1993), Nkrumah did not go through with any state executions related with political activities.⁴⁷⁴

Lastly, Biney holds that Nkrumah simply *had to* employ authoritarian measures due to the NLM's unwillingness “... to accept the political rules of the game ...”⁴⁷⁵ – unfortunately without defining what she means by these rules. She goes on to draw attention to the formation of the Ga Standfast Association in 1957 (which she describes as “... disturbances among the Gas ...”⁴⁷⁶), to the Kulungugu grenade throwing of 1962 and the subsequent bomb

⁴⁶⁸Biney 2008: 139.

⁴⁶⁹Biney 2008: 140 (my emphasis).

⁴⁷⁰Mazrui 2004.

⁴⁷¹Biney 2008: 140.

⁴⁷²Biney 2008: 141-142.

⁴⁷³Biney 2008: 143.

⁴⁷⁴Biney 2008: 142-143.

⁴⁷⁵Biney 2008: 144.

⁴⁷⁶Biney 2008: 144.

attacks, and to the attempt to assassinate Nkrumah in 1964. Concluding her section on Nkrumah's domestic politics, she argues that “[s]uch developments provided Nkrumah ... with the justification to suppress [his] political enemies and safeguard the security of the state and its citizens”.⁴⁷⁷

Let us recall Biney's main intention here: does she succeed in her attempt to refute Mazrui's accusation that Nkrumah started the trend towards African authoritarianism? Superficially yes, because it is true that in Ghana, the construction of the one-party state was *completed* later than in other African states. But what Mazrui emphasised was the *trend* towards authoritarianism,⁴⁷⁸ and one could argue that this trend was necessarily “started” by Nkrumah, as Ghana's independence came first. We have seen in chapter two that oppression of the opposition was evident in Ghana as early as in 1957. Nevertheless, I side with Biney when it comes to the question if Nkrumah *caused* this trend. She is certainly right to point out that other African heads of state resorted to authoritarian measures not because Nkrumah was their role model, but because – among other reasons – authoritarian measures generally seemed attractive in the face of the nation-building challenge. This argument, however, necessarily reduces the importance of Nkrumah as a source of inspiration – an unintended side-effect of Biney's attempt to rehabilitate Nkrumah.

There is a second level of Biney's argumentation. Her emphasis on Nkrumah's comparatively non-violent authoritarianism seems to aim at a demolition of the dominant view that Nkrumah's legacy in terms of political practice was by and large negative (see above). It seems clear to me that even though Nkrumah was not the second Gandhi that Biney portrays him as, there is no doubt that, contrary to other dictators, Nkrumah did not abuse his powers for random killings. This does not turn Nkrumah's legacy concerning political practice into a positive one, but the comparatively non-violent nature of Nkrumah's dictatorship has indeed received insufficient attention by his critics who stress his cruelty and his thirst for power.

However, all things considered, Biney's attempt to provide a more sympathetic view of Nkrumah's authoritarian rule is heavily compromised by her strong bias and obvious willingness to make “evidence” fit her cause. She wants to rehabilitate Nkrumah, no matter what. Her problematic use of sources is most noticeable in her decision to mention that Nkrumah was influenced by Garvey, but to omit Nkrumah's criticism towards Garvey – empirical completeness and accuracy are sacrificed on the altar of Pan-Africanism. As I have shown, Biney draws connections where there are no connections to be drawn. And the article

⁴⁷⁷Biney 2008: 144.

⁴⁷⁸Mazrui 2004.

is highly inconsistent: prior to her discussion of Nkrumah's domestic policies, she states that his failure to transform Ghana into an economic and technological paradise was partly due to his authoritarian methods,⁴⁷⁹ but she never gives an answer to the question how Nkrumah's failure and his authoritarianism were connected. Furthermore, Biney's odd conclusion that opposition violence *provided* Nkrumah with the *justification* to oppress political opponents (and to protect the state) is in fact a contradiction to her earlier point that the NLM *forced* Nkrumah "to go authoritarian". Even though it is most likely not her intention, Biney leaves us wondering: did Nkrumah use opposition violence as an excuse for selfish power consolidation?

Her final part on African unity after Nkrumah's death is mostly dedicated to demonstrating that he had been right all along. She attributes "... the institutional transformation of the OAU into the African Union (AU) ..." ⁴⁸⁰ in 2002 to the ongoing, indeed increasing impact of Nkrumah's ideas. Leaving this exaggeration aside, the most interesting aspect of Biney's final part is that she draws parallels between Nkrumah and the former Libyan ruler Muammar Gaddafi (1942-2011). Discussing a summit of 33 African states held in Sirte, Libya, in September 1999, Biney explains that "... it was Gaddafi who resurrected the ideals and vision of Nkrumah in his call for a "United States of Africa" at Sirte".⁴⁸¹ However, "[r]eminiscent of Nkrumah's calls for continental union government at the OAU summits of 1964 and 1965, many ... considered Gaddafi's proposal as too radical and over ambitious".⁴⁸²

Regarding Gaddafi's overthrow, Biney states elsewhere that in her view, "[t]he call by [Libya's National Transitional Council] for Western intervention bodes the beginning of the neocolonial project in Libya and the continued military re-colonisation of Africa under the ideological pretext of humanitarian intervention ...".⁴⁸³ Nevertheless, I doubt that she is currently working on a sympathetic re-interpretation of Gaddafi's torture prisons.⁴⁸⁴ Thus, in my view, emphasising similarities between Nkrumah and Gaddafi in an article aiming at a sympathetic reassessment of Nkrumah's authoritarian policies is, in the end, self-defeating. If Biney had focused on the arguments that a) authoritarianism was widespread in Africa in the 1960s, and b) Nkrumah's authoritarianism was comparatively non-violent, she could have written a convincing critique of Nkrumah's one-sided critics. However, her at least equally one-sided agenda to rehabilitate Nkrumah, no matter what, deprives the article of any

⁴⁷⁹Biney 2008: 139.

⁴⁸⁰Biney 2008: 145.

⁴⁸¹Biney 2008: 148.

⁴⁸²Biney 2008: 148.

⁴⁸³Biney 2011.

⁴⁸⁴*Sueddeutsche.de*, September 2, 2011.

credibility.

Let me now briefly turn to Boni Yao Gebe. After he had received a Bachelor degree with honours in Ghana and a Master's degree in Japan, Gebe did a Ph.D. in Political Science at Queen's University, situated in Kingston, Ontario (Canada). From December 2002 until November 2003, he was located in the USA, being a Fulbright scholar at both the National Defense University's Africa Centre for Strategic Studies (ACSS) in Washington D.C. and at the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. At the present time, Gebe works as a senior research fellow at the University of Ghana's Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy (LECIAD), where he teaches Regionalism and Integration, International Relations, and United States Foreign Policy. Furthermore, he gives interviews to Ghanaian newspapers and is a member of the National Petroleum Authority Board.⁴⁸⁵

The Journal of Pan African Studies published his article about *Ghana's Foreign Policy at Independence and Implications for the 1966 Coup D'état* in 2008. Even though the Fifth Pan-African Congress did not, contrary to what Gebe writes, take place in London, but in Manchester, his article is – at least at first sight – more carefully written than Biney's. For example, despite his Nkrumah-friendly perspective, Gebe holds that Nkrumah's foreign policy was inconsistent, if not unrealistic. Gebe also allows for the possibility that Nkrumah had the intention to become the ruler of Africa, and he granted more legitimacy than Biney to the views of Nkrumah's political opponents, like Nyerere.⁴⁸⁶

However, when it comes to Gebe's actual arguments, they are just as unconvincing as Biney's. For example, Gebe points out that Nkrumah's critics have accused him of neglecting domestic economic development and holds that he has evidence against this. His point is that Nkrumah was so concerned with delivering material welfare to Ghana that he even compromised his socialist convictions and cooperated first with the colonisers, and after independence with the capitalist West in general. Gebe draws special attention to the Volta River Project.⁴⁸⁷

Clearly, this argument suffers from Gebe's omission of the fact that Nkrumah's critics directed their charge of domestic neglect mostly at his *post-1960* policies. Consequently, the attempt to refute this criticism by referring to Nkrumah's *pre-1960* achievements cannot be successful.

Gebe's main part is about the role of the US government in the overthrow of Nkrumah. Gebe claims that “[a] recent revelation came from an American Embassy staff working in Ghana at

⁴⁸⁵Foreign Policy Journal 2012; GhanaWeb May 2006; LECIAD 2012; Modern Ghana October 2004; National Petroleum Authority 2012.

⁴⁸⁶Gebe 2008: 165, 168-169.

⁴⁸⁷Gebe 2008: 166.

the time to the effect that the American government had a hand in the coup d'état".⁴⁸⁸ This claim is based on an article by Paul Lee (2001), released on seeingblack.com, a Pan-Africanist website covering arts, media, and politics. Even though Lee included links to the official government websites which he referred to,⁴⁸⁹ Gebe relies exclusively on Lee's article.

The revelation mentioned is mainly about the CIA's role in financing the coup that ousted Nkrumah from office. Furthermore, Gebe claims that Western governments conspired in order to deny Ghanaian aid requests so that Nkrumah's regime would be financially strangled.⁴⁹⁰

Consequently, in Gebe's view, "[t]he *main* reason for the putsch was American disenchantment for the socialist orientation of the Nkrumah regime and his anti-Western radicalism".⁴⁹¹

Even though Gebe is most likely correct about the CIA's involvement in financing the coup, the argument that the coup was *mainly* due to US interference does not work. In fact, Gebe seems somewhat undecided himself: he is quick to point out internal forces that contributed to Nkrumah's overthrow, like "... the precarious condition prevailing in the security, political and economic spheres of national life, (...) [and] the neglect and 'inadequate attention' the government had paid to the armed forces ...".⁴⁹² Gebe also mentions the Ghanaian public's perception of the officials' corruption, and the charges made against Nkrumah concerning dictatorial tendencies. He goes on to write that "[t]he stifling of opposition within the party and the larger Ghanaian public, together with disaffection within the security agencies meant that the government had created a fertile ground for its own demise".⁴⁹³

We are left to wonder what Gebe is actually trying to tell us with these self-contradictory deliberations. It is clear from most of his remarks, especially in the conclusion, that he aims at an appreciation of Nkrumah's foreign policy which, even though Nkrumah was too impatient in its implementation, was, in Gebe's view, beneficial in general. According to Gebe (at least on some pages), most of all external forces prevented true African unity from happening.

A sympathetic interpretation of Gebe's article might arrive at the conclusion that the many self-contradictions are due to his attempt to appear objective, no matter how unsuccessful. All things considered, Gebe fails to make a consistent argument and often tries to link unrelated issues. Like Biney's, Gebe's article does not live up to academic standards.

⁴⁸⁸Gebe 2008: 172.

⁴⁸⁹Lee 2001.

⁴⁹⁰Gebe 2008: 173.

⁴⁹¹Gebe 2008: 173 (my emphasis).

⁴⁹²Gebe 2008: 175.

⁴⁹³Gebe 2008: 176.

The final author to be discussed is Charles Quist-Adade. In his native country Ghana, Quist-Adade obtained his first degree in Journalism from the Ghana Institute of Journalism. Afterwards, Quist-Adade moved to Russia and studied at Leningrad State University, from which he received an M.A. in Mass Communication, followed by a Ph.D. in Sociology, awarded by Petersburg State University. Quist-Adade worked as a radio broadcaster for the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, and as a newspaper journalist for the Ghanaian Times. Among other things, he also contributed to the BBC's Africa Service, and to several magazines, including the *New African*.

In 1992, Quist-Adade moved to Canada, where he taught for many years at the University of Windsor. He also lectured at US-based universities. Apart from his academic engagements, he produced a documentary on the life of African Russians, and he was particularly active in leadership positions of the Windsor and District Black Coalition. At the present time, Quist-Adade lectures at the Sociology department of Kwantlen Polytechnic University, British Columbia, Canada.⁴⁹⁴

In 2007, Quist-Adade acted as the *Journal of Pan African Studies'* Internal Special Guest Editor of the internal special issue *Ghana at Fifty Symposium: British Columbia, Canada*. He made three contributions to this volume. His writings, whose style bears witness to Quist-Adade's background in journalism, are of interest here because they contain many elements that Biney and Gebe discuss at length.⁴⁹⁵ Thus, Quist-Adade can be seen as a typical proponent of the Pan-Africanist group of Ghanaian intellectuals currently engaged in publishing revisionist interpretations of Nkrumah's life and rule. Quist-Adade explicitly puts the trend among these authors to canonise Nkrumah into the broader context of their hope to achieve meaningful African unity.⁴⁹⁶

Apart from the usual emphasis on Nkrumah's Pan-African commitment and Ghana's importance as an anti-colonial role model for others still under colonial rule, Quist-Adade – similar to Biney – stresses that Nkrumah had been inspired by Marcus Garvey. He claims that Garvey was Nkrumah's hero, but, like Biney, he omits the fact that Nkrumah distanced himself from Garvey's racialist notion of black nationalism in his *Autobiography*.⁴⁹⁷ The reason for this is obvious: Quist-Adade himself admires Garvey. He describes him as “... the most ardent and consistent advocate of the unity of the Black race ...”⁴⁹⁸ and holds that

⁴⁹⁴Moore 2005; Quist-Adade 2012.

⁴⁹⁵Quist-Adade 2007a; Quist-Adade 2007b; Quist-Adade 2007c.

⁴⁹⁶Quist-Adade 2007c.

⁴⁹⁷Quist-Adade 2007a.

⁴⁹⁸Quist-Adade 2007c: 247.

Nkrumah brought "... Pan-Africanism to its *natural home* when he returned to the Gold Coast ...".⁴⁹⁹ Quist-Adade's praise for Garvey is followed by listing a number of important Pan-Africanists, among them Du Bois and Padmore, without mentioning that their views on Pan-Africanism were quite different from Garvey's.⁵⁰⁰ Like Biney, Quist-Adade invents a non-factional Pan-Africanist past that is disconnected from historical reality.

According to Quist-Adade, "[f]orty-one years after the dastardly coup, almost every Ghanaian (except those still suffering from acute blindness and amnesia) now realize the enormity of our loss as a nation".⁵⁰¹ Like Gebe, Quist-Adade emphasises that the coup was CIA-inspired, but he is more willing than Gebe to distort facts. Quist-Adade obviously agrees with the view of his "... good old friend ..."⁵⁰² Baffour Ankomah (*New African*, 2007) that shortly before Nkrumah was overthrown, Ghana was an economic paradise without any shortages. Milne had made the same claim back in the 1970s, but it has not become more true over the years. As I have demonstrated in the empirical section, Ghana was certainly not "... producing every need of the population ..., virtually everything!"⁵⁰³ in early 1966.

Furthermore, Quist-Adade credits Robert Mugabe for managing to hold on to power, "... in spite of frenetic attempts to overthrow [his regime] by the same Western forces who overthrew Nkrumah's government in 1966".⁵⁰⁴ Let me leave the problematic praise of Mugabe unconsidered here, and turn to Quist-Adade's point concerning Nkrumah right away. It is one thing to emphasise the role which Western financial *help* played in the coup of 1966, but to claim that it was Western forces who *overthrew* Nkrumah is simply wrong (see 2.4).

Reminiscent of Buah, Quist-Adade emphasises Nkrumah's official commitment to non-alignment, but he does not take into account how Nkrumah's neutrality turned out in reality.⁵⁰⁵

As we have seen in 2.4, Nkrumah was certainly closer to the West until circa 1960, and closer to the East afterwards. Another issue is that it is difficult to understand what Quist-Adade means when he claims that Nkrumah *died* for his ideal of African liberation and unity.⁵⁰⁶

Comparing the writings of Biney, Gebe, and Quist-Adade, a common feature which they all share is omission and distortion of relevant information, as well as drawing conclusions that cannot be supported by their evidence. However, this is stronger in Biney's and Quist-Adade's work than in Gebe's. Gebe puts forward a highly positive view of Nkrumah, but he has trouble

⁴⁹⁹Quist-Adade 2007c: 248 (my emphasis).

⁵⁰⁰Quist-Adade 2007c.

⁵⁰¹Quist-Adade 2007b: 232.

⁵⁰²Quist-Adade 2007b: 232.

⁵⁰³Ankomah, quoted in Quist-Adade 2007b: 231.

⁵⁰⁴Quist-Adade 2007c: 249.

⁵⁰⁵Quist-Adade 2007c: 248.

⁵⁰⁶Quist-Adade 2007c: 249.

supporting his claim that Nkrumah's overthrow was *mainly* due to CIA involvement, which is partly due to the fact that his article is not as one-sided as Biney's and Quist-Adade's. Gebe mentions internal problems in Ghana in the 1960s, whereas Quist-Adade (through Ankomah) claims that the Ghanaian economy prospered shortly before the coup. Furthermore, Biney's and Quist-Adade's admiration for Garvey is absent in Gebe's text. These differences may partly be explained by the different places of residence of the authors. Gebe lives in Ghana, whereas Biney and Quist-Adade live abroad. It is possible that their long absence from Ghana contributed to an idealisation of their home country, tempting them to adjust history to their personal needs. Furthermore, Biney and Quist-Adade are proponents of a certain branch of thought that categorically attributes all of Africa's problems to external forces. In their view, the only solution is the actual establishment of Nkrumah's vision of the United States of Africa. Quist-Adade explains this in detail.

Based on the generalisation that all African countries today are desperate, dispirited, and non-viable, Quist-Adade argues that Nkrumah was wise to call for the United States of Africa. Furthermore, in Quist-Adade's view, the inefficiency of the African Union confirms "... Nkrumah's warning that only a continental government of political and economic unity could save the continent ...".⁵⁰⁷ Similar to Gebe, Quist-Adade stresses that in the Cold War climate of block policies, Nkrumah's plan tragically could not work. But as the Cold War is over, Quist-Adade advocates the establishment of the United States of Africa *now*. The reasoning is succinctly summarised in the following quote:

"... the continent would be better today if Nkrumah's dream had been achieved, for such a union would have made it possible for the marshalling and pooling of the continent's rich resources for the collective benefit of the citizens of Africa. Advantages of economies of scale, the avoidance of duplicity, the presentation of ... a united voice in world affairs, and a collective bargaining position in international trade (instead of Africans competing among themselves for the lowest commodity prices at the international bargaining table) are but a few of the fruits that might have been by a continental union government [sic], and that may still yet be reaped".⁵⁰⁸

Quist-Adade goes on to refer to the North American Free Trade Agreement and the European Union in order to demonstrate that cultural, linguistic, and political-ideological differences do not hinder the making of unions. He argues that civil wars in Africa are partly due to African countries' inability to meet the basic needs of their populations, which can only be changed by

⁵⁰⁷Quist-Adade 2007c: 249.

⁵⁰⁸Quist-Adade 2007c: 250.

unity. In his view, African countries do not fulfil the criteria of “real” countries – they only have flags and anthems. Finally, he holds that an all-African government is the only way how Africa can meet the challenges of globalisation, as the global economy puts small states at a disadvantage.⁵⁰⁹

Some obvious objections come to mind. Not all African countries are desperate and non-viable – Ghana actually being a good example. Additionally, Quist-Adade's distribution argument does not hold. It is hard to see why civil wars should end under an African union government. In many African countries, state power is continuously contested by various local groups rivalling for resources and political influence. The reasons for this are highly complex and multidimensional. Clearly, many African states' lack of legitimacy is partly due to their inability to meet the people's basic needs, as Quist-Adade points out. But the crucial question is: *why* are many African states unable to deliver material well-being to their peoples? Quist-Adade would answer that resources are not being distributed efficiently due to disunity. However, assuming that it would be easier to coordinate the needs of a highly diverse continent in a more centralised way seems implausible to me. A centralisation of resources could not solve the distribution issue, as the needs of all the various regions that make up the African continent are too many to be known to, let alone administered by, one centralised political entity.

Quist-Adade's focus on centralisation and distribution also leaves issues like neo-patrimonialism, ethnic plurality, and identity unconsidered. Regarding the latter, if the attempt to achieve a *national* identity has often been unsuccessful, why should the creation of a *continental* identity and solidarity work? It is doubtful that, for example, a majority of well-off South Africans or Botswanans would peacefully give their consent to a redistribution of their wealth intended to improve the living standards of, say, Zimbabweans or Somalis.

Furthermore, I do not agree that today's global economy necessarily puts small states at a disadvantage. This view cannot be reconciled with the economic prosperity of small countries like, for example, Denmark. In my opinion, the major weakness of the Pan-African agenda described above is that it focuses more on size than on structure. Unfortunately, Quist-Adade deals with complex political, social, and economic issues in the same way he deals with Ghanaian history: overly simplistic and reductionist. It remains to be hoped that more balanced, earnest, and careful authors regain the publishing initiative in the ongoing Nkrumah controversy.

⁵⁰⁹Quist-Adade 2007c: 250.

4. Conclusion

In order to conclude the present thesis, let me return to the research questions raised in the introduction. I have asked:

- 1) In what way have Ghanaian academic contributions to the Nkrumah controversy, published between 1970 and 2008, been characterised by change and/or continuity? Can we determine certain trends, or epochs?
- 2) Have the authors' politico-economic ideologies, and their professional and societal backgrounds, influenced their views of Nkrumah? Which political ideologies have been most dominant in shaping the Nkrumah controversy? What role have nationalism and Pan-Africanism played in particular?
- 3) Have political changes in Ghana had an impact on Ghanaian intellectuals' publications on the Nkrumah controversy?

In the following, I will answer these questions by summarising the main findings of the present thesis. With regard to political ideologies shaping the Nkrumah controversy, we have seen that Ghanaian academic contributions dealing with Nkrumah have been strongly influenced by the dualism of a rather Western-friendly liberalism versus a socialism-oriented Pan-Africanism. This dualism can be traced back to factional disputes within the country's nationalist movement in the 1930s. The divide between nationalists who advocated gradualism, and those who called for a radical abolishment of colonial rule, was fundamental to the split between Nkrumah and the liberal-conservative UGCC that led to the formation of Nkrumah's own party, the CPP, in 1949. At least since the competition of the UGCC and the CPP for the leadership role in the Ghanaian anti-colonial struggle, the basic opposition between the liberal outlook and the socialist/Pan-Africanist orientation had been institutionalised. This ideological dualism has continued to have a strong impact on Ghanaian political discourse up to the very present, and it partly explains the polarisation evident in a large number of Ghanaian works on the Nkrumah period.

There are certain epochs, or trends observable in the Ghanaian contributions to the Nkrumah controversy. During what I call the post-NLC era, lasting from late 1969 to circa 1975, liberalism-informed publications dominated the scene. In addition to the writings of the authors under consideration, their biographies were fundamental in revealing the main agendas conveyed in their texts. An awareness of Omari's, Boahen's, and Fynn's professional careers, which underline their affiliation with liberalism, strongly adds to our understanding of their interpretations of the Nkrumah period. In terms of political developments, I have

shown that it was of crucial importance that the NLC handed over power to an elected liberal government in September 1969. However, this government only lasted until January 1972, when it was overthrown in another military coup. Before this coup, liberal authors were carefully optimistic about Ghana's future and warned their compatriots about the dangers of totalitarianism that, in their view, had characterised Nkrumah's rule. After the coup of 1972, hope had turned into disappointment, but the lessons of the past that were put forward were still informed by a liberal outlook. Liberal authors writing in the post-NLC period paid more attention to domestic concerns than to internationalist, Pan-Africanist issues.

In September 1979, after a series of military coups, Ghana shortly returned to civilian rule – this time under the leadership of the ideological successor party of Nkrumah's CPP. Against the background of the unsuccessful liberal interlude and the experience of long-term military rule, nostalgic sentiments for the “good old days” under Nkrumah had grown among a considerable part of the Ghanaian population. Buah's publication of an Nkrumahist re-interpretation of Ghana's independence era followed in 1980, constituting a paradigm shift within notable Ghanaian historical works. Interestingly, the author was a member of the Nkrumahist administration. As his book was intended to be used for teaching, the connection between the political victory of the Nkrumahist tradition and Buah's contribution to the Nkrumah controversy is self-evident. Even though Buah put more emphasis on Nkrumah's Pan-Africanist commitment than the liberal authors, his rehabilitation of Nkrumah was primarily focused on his beneficial impact on the country.

With regard to future research, it would be interesting to address the question why a highly positive interpretation of Nkrumah's life and rule in the form of an academic publication, written by a Ghanaian, was not available to the Ghanaian public before 1980 (at least I am not aware of any such publication). Emphasising the possibility to publish abroad, I have argued in 3.3 that it is not clear yet why Nkrumah's academic admirers like Buah waited until a more positive view of Nkrumah had spread among the Ghanaian public.

It should further be noted that by 1980, the basic ideological conflict between liberalism and socialism described above had unfolded in Ghanaian historians' academic writings on the Nkrumah controversy. Politically, December 1981 saw the overthrow of civilian rule in yet another military coup.

Since the long-term return to civilian government after the presidential election of 1992, the political situation in Ghana has remained rather stable. In the 1990s, the views that were put forward in some notable publications on the Nkrumah period were rather balanced. However, in 2007/08, coinciding with Ghana's 50-year anniversary, there was again a trend towards

polarisation. Using the 50-year celebrations as an opportunity to emphasise Nkrumah's crucial and successful role in the anti-colonial struggle, and building on earlier highly positive interpretations of Nkrumah's rule, a number of Ghanaian-born Pan-Africanists currently attempts to fully rehabilitate Nkrumah and turn him into a figurehead behind whom all Pan-Africanists can join together. Thus, after earlier Ghanaian publications on Nkrumah had been more focused on his legacy for the country, attention has now shifted to his continuing impact on international affairs. Ghana's long-term political stability since 1992/93 facilitated this shift. The majority of the recent contributions to the Nkrumah controversy is characterised by highly one-sided, simplistic, and reductionist views of the Nkrumah period. Furthermore, the authors tend to idealise their home country, which may have to do with their long-term residency outside the African continent. In terms of academic quality, the recent publications lag behind earlier ones.

In fact, as we have seen, strongly positive interpretations of Nkrumah's life and rule are of dubious quality in general. This is not to say that Nkrumah's critics produced unobjectionable, or objective works. I have pointed out the problematic nature of Omari's and Boahen's reliance on testimonies of former political followers of Nkrumah. Furthermore, I have drawn attention to the suggestive nature of Omari's book, and to Boahen's highly biased way of assessing Nkrumah's socialist policies. However, I have also demonstrated that in comparison, Nkrumah's unconditional admirers are more ready to omit and distort established facts than his critics. For example, both Biney and Quist-Adade emphasise that Nkrumah was influenced by Garvey's writings, but they leave their readers uninformed about the fact that Nkrumah distanced himself from Garvey's racialist version of Pan-Africanism in his *Autobiography*. Quist-Adade goes as far as claiming that Ghana was an economic paradise shortly before Nkrumah's overthrow. Alluding to Omari's famous sentence, one could say that in the recent Ghanaian contributions to the Nkrumah controversy, empirical accuracy is being sacrificed on the altar of Pan-Africanism. Motivated by their aim to construct a non-factional Pan-Africanist past, Biney and Quist-Adade are ready to wipe differences between Garveyism and Nkrumahism under the carpet. Quist-Adade's reflections on the United States of Africa as the solution to Africa's political, economic, and social problems are similarly superficial as his interpretation of Nkrumah's rule.

The poor quality of these recent works is especially regrettable since there is indeed a potential for a more positive mainstream view of Nkrumah. As we have seen, even though especially Boahen's book can be taken more seriously than the writings of Buah, Biney, Gebe, and Quist-Adade, the most convincing contributions to the Nkrumah controversy are situated

“somewhere in the middle” – Frimpong-Ansah's comments on Nkrumah's complex decision-making process being but one example. Thus, it remains to be hoped that more careful authors with a more balanced view and a more convincing methodology regain the publishing initiative and make use of the potential to interpret certain aspects of Nkrumah's rule from a more sympathetic angle.

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Abstract

Based on the premise that Western publications on the Nkrumah controversy have been dominant, the present thesis sets out to examine how the debate as to how to evaluate Kwame Nkrumah's rule and philosophy has been led among Ghanaian intellectuals. The guiding research questions are 1) In what way have Ghanaian academic contributions to the Nkrumah controversy, published between 1970 and 2008, been characterised by change and/or continuity? Can we determine trends, or epochs? 2) Have the authors' politico-economic ideologies, and their professional and societal backgrounds, influenced their views of Nkrumah? Which political ideologies have been most dominant in shaping the Nkrumah controversy? What role have nationalism and Pan-Africanism played in particular? 3) Have political changes in Ghana had an impact on Ghanaian intellectuals' publications on the Nkrumah controversy?

In order to answer these questions, I apply Intellectual History as a methodology, meaning the Ghanaian academic publications under review are comprehensively contextualised and analysed.

In the post-NLC period (c. 1969-1975), liberal authors with a highly negative view of Nkrumah dominated the scene. T. Peter Omari and Albert Adu Boahen wrote their books, which were characterised by the hope for a freer future in a more liberal Ghana, during the rule of a liberal government which they supported. John Kofi Fynn's book, written after this government had already been overthrown, was still characterised by the same agenda. Taking into account the biographies of the authors who contributed to the Nkrumah controversy during the post-NLC period strongly adds to understanding liberal ideology as the driving force behind their biased interpretations of Nkrumah's rule, philosophy, and life.

In 1980, Francis K. Buah's antithesis of the liberal view was published. The release of this book, which was intended to be used for teaching Ghanaian history, coincided with an increased demand among a significant part of the Ghanaian population for a more positive re-examination of the Nkrumah years. The rule of the successor party of Nkrumah's CPP from 1979 to 1981 was partly due to this shift in public opinion. Buah worked for this Nkrumah-friendly government as minister of education. Thus, the interconnectedness of the political victory of the Nkrumahists and Buah's career and his positive interpretation of Nkrumah's rule and personality is self-evident.

Furthermore, by 1980 the basic ideological conflict between a Western-friendly liberalism and a socialism-oriented Pan-Africanism had unfolded in Ghanaian historians' academic writings on the Nkrumah controversy. This dualism goes back to factional disputes within Ghana's nationalist movement in the 1930s.

After more balanced interpretations of Nkrumah's rule had come to the fore in the 1990s, the initiative shifted towards an extreme position again in 2007/08. Coinciding with Ghana's 50-year anniversary, Pan-Africanist authors with a highly positive view of Nkrumah and his legacy published their attempts to fully rehabilitate Nkrumah. Ama Biney's, Boni Yao Gebe's, and Charles Quist-Adade's writings are characterised by deliberate omission and distortion of established facts and do not live up to academic standards. Additionally, Biney and Quist-Adade, who reside outside the African continent, strongly idealise Ghana during Nkrumah's rule. In their attempt to create a non-factional Pan-Africanist past which, as the present thesis demonstrates, did not exist, Biney and Quist-Adade deny fundamental differences between the philosophy of Nkrumah and Marcus Garvey.

Generally, even though the liberal works are not presented as flawless or objective in this thesis, I argue that conscious selectivity and distortion is stronger in the pro-Nkrumah writings. Regarding the question about the

role of nationalism and Pan-Africanism, it should be noted that in the recent publications of Biney, Gebe, and Quist-Adade, emphasis has strongly shifted from national to Pan-African and global matters. This may be partly due to increased political stability in Ghana since circa 1993.

Basierend auf der Annahme, dass westliche Beiträge zur Kontroverse um Kwame Nkrumah dominieren, legt diese Arbeit den Fokus darauf, wie ghanaische Intellektuelle Nkrumahs Herrschaft und Philosophie debattiert haben. Richtungsweisende Fragen sind 1) ob die betreffenden ghanaischen Publikationen, veröffentlicht zwischen 1970 und 2008, von Wandel und/oder Kontinuität gekennzeichnet sind. Können Trends oder Epochen ausgemacht werden? 2) Inwiefern haben die politisch-wirtschaftlichen Ideologien der Autor_innen, und ihre beruflichen und gesellschaftlichen Hintergründe, ihre Sichtweisen maßgeblich beeinflusst? Welche Ideologien waren am ausschlaggebendsten? Welche Rolle haben Nationalismus und Panafrikanismus gespielt? 3) Wirkten sich politische Veränderungen in Ghana auf die Meinungen ghanaischer Akademiker_innen aus?

Um diese Fragen zu beantworten, wende ich *Intellectual History* als Methodologie an. Die betreffenden ghanaischen wissenschaftlichen Publikationen werden umfassend kontextualisiert und analysiert.

In der Post-NLC-Periode (ca. 1969-1975) dominierten liberale Autor_innen mit einer höchst negativen Meinung über Nkrumah. T. Peter Omari und Albert Adu Boahen schrieben ihre Bücher, die von der Hoffnung auf eine freiere Zukunft in einem liberaleren Ghana gekennzeichnet sind, während der Herrschaft einer liberal ausgerichteten Regierung, die sie unterstützten. John Kofi Fynns Buch, das er bereits nach dem Sturz dieser Regierung schrieb, lag ebenfalls eine liberale Agenda zugrunde. Das Hinzuziehen der Biografien von Omari, Boahen und Fynn trägt dazu bei, Liberalismus als starke Triebkraft hinter ihren Interpretationen von Nkrumahs Herrschaft, Philosophie und Leben begreifen zu können.

1980 wurde Francis K. Buahs Antithese zu der liberalen Sichtweise publiziert. Die Veröffentlichung dieses Buchs, das für Unterrichtszwecke bestimmt war, fiel zeitlich mit einer erhöhten Nachfrage in Teilen der ghanaischen Bevölkerung nach einer wohlwollenden Umdeutung der Nkrumah-Jahre zusammen. Die Herrschaft der Nachfolgepartei von Nkrumahs CPP von 1979 bis 1981 war teilweise aufgrund der veränderten öffentlichen Haltung zustande gekommen. Buah selbst war für diese Nkrumah-freundliche Regierung als Bildungsminister tätig. Dies legt offen, dass es eine klare Verbindung zwischen dem politischen Sieg der Nkrumahisten, Buahs Karriere und seiner positiven Interpretation von Nkrumahs Herrschaft und Persönlichkeit gab.

Darüberhinaus ist zu bemerken, dass sich im Jahr 1980 der fundamentale ideologische Konflikt zwischen einem pro-westlichen Liberalismus und einem sozialistisch orientierten Panafrikanismus in den wissenschaftlichen Schriften ghanaischer Historiker_innen entfaltet hatte. Dieser Dualismus geht auf Richtungsstreitigkeiten innerhalb der ghanaischen nationalistischen Bewegung in den 1930er Jahren zurück.

Nachdem in den 1990ern ausgeglichene Positionen in den Vordergrund getreten waren, wurde in den Jahren 2007/08 die Nkrumah-freundliche Extremposition wieder populär. In zeitlicher Übereinstimmung mit Ghanas fünfzigjährigem Bestehen veröffentlichten panafrikanistische Autor_innen mit einer stark positiven Meinung über Nkrumah ihre Versuche, ihn vollständig zu rehabilitieren. Die Texte von Ama Biney, Boni Yao Gebe und Charles Quist-Adade sind von bewusster Auslassung und Verzerrung von unbestreitbaren Fakten gekennzeichnet und werden wissenschaftlichen Standards nicht gerecht. Biney und Quist-Adade, die nicht in Afrika leben, idealisieren Ghana unter Nkrumah. Aufgrund ihres Anliegens, das Bild einer homogenen Geschichte des Panafrikanismus zu zeichnen, in der es keine ideologischen Differenzen gab, bestreiten Biney und Quist-Adade

grundlegende Unterschiede zwischen den Philosophien Nkrumahs und Marcus Garveys.

Obwohl in der vorliegenden Arbeit keineswegs argumentiert wird, dass die liberal ausgerichteten Interpretationen makellos oder objektiv seien, wird deutlich gemacht, dass Autor_innen mit einer extrem positiven Meinung von Nkrumah stärker selektiv und verfälschend vorgehen. Bezüglich der Frage nach der Rolle von Nationalismus und Panafrikanismus sei angemerkt, dass der Fokus, während er noch bei Buah auf nationalen Angelegenheiten lag, in den jüngeren Arbeiten auf panafrikanischen und globalen Belangen liegt. Dies mag unter anderem mit einer Zunahme politischer Stabilität in Ghana seit ca. 1993 zusammenhängen.

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