

Exilic Pan-Africanism: Refocusing Kwame Nkrumah's Conakry Years, 1966–1971

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Abstract

This article looks at the years spent by Kwame Nkrumah in forced exile after the military coup in Ghana 1966 ousted him from power. Looking at his letters in combination with Nkrumah's own published writings of the time, the Conakry years turn out to be pivotal moments in the evolution and maturation of Nkrumah's revolutionary philosophizing. Critical examination and analysis of this phase provide clearer insights into the complexities and ambiguities of Nkrumah's thinking, and deeper understanding of the blueprints he developed for Africa's leadership of the global struggles of oppressed humanity. The article is structured according to the three themes which dominated Nkrumah's Conakry years: First, ideas about how to regain what was lost in Ghana; second, mapping out blueprints and strategies for the leadership role Africa would assume in the global revolution; and third, responses to, and realigning with, the expanding and problematic diaspora contexts of the struggle.

Kwame Nkrumah has gone down in history as the champion of African freedom; in Black Nationalist and Pan-Africanist circles in particular, he is lauded the one leader who indomitably confronted and challenged

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colonialism and neo-colonialism, and fought courageously and unapologetically for continental unification and Pan-Africanism until ousted by a CIA-backed military coup in February 1966 (Pohl 2016: 121ff., 128ff.). He was, and remains for many, the champion of African freedom. There had been signs and some concerns during his presidency in Ghana about a drift toward dictatorship and authoritarianism (see Davidson 2007 [1973]: 165-187, 193-202 and Müller 2016: 137ff. for nuanced accounts; Fitsch/Oppenheimer 1966 and Omari 1970 as examples of early and clearly biased ones). However, they were often minimized and dismissed as necessary but temporary for defending and stabilizing the state against neocolonial intrigues and threats, as for instance recently by Marable (2011). It is the contention of this paper, however, that perhaps the dictatorial and authoritarian proclivity was far deeper and entrenched and would most likely have predominated had Nkrumah not been ousted. A critical examination of his private letters and correspondence during the exilic years from 1966 to 1971 portray a character in sharp contrast to the champion of African freedom iconized in Black Nationalist and Pan-Africanist discourses.

In February 1966, President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana was ousted in a military coup while he was away on a peace mission to Hanoi, Vietnam. Almost immediately, many perceived this coup CIA-sponsored against a government whose policies had become anathema to western imperialist and neocolonialist interests in Africa (see Arhin 1993, Biney 2011, Birmingham 1998, Fuller 2014, Lundt/Marx 2016, Rahman 2007). Those who considered Nkrumah's policies threatening celebrated his ouster (for instance, Fitsch/Oppenheimer 1966). However, it would be a gross misreading of history to accord the military putsch the force of terminality. While it certainly removed Nkrumah from office, it did not stultify his growing reputation as spokesperson of emerging global realignment of oppressed groups. Several of Nkrumah admirers in the American civil rights movement like Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael appropriated and propagated Nkrumah's global and Pan-African framing of the African and black diaspora struggles. They idolized him as the frontline African leader with a clear vision and a thoughtfully theorized and compelling philosophy (for instance Carmichael 1971: 221-227; see also Rahman 2007, Adeleke 2017).

Just one month after his ouster, Nkrumah fired the opening salvo in what became the latest development in his life-long battle against forces he considered inimical to Africa's progress. Invited by his fellow Pan-Africanist state of head Sékou Touré to Guinea and from his new base in Conakry, Nkrumah issued one of numerous addresses to "FELLOW countrymen of Ghana," from the "Voice of the Revolution," Radio Guinea, and declared his indomitable stand against imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism. He reiterated his now famous declaration that "the independence of Ghana was meaningless unless it was linked up with the total liberation of the African continent." (Nkrumah 1967: 5-10) Nkrumah had welcomed delegates to the 1958 *All Africa Conference* in Accra with this bold declaration. His message was clear and unambiguous. For Nkrumah, Ghana's independence was only the opening of a new and expanded theater of conflict for the complete independence of Africa. Therefore, if anyone celebrated the coup as a force of terminality that would forever silence Nkrumah, they had it coming! Though a setback and regrettable, the coup taught Nkrumah vital lessons, and afforded opportunity for reassessment of Pan-Africanism. It drove home the urgency of, and imperative for, continental unification; a subject and theme that dominated his writings and public pronouncements. Nkrumah seemed unyielding in his resolve that only a unified continental government organized according to scientific socialist ideology would preserve Africa's independence. His insistent call for continental unification therefore constituted a shot across the bow of imperialism and neocolonialism.

Although Nkrumah had emphasized the primacy of continental unification long before Ghana's independence, the coup reinforced his deeply held convictions about the pitfall and fragility of "national sovereignties." He lamented that as African nations secured independence, the allure of prioritizing and defending national sovereignties would be irresistible and thus constituted even bigger obstacle to the cause of continental unification. He was deeply troubled by the prospect of conflict between the push for continental unification, and the ambitions and desires of the leadership of newly independent African nations to consolidate their political power bases (Nkrumah 1963: 132-140, 216-222). He was right on this point, for several of the leaders who opposed his vision of continental unification expressed preference for defending and preserving their national

sovereignties (for instance Kaunda 1966: 123-136; see also Mutiso/ Rohio 1975: 347-351 and Wurzer in this volume).

Nkrumah depicted national independence as a transition phase in the peoples' revolutionary struggles. The next phase entailed dislodging neocolonialism and forging continental unification. In essence, Nkrumah defined the political independence of any African state a beginning, albeit a critical step in the direction of securing the decolonization and unification of the entire continent (Panaf Books and Editors of "The Spark" 1964: 70-84, Sonderegger 2016: 28-38). The attainment of political independence therefore obligated the newly independent state to commit to a higher goal: a unified continental government that would guarantee permanent freedom and independence for all. Left unchecked, narrow nationalistic consciousness would, Nkrumah (1963) inferred, only further "balkanize" the continent much to the benefit of imperialists and neocolonialists (see Neuberger 1976).

Nkrumah's expanded paradigm had a unified Africa as the substructure for, and vanguard of, the global struggles of oppressed peoples for liberation. His ideas became even more threatening to those in power (and the wealthy close to it) since they dovetailed with, and found resonance among, a growing segment of the leadership of the African diaspora struggles. He inspired activists confronting similar challenges elsewhere, especially in the United States. Growing increasingly frustrated and radicalized, black activists in North America sought to broaden their struggles through linkages with Africa. Malcolm X pursued this goal upon severance of links with the Nation of Islam in 1964, and he immediately tagged Nkrumah the individual capable of spearheading the global coalescence of the struggles of disparate oppressed and exploited groups (Malcolm X 2002 [1964]: 21-30). This was equally true of Stokely Carmichael who in 1968, following Malcolm X, turned toward Africa and Nkrumah for ideological inspiration and leadership. In fact, Carmichael portrayed Nkrumah as someone who had demonstrated, through his pronouncements, policies and writings, profound knowledge and understanding of the dynamics of the challenges confronting Africans and peoples of African descent worldwide (Nkrumah 1967: 29-30, 49-57; "Kwame Nkrumah to June Milne, March 28, 1966" in Milne 1990: 30; see also Gaines 2006). Increasingly, black militants in the United States were

drawn to Nkrumah's vision of a global cosmopolitan revolution of the oppressed.

It was therefore no coincidence that Nkrumah was toppled at precisely the time when an increasingly vocal and radicalized segment of the black American and diaspora leadership began converging on Ghana. Nkrumah had envisaged independent Ghana as the epicenter of revolutionary movements. Encouraged by his ideas and pronouncements, diaspora blacks trooped to Ghana. Under Nkrumah, independent Ghana became a beacon of light to, and "Mecca" for, African diaspora activists (Gaines 2006, Sherwood 2011). In appearance, therefore, the coup seemed to vanquish not just Nkrumah, but the iconic image of Ghana and all accompanying visions and aspirations. Significantly the coup also ended Ghana's practical support for liberation movements from other parts of the African continent, closing down the Bureau of African Affairs and the Ideological Institute that had served as an educational facility for revolutionary cadres (Darkwah 2016: 39-48).

However, it could also be argued that the coup inaugurated Nkrumah's second, and some would contend, more impactful phase of his career in the African diaspora; one that enabled him to more fully develop and explicate his Pan-African ideologies and strategies. As Nkrumah noted, the coup revealed "a number of facts that were previously concealed and made the issues involved in the African revolutionary struggle more sharply visible." ("Kwame Nkrumah to Christine Johnson, April 12, 1966" in Milne 1990: 40) Nkrumah certainly did not see his relocation to Guinea in the traditional exilic perspective; when ousted leaders sought refuge and quietude as they lived their remaining days/years in solitude. On the contrary, to Nkrumah, as well as his host Sékou Touré, coming to Guinea was just a temporary stopgap in the triumphant march of Pan-Africanism. Guinea became a vital phase in the maturation of Nkrumah's revolutionary ideas and visions. Touré ensured that the ouster would not derail Nkrumah's vision. Nkrumah therefore did not spend the Conakry years in exilic commiseration and inertia.

This article attempts to historicize the Conakry years as pivotal moments in the evolution and maturation of Nkrumah's revolutionary philosophizing. Critical examination and analysis of this phase provide clearer insights into the complexities, and some would contend ambiguities of Nkrumah's thinking, and deeper understanding of the blueprints he developed for

Africa's leadership of the global struggles of oppressed humanity. The article is structured according to the three themes which dominated Nkrumah's Conakry years: First, ideas about how to regain what was lost in Ghana; second, mapping out blueprints and strategies for the leadership role Africa would assume in the global revolution; and third, responses to, and realigning with, the expanding and problematic diaspora contexts of the struggle. The collection of letters collected and edited, first and foremost, by Nkrumah's long-term secretary June Milne allow for rich sources to complement Nkrumah's own published writings. June Milne served for fifteen years as Nkrumah's research assistant and later as literary agent and publisher, was a frequent visitor to him in Guinea and worked in his office in *Villa Syli* where she had a series of interviews with him. She was born in 1920 in Melbourne, Australia, and educated at the University of London, before assuming a lecturer position for a few years at the University of Gold Coast 1948-1952 (now the University of Ghana). She became Nkrumah's research assistant in 1957. After his overthrow, she continued to work with him in Guinea and helped establish Panaf Books Limited (London) in 1968 to publish Nkrumah's new books.

A New Phase: Revolutionary Armed Struggle

In Sékou Touré, Nkrumah encountered another African leader as equally driven by profound distrust of western imperialist interests and as determined to pursue full and unfettered independence; a leader who, like Nkrumah, was deeply committed to the pursuit of continental unification and with shared convictions on the supremacy of continental sovereignty over national sovereignties. Both had in fact inserted into their respective national constitutions clauses that affirmed their willingness to surrender national sovereignty for the greater continental sovereignty (Panaf Great Lives 1978, Carmichael 2003: 609-610). Though not toppled by a coup, Sékou Touré's experience in some ways mirrored Nkrumah's. He was also the victim of imperialist sabotage masterminded by French President, Charles De Gaulle, who had coerced other French West African colonies (Senegal, Ivory Coast, Niger, Chad, Soudan [Mali], Mauritania, Dahomey [Benin], etc.) into accepting some form of quasi-independence under French tutelage. Touré, in solitary grandeur, had rebuffed De Gaulle in 1958 and opted for full independence with the daring declaration; "We, for our part, have a first and indispensable need, that of our dignity. Now there is no

freedom without dignity. We prefer poverty in freedom to riches in slavery.” (Touré cited in Panaf Great Lives 1978: 79) This declaration was as bold and courageous as it was politically challenging. De Gaulle was enraged. Almost immediately, France dismantled every infrastructure it had built in Guinea: financial institutions, social infrastructures, communication systems, medical facilities, currency, etc. De Gaulle was determined to cripple Guinea; to punish her for daring to choose independence, and thus serve as a timely warning to other African states contemplating similar choice (see Chafer 2002). It was a policy contrived to render independence a failed option.

This brazen attack on the sovereignty of a young nation only reinforced Nkrumah’s belief in the necessity of continental unity. At the December 1958 *All African Peoples Conference* in Accra it was announced that Ghana and Guinea had formed a political union. Two considerations prompted this union. First, it was to ensure that Guinea was not driven to bankruptcy by De Gaulle’s punitive actions, and second it was to serve as foundation for the broader continental unification. By 1961, Mali under Modibo Keita had joined the union (see Rahman 2007, Biney 2011). To further strengthen Guinea, Nkrumah issued a check for ten million Pound Sterling drawn on the foreign reserve of Ghana (Carmichael 2003: 610). It was a timely gesture of solidarity couched in the evolving spirit of the Pan-Africanism Nkrumah advanced; one for which Sékou Touré would forever be grateful. That was in 1958. Eight years later, in 1966, when Nkrumah was toppled by a military coup, Touré, and the Guinean people, reciprocated by inviting him to Guinea; and at a rancorous mass rally in the national stadium in Conakry, Touré declared; “The Ghanaian traitors have been mistaken in thinking Nkrumah is simply a Ghanaian...He is a universal man.” (cited in Milne 1990: 6) Speaking in French, interrupted by thunderous applause, Touré proclaimed Nkrumah President of Guinea. Nkrumah did not immediately realize what had just happened. Since he did not understand French, Nkrumah thought the wild applause was for welcoming him to Guinea. He was deeply touched later when he learned that Touré had actually announced his appointment as president of Guinea. Nkrumah politely declined the presidency, but convinced Touré that he would gladly serve as co-president (Milne 1987: 39, Davidson 2007: 204f.). Though Nkrumah received other offers of political sanctuary, he chose Guinea for a number of reasons. First, based on his conviction that the coup in Ghana would be

short-lived and he would soon return, Guinea with its proximity to Ghana (estimated 300 miles) seemed a strategic location. Second, and perhaps equally compelling, Guinea had become “a stronghold of the African Revolution,” given Sékou Touré’s bold, anti-colonial and anti-imperialist policies (Milne 1990: 6). Like Ghana under Nkrumah, Guinea had also become a sanctuary for liberation activists. Just like Nkrumah, Touré had attracted freedom fighters and activists. By the mid-1960s, Guinea had become an attractive sanctuary for African liberation movements. Many had their offices and bases in the country, most notably, the *Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde* (PAIGC) led by Amílcar Cabral (see Milne 1990: 16).

Upon Nkrumah’s arrival in Guinea, Touré opened an office for him in *Villa Syli* using furniture and vehicles forfeited by the closed Ghanaian embassy. At Nkrumah’s request, a radio station was also set up and shortly thereafter he began periodic broadcasts to Ghana through Radio Guinea’s *Voice of the Revolution*. These broadcasts were soon to be published in a book, *Voice from Conakry* (Nkrumah 1967). Nkrumah’s broadcasts were meant to counteract what he depicted as deliberate mischaracterizations of his policies, and justification for his overthrow, propagated to Ghanaians by the military led National Liberation Council (NLC). He also used the broadcasts to reassure Ghanaians of his imminent return. He encouraged the masses not to despair, but to engage in acts of civil disobedience. The broadcasts were also meant to prepare Ghana for leadership of the next phase of the African revolution, which, according to Nkrumah (1967), would be through armed struggle. The deluge of sympathy mails and messages of support and solidarity Nkrumah received from Ghanaians and foreigners bolstered the conviction that his exile would be brief. Some supporters and sympathizers even reassured Nkrumah that they were already clandestinely organizing a counter coup for his restoration (see Milne 1990: 4-20). Notwithstanding, Nkrumah would never return to Ghana. He remained in Conakry from 1966 till his death in 1972. The period in Guinea was his most intellectually productive during which he published prodigiously and attained the zenith of his Pan-African impact on the African diaspora. The coming of Nkrumah also enhanced the reputation of Guinea as epicenter of Pan-Africanism and African liberation. In 1966, therefore, Guinea – a nation of about ninety-five thousand square miles, and a population of between six to seven million

inhabitants – had two formidable giants of African liberation, each afoul of western imperialists.

The military coup finally convinced Nkrumah that Africa could not be free of colonialism and neocolonialism without armed struggle; he had considered that thought, hesitantly and with caution, since the early 1960s – in response to the crises in Congo and Rhodesia (Nkrumah 1965, Nkrumah 1976) as well as the ongoing militant anticolonial struggles in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau – as he reminded the readers of his *Handbook of Revolutionary Warfare*: “Previous notes I made for a manual of guerrilla warfare for African freedom fighters were left behind in Ghana when I departed for Hanoi on 21st February 1966.” (Nkrumah 1968a: n.p./Author’s Note). He used the broadcasts to remind Ghanaians of the core reasons imperialists masterminded his ouster: his advocacy of, and unrelenting call for, the total liberation and unification of Africa. Nkrumah confided in his trusted publicist and literary agent, June Milne, that upon return to Ghana he would immediately raise a volunteer army for the African revolution. He believed that the struggle for Africa’s future had reached its most critical phase; the phase of revolutionary armed struggle (“Kwame Nkrumah to June Milne, April 30, 1966” in Milne 1990: 41). This was the central theme of his seminal book: *Handbook of Revolutionary Warfare*, written and published shortly after relocating to Guinea (Nkrumah 1968a).

Nkrumah divided the *Handbook* into two major parts – “*Book One: Know The Enemy*”, and “*Book Two: Strategy, Tactics and Techniques*” for dealing with the situation at hand. Meant as a guide to the “Armed Phase” of the African revolution, the *Handbook* encapsulated his vision for the future of Africa. Nkrumah had no doubt he would ultimately return triumphantly to Ghana, and the book was meant as ideological guideline for implementing his plans for Africa, one that would forever solve the nagging and seemingly intractable challenges of colonialism and neocolonialism. He proposed two institutions as the foundations for a unified Africa: an *All-African Peoples’ Revolutionary Party* (AAPRP); a single party that would unify the entire continent; and an *All-African Peoples’ Revolutionary Army* (AAPRA) (Nkrumah 1968a: 43-74). Nkrumah also planned to unify the liberation movements then operating on the continent (Mozambique, South Rhodesia [now Zimbabwe], South Africa, Southwest Africa [now Namibia], Angola, and Guinea-Bissau) under one central political and military command.

Furthermore, he wanted Pan-African linkages of revolutionary movements across the Caribbean, Africa, Latin America and Asia. He stressed the imperative of coordination among liberation movements across the world; wherever anti-imperialist struggles occur (Nkrumah 1968a: 1-122).

Nkrumah rejected and mocked attempts at reformism such as the *Civil Rights Act* of 1964, and the *Voting Rights Acts* of 1965 in the United States, and characterized such reforms as tokenisms that would not fundamentally alter the structures of colonial and neocolonial exploitation and dependency. He insisted that in order to effectively dislodge colonialism and neocolonialism it was necessary to understand their operational dynamics. He argued that developments in Africa established that the attainment of political independence through peaceful constitutional procedures had not paved the way for unification and socialism; but had instead, in Nkrumah's words, "landed us in the grip of neocolonialism." (Nkrumah 1968a: 12) Peaceful methods had failed, and in Nkrumah's judgment, armed struggle was now the only option. He denounced nonviolent methods as "now anachronistic in Revolution." (ibid.: 13) Nkrumah believed that liberation would not come through "popular participation," neither would it occur through "Africanizing," that is, the infusion of indigenous elements. He didn't construe "Africanizing" or indigenization policy as necessarily progressive. He was aware that indigenous people often connived with foreign interest to perpetrate coups and engage in political destabilization such as happened in Ghana (ibid.: 9-10). Nkrumah concluded therefore that compromises with, or concessions to, domestic interests would not help. He denounced the rising tide of military coups and political instability in places like Nigeria, Mali, Togo, Dahomey (now Benin), Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso), Ghana, Sierra Leone, and the Congo. He urged rejection of what he characterized as imperialist myth of progress through "western trained and western bought" army puppets (ibid.: 10).

In the *Handbook of Revolutionary Warfare*, therefore, Nkrumah offered only one solution to the challenges of neocolonialism: armed struggle (violence). He believed that the creation of the AAPRA would remedy the present weak conditions of the disparate liberation forces in Africa (Nkrumah 1968a: 10-26). He identified three interrelated factors central to the armed struggle: *Nationalism*, *Pan-Africanism* and *Socialism*. The nationalist phase would win political independence. But the struggle was far from over.

Africa could not, and should not, be confined behind or within “national” boundaries. Neither should “national sovereignties” be prioritized. Nkrumah decried the lure of national sovereignty, which he depicted as subterfuge and colonially induced subversive consciousness. He believed that the “nation” itself should be dismantled. In his view, the insistence on maintaining “national” sovereignty had only paved the way for weak and vulnerable “independent” or, what he derisively termed, “flag independent” states: fragile zones of neocolonial dependencies (ibid.: 24-25). What Nkrumah advocated was a transcendental stage in which *Pan-Africanism* obliterated *nationalism* which would then usher in the final stage (*Socialism*) which Nkrumah deemed “organic” and “complementary” to Africa (ibid.: 27-30).

From Nkrumah’s standpoint, one unintended consequence of the Ghana coup was that it paved the way for developing “something tangible” to replace “the old compromises and inconsistencies.” One such inconsistency was the failure of African leaders to conceive of “all the independent African states” as one entity; for, in Nkrumah’s words, “The whole of Africa is one, and every part of it belongs to Africa as a whole.” He reiterated in unambiguous terms; “I take Africa as ONE NATION.” (“*Kwame Nkrumah to June Milne, August 30, 1966*” in Milne 1990: 66)

Nkrumah's view of Africa as “one nation” goes back to the mid-1940s when, soon after the epochal Manchester Pan-African Congress, he and I.T.A. Wallace Johnson of Sierra Leone, and a few others held a meeting in London to launch the *West African National Secretariat* (WANS) (see Adi 2018: 129-136). They were mobilizing to better combat imperialism and more importantly challenge what they considered artificial colonial boundaries that could imperil their pursuit of “African National Unity.” According to Hakim Adi (2018), they were all heavily influenced by the *Communist Party of Great Britain* (CPGB), and they began training on how to start revolutionary work in Africa. Nkrumah later confirmed that their goal was to create a “Union of African Socialist Republics”, and in 1946 WANS published a pamphlet called *West African Soviet Union* (Adi 2018: 129-136). The unification of West Africa was the vital step in continental unification. Nkrumah prioritized the unity of West Africa as “political condition” for the future of Africa and her diaspora. Unfortunately for Nkrumah and his group, WANS soon declined and in 1947 Nkrumah returned to the Gold Coast where subsequently he founded the *Convention Peoples Party* (CPP)

which led Ghana to independence (see Adi 2018: 135-138, Davidson 2007 [1973]: 51-157, James 1982 [1977], Padmore 1953).

Now toppled and in exile, Nkrumah realized that actualizing this "ONE NATION" would not be easy task. It would require both deep ideological and practical preparedness in military engagements. For his ideological preparation, Nkrumah received supplies of books written by Mao Tse-Tung on guerilla warfare and revolutionary armed struggle from the Chinese embassy in Conakry. He proudly informed June Milne about his growing collection of books on this genre. He was "reading and studying" the materials "very carefully," he told her because "[t]he future of Africa lies in that direction." He also revealed that he would shortly be starting his "own military training." ("*Kwame Nkrumah to June Milne, June 26, 1966*" in Milne 1990: 49) Revolutionaries had to be culturally and ideologically strengthened through thorough grounding in the theories of armed revolutions and conflicts, as well as combat preparedness. In fact, Nkrumah and the Ghanaian entourage who had accompanied him to Guinea began regular military training with units of the Guinean state militia (see Carmichael 2003: 688-702).

Nkrumah represented his re-conceptualized Pan-Africanism as the ideological framework for achieving freedom and progress for oppressed minorities and peoples worldwide. He described the new paradigm as anti-racist. It would not isolate any group due to race, religion or some other primordial consideration, but would appeal to everyone oppressed and impoverished ("*Kwame Nkrumah to June Milne, August 29, 1967*" in Milne 1990: 176). Nkrumah proposed developing a movement that mimicked Ernesto Che Guevara's "Proletarian internationalism." (Nkrumah 1973b: 42) The anticipated armed guerilla warfare would be intense, protracted and thus required careful planning and preparations. It would require mastery of the art of fighting on diverse and complex terrains. Nkrumah had concluded that both currently liberated and politically independent countries and the yet-to-be-liberated would have to be mobilized for the armed struggle, and he would be fully involved in the battles ("*Kwame Nkrumah to June Milne, March 25, 1967*" in Milne 1990: 128; "*Nkrumah to June Milne, March 31, 1967*" in Milne 1990: 130).

Nkrumah did not intend to be an armchair ideologue. He articulated this in a frank and poignant response to Shirley Du Bois (widow of William E. B. Du Bois), who had suggested that he should consider accepting a teaching

position: "I am a professional revolutionary. The gun without the pen is useless and the pen without the gun is even more useless. My way lies in action and struggle and in struggling and performing these actions, I can teach others in that way. Unlike WEB, I believe not in life but in action..." (*"Kwame Nkrumah to Shirley Du Bois, February 14, 1969"* in Milne 1990: 294)

Being a professional revolutionary, however, mandated training in military tactics. As is clear from his letters in exile, Nkrumah began receiving the requisite training at the hands of revolutionary "experts" from the Soviet Union and China who daily visited and showed him documentaries and movies on revolutionary warfare, as well as instructions on how to successfully and strategically wage armed guerilla struggles in both savannah and forest landscapes (see Milne 1990). Nkrumah sought training on the tactics of guerilla warfare in these landscapes, given the varied nature of the African topography. Mastering the art of guerilla warfare in such diverse environments would be an invaluable experience. He wanted the AAPRA trained in all possible landscapes it would encounter across Africa. Nkrumah watched documentaries and received instructions on tactics of guerilla warfare on plains. It seemed that he had specifically requested these documentaries as a vital first step in his military preparedness. As he reasoned, "I want to see how they fight guerilla war in open places. You see all the countries north of Ghana are open places, Upper Volta, Niger, etc." (*"Kwame Nkrumah to June Milne, March 25, 1967"* in Milne 1990: 128) Following the films and documentaries on guerilla warfare in the plains, according to Nkrumah, the Chinese would show "another film about guerilla warfare in forests and jungles." (ibid.: 128) That way, Nkrumah would have gained the necessary skills and training for battles on every conceivable landscape in Africa. It was also crucial to acquire training in the art of insurrection fundamental to the armed struggle. Planned insurrection tactics would be used to destabilize "puppet governments" across the continent; such as the NLC currently in Ghana (*"Kwame Nkrumah to June Milne, March 31, 1967"* in Milne 1990: 130; also *"Kwame Nkrumah to June Milne, April 26, 1967"* in Milne 1990: 143).

Nkrumah had no qualms about the likelihood that his fighting force could be violating the national sovereignties of other African nations for, as hinted earlier, he deemed such "nationalisms" illusions created by imperialism in order to isolate African nations for easier manipulation and exploitation (*"Kwame Nkrumah to June Milne, April 9, 1967"* in Milne 1990: 136). How

would Nkrumah constitute his formidable fighting force? He was very secretive about much of the logistics of his guerilla warfare. As he once confided in Milne,

“A new idea just came to me... something to do with the armed revolutionary warfare we shall be engaging in when I return. I wrote something down which I have cancelled for security sake...something to do with how we can politically unite all the forces of AAPRA, and all the guerilla and freedom fighters in Africa.” (*Kwame Nkrumah to June Milne, October 27, 1967* in Milne 1990: 192)

For “security sake” therefore Nkrumah did not divulge the details of how this formidable fighting force of “All-African” people would be constituted. However, there were indications that he was promised volunteers already and had planned on mobilizing these volunteers once he was back in power in Ghana. Ghana was to be the base for this fighting machine. There had been admirers and potential volunteers from parts of Africa and the diaspora, including Somalia, Sudan, the Gambia, Sierra Leone, and among blacks in North America and the Caribbean. For instance, Nkrumah once received a letter from the president of a cooperative movement in Somalia pledging 10,000 men for Nkrumah’s army. Nkrumah excitedly informed June Milne; “I will write and ask him to reserve that force for me. I will need them for the AAPRA.” (*Kwame Nkrumah to June Milne, October 19, 1966* in Milne 1990: 77)

He was also encouraged by the prospect of hundreds of recruits and followers among African and African American students at historically black colleges in the United States who had embraced “Nkrumaism”, and who were being socialized to think “Nkrumaistically,” and were anxious to offer their services (*Lamine Jangha to Kwame Nkrumah, December 13, 1970* in Mbalia 2011: 70; see also *Lamine Jangha to Kwame Nkrumah, April 27, 1971* in Milne 1990: 398). Nkrumah received several letters from students that suggested the existence of such groups eager and willing to be mobilized in the Gambia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, and among historically black colleges in Ohio and Atlanta (Ibid.; see also *P. K. Leballo to Kwame Nkrumah, July 9, 1966* in Mbalia 2011: 7-8; *P. K. Leballo to Kwame Nkrumah, August 11, 1966* in Mbalia 2011: 9; *P. K. Leballo to Kwame Nkrumah, October 14, 1968* in Mbalia 2011: 10).

From one Saihou Omar Taal, Nkrumah heard of an organization in the Gambia committed to “Nkrumaism” and looking forward to his restoration and dedicated to his service (“*Saihou Omar Taal to Kwame Nkrumah, August 14, 1968*” in Milne 1990: 252; see also “*Pan African Students Organization in the Americas (PASOA) to Kwame Nkrumah, June 25, 1971*” in Milne 1990: 49). Lamine Jangha, a Gambian resident in Ohio, USA, also informed Nkrumah about the growing popularity of his ideas among black college students across America. They were reading his books and organizing classes around his ideas, all hoping for his return to Ghana which would then provide them a base for their struggles (“*Lamine Jangha to Kwame Nkrumah, April 27, 1971*” in Milne 1990: 398; see also Mbalia 2011: 70-73, 76). As Lamine told Nkrumah,

“Your presence in Ghana is ever most needed. I’ve come across so many students from the continent, West Indies or in the United States, and most are seeing the light in an Nkrumaist direction.” (cited in Mbalia 2011: 77)

From Potlako K. Leballo, Acting President of *Pan African Congress of Azania*, Nkrumah learnt about the potential for hundreds of volunteer youth, willing to be mobilized for the AAPRA. He implored Nkrumah to help secure Guinean visa so these potential recruits could move unhindered and disguised as students with their weapons (“*P. K. Leballo to Kwame Nkrumah, July 9, 1966*” in Mbalia 2011: 7-8).

“The Paradox of our Age”: “Hate in Order to Love” – Radicalism, Violence and the Nature of Leadership

Exile reshaped Nkrumah’s strategy of fulfilling Pan-Africanism and achieving the ultimate freedom that came from defeating imperialism and neocolonialism. He determined that this could not be accomplished peacefully, along the old lines of constitutionalism and democracy. Nkrumah had lost faith in democratic and constitutional approaches to political change which he had promoted up to the late 1950s. In fact, now after being ousted from office he outspokenly considered Western democratic traditions political death traps for Africa (“*Kwame Nkrumah to June Milne, April 30, 1966*” in Milne 1990: 41; “*Kwame Nkrumah to D. K. Muvuti, May 8, 1967*” in Milne 1990: 146). Democracy and constitutionalism

tended to encourage and promote dysfunctional values such as persuasions and compromises. Nkrumah resolved that the magnitude of the challenges confronting Africa demanded a unique approach; one that dispensed with democratic and constitutional methods in favor of authoritarianism. He affirmed faith in Mao's political dictum that "power flows from the barrel of a gun." (*"Kwame Nkrumah to Pat Sloan, September 27, 1966"* in Milne 1990: 71; *"Kwame Nkrumah to June Milne, October 19, 1966"* in Milne 1990: 77)

This was the path forward for Africa. As he declared, "there is no other way to fight and overcome" the imperialists and neo-colonialists except by guerilla warfare and armed struggle (*"Kwame Nkrumah to June Milne, May 18, 1966"* in Milne 1990: 44). Retrospectively, Nkrumah acknowledged that circumstances "forced me into constitutional tactics" and that he had to suppress his Marxist, almost Maoist conviction in order to give constitutionalism a chance (*"Kwame Nkrumah to June Milne, October 19, 1966"* in Milne 1990: 77). He was right. As indicated earlier, long before his return home to lead Ghana's struggles, Nkrumah had embraced Historical Materialism's model of revolutionary change. He and members of the WANS were influenced by the *Communist Party of Great Britain* and received training on how to advance revolutionary change in Africa. But WANS failed, and Nkrumah returned home (Adi 2018: 129-136), heavily influenced by the Marxist thought of George Padmore whom he had met in London and who would join him later in his "Gold Coast Revolution" (Padmore 1953, Sonderegger 2016: 28ff.). Nkrumah therefore did harbor deep Marxist convictions which circumstances compelled him to suppress during the struggles leading to Ghana's independence. Perhaps he had become aware of the limitations of, and the challenges posed by adoption of, a Maoist approach at the time.

In the quest to fulfill the objective of Pan-Africanism, therefore, there would be no compromises with, or concessions to, constitutional ideals. This had been the bane of previous approaches that had enabled imperialists, neocolonialists and their domestic stooges to stage military coups and arrest Africa's march toward progress. Nkrumah was done with "persuasion" which, if used at all, must be buttressed by coercive measures. He insisted that everything "must now be backed by a revolutionary armed struggle." (Milne 1990: 4-20; Nkrumah 1968a: 27-41) His new approach, derived from the lessons of the Ghana coup, mandated violence. This new phase of the African Revolution would be based on an ideology and strategy that also

emphasized mobilizing the masses ideologically and physically (revolutionary ideology and warfare) in order to destabilize and ultimately dislodge the imperialists and their domestic cohorts (Nkrumah 1968a: 10-20). The people would have to be socialized to acknowledge and respect the leader, who, though conceived as embodiment of the peoples' wishes, aspirations and struggles, was shoulder high above everyone else. The revolution would be led by someone who personified the peoples' struggles, and yet demanded, and would be accorded, special status and recognition ("*Kwame Nkrumah to James and Grace Boggs, November 12, 1968*" in Milne 1990: 270).

Nkrumah made a point however that though this leadership smacked of personality cult, it was not aberrant, but in fact indispensable to the overall success of the revolution. All successful revolutions had to accommodate this reality. This was vital to success. Nkrumah drew upon history to justify his call for this iconic, almost cultic, brand of leadership. As he quizzed rhetorically, "where would the Soviet Union have been without Lenin, Stalin and Trotsky? Can the Chinese revolution be seen in isolation from Mao Tse-Tung, Cho En-Lai, and Lin Piao?" ("*Kwame Nkrumah to James and Grace Boggs, December 6, 1968*" in Mbalia 2011: 20)

Furthermore, in addition to such iconic and cultic leadership, everyone had to be in line with the overarching goal of the revolution. There had to be uniformity and consistency in vision and drive. There should be no opportunities created for intrigues, such that would allow counterrevolutionary forces to sabotage the goal. Thus, Nkrumah (1970: 61-62) defended *coercion* as reform strategy.

The coup that ousted Nkrumah brought home some significant lessons. First, it transformed him into "an ardent African nationalist socialist," someone who saw Africa's future no longer as a balkanized zone of national sovereignties, but a unified entity with a uniform socialist program of development ("*Kwame Nkrumah to June Milne, April 1, 1967*" in Milne 1990: 131). This would invalidate and neutralize old colonial boundaries. Nkrumah rationalized that since the colonial boundaries were imposed and artificial, they had no legal or historical standings and thus could rightly be violated and obliterated by the AAPRA. As he elucidated,

"There can be no question of revolutionary forces (AAPRA) violating a country's sovereignty by entering it for the purpose of the political

unification of the continent. The whole of Africa is one, and every part of it belongs to Africa as a whole." ("Kwame Nkrumah to June Milne, April 9, 1967" in Milne 1990: 136)

The second lesson Nkrumah lamented "took some time to grasp" had to do with leadership attributes necessary for the success of any revolutionary movement: *bravery, ruthlessness, bitterness*. As he rationalized,

"In order for a revolutionary to succeed he must be *brave, bitter* and *ruthless*, and also capable of hating his enemies. In other words, love those who love you, and hate those who hate you" ("Kwame Nkrumah to June Milne, April 1, 1967" in Milne 1990: 131, emphasis added).

Nkrumah further explained in frightfully poignant words, "we cannot conquer and overcome neocolonialism unless we hate those who practice it." (ibid.: 131)

Furthermore, the integrative future of Nkrumah's *Weltanschauung* implied a certain *order* that harmonized actions of disparate groups of people. *Coercion* was crucial to this process. While there would be "permissible range of conduct," there would also be measures of enforcing *conformity* (Nkrumah 1970: 59-60). Nkrumah deemed this approach vital to achieving a *unity* which at the same time respected *diversity* (Ibid.). *Coercion*, in this respect, supposedly nurtured *cohesion*, and would restrain potentially disruptive individualistic and nihilistic tendencies, while also developing shared values, attitudes and reactions (Ibid.). The presence of force and intimidation notwithstanding, Nkrumah's futuristic state embodied certain humanistic values,

"equality for all peoples and races, and that all men, women, irrespective of race, color or religion, have an equal right to dignity and respect, to freedom and national independence, and ..., solidarity between the oppressed peoples of all countries." ("Kwame Nkrumah to June Milne, August 26, 1967" in Milne 1990: 176)

Nkrumah hypothesized that this unified Africa would indeed actualize the humanistic principles and essence undergirding "traditional African society", while also harmonizing with what he characterized as the "Islamic

and Euro-Christian values of modern technological society.” (Nkrumah 1973a: 78-81) This was the core attribute of his concept of “Philosophical Consciencism.” (Nkrumah 1970: 70)

Regardless of the violent and coercive implications of Nkrumah’s vision, the end result would, he reasoned, embody the humanism of traditional Africa; resulting in a community in which “each saw his well-being in the welfare of the group.” (Nkrumah 1973a: 80) This affirms and validates what Nkrumah termed “the paradox of our age.” Simply put, this paradox combined two seemingly contradictory attributes: “we must *hate* in order to *love*.” (“*Kwame Nkrumah to June Milne, October 14, 1969*” in Milne 1990: 338, emphasis added)

Although Nkrumah advocated a strong leader as “a unifying symbol,” who embodied the peoples’ interests and aspirations, and thus demanded and deserved “unquestioning and blind obedience,” in the African context, however, the goal of the revolution trumped the leadership. Nkrumah seemed to suggest that there was no better unifying symbol than the goal of continental unification, the presence of an iconic leader notwithstanding. While in other revolutions, the *individual* served as rallying force (Mao, Lenin, Stalin, etc.), in Nkrumah’s Africa, it would be the overarching goal (*unification*). Paradoxically, it was precisely this reality that ultimately accorded the individual leader in Africa iconic and unquestionable authority. The real “unifying symbol” for Africans therefore was not the individual leader, but the shared vision. Yet, in a curious way, that “shared vision” conferred iconic status on the leader.

It should be acknowledged, at this juncture, that while Nkrumah’s advocacy of armed struggle clearly rationalized the imperative for an iconic and powerful leader, there is however a “political dimension” to armed struggle anchored to popular participation. The late intellectual activist Walter Rodney once theorized about “the political dimension of the revolutionary violence” indispensable to actualization of “armed struggle”. He argued that the concept “armed struggle,” should not be construed as revolving solely around an iconic leader. For “armed struggle” to succeed, regardless of leadership, it had to include a crucial “political dimension” which, according to Rodney, obligated revolutionaries to appeal to and “mobilize the masses of the population,” and also “engage in a *politics of participation*” (Rodney cited in Hill 1990: 45-47, emphasis added). In other words, they had “to open the struggle to allow the people to participate.” (Ibid.) Rodney

prioritized peoples' participation, "Because if you don't allow them to participate, then, there's no peoples war and there's no victory." (Ibid.; see also Harisch in this volume)

Nkrumah seemed to acknowledge this vital dimension. However, given the contents and tone of his writings, preparatory to what he thought would be his triumphant return to power in Ghana, Nkrumah's conceptualization of "armed struggle" as fundamentally a violent confrontational process built around a powerful leader, seemed to mask the equally significant appeals for mass mobilization and participation that he also stressed.

Pan-Africanism and Black Power

The global realignment of Pan-Africanism Nkrumah conceived developed partly in response to the challenges of the black struggles in America, particularly with regard to the development of Black Power ideology in the mid to late 1960s. The Black power movement started as a revolt within the US civil rights movement, and though initially whites were involved, Black Power soon assumed strong racial undertones (see Adeleke 2017). Nkrumah had studied in the United States; he was very familiar with the undercurrents of the civil rights movements. Also, those directly involved in Black Power had embraced Nkrumah's vision of Pan-Africanism and African unification. Some like Stokely Carmichael, Grace and James Boggs, and Malcolm X openly advocated Pan-African framing of the black struggle in America. Yet, Nkrumah did not initially endorse Black Power. He was troubled by the separatist and racial undertones. Nkrumah also regarded Black Power a delicate subject. As he told Milne,

"Black Power had to be 'carefully handled'...I have been thinking of what I want to write about Black Power, but as yet I have not put anything down. I hesitate because I do not want to appear a racist. I am an internationalist and color-blind. All men are human, men and women, all human beings." (*Kwame Nkrumah to June Milne, September 15, 1967*" in Milne 1990: 178-179)

It would require the nudging of two individuals for Nkrumah to comment openly on the upsurge of Black Power, and its implications for Pan-Africanism and the African struggles. The first, it seemed, was Julia Wright, daughter of African American author Richard Wright who was then living

in Paris, France. In a letter to Nkrumah, Julia recalled his leadership of Pan-Africanism, and of the support and sanctuary he had once afforded black Americans in Ghana, including W. E. B. Du Bois, and her father. She implored him as “ideological father” “to write a statement, or a few reflections on the recent upsurge of armed struggle for Black Power in the USA.” (“*Julia Wright to Kwame Nkrumah, September 5, 1967*” in Milne 1990: 177) The other was Stokely Carmichael who, according to Nkrumah, pressed the subject during a meeting in November 1967 (Milne 1990: 110). It was shortly thereafter that Nkrumah began writing the pamphlet titled *The Specter of Black Power* (Nkrumah 1968b, 1973b: 36-43). Nkrumah initially had not intended to publish the pamphlet before he was back in Ghana. He only sent a draft to June Milne. However, “at the request of many,” he finally decided the book had to be published “as an expression of solidarity between Africans, African Americans, and oppressed peoples everywhere.” (Nkrumah 1968b: 4) He meant his pamphlet both as a statement on Black Power and an attempt to educate black activists, like Carmichael, who seemed to harbor, in some form or the other, a racialized view of Black Power. Based on his discussions with Carmichael, Nkrumah determined that Black Power activists in the United States lacked adequate understanding of the broader and global ramifications of Black Power. Nkrumah insisted that Black Power was not a racist ideology, and his goal was to “make Black Power a universal concept.” (“*Kwame Nkrumah to June Milne, July 6, July 7, and July 13, 1968*” in Milne 1990: 246-247) He wanted everyone to understand the African and global, as well as class ramifications of, Black Power (“*Kwame Nkrumah to June Milne, October 6, 1967*” in Milne 1990:186-187). He was concerned that the phenomenon would shed its global unifying scope and appeal if defined by narrow racial experiences and consciousness. He was convinced that Carmichael manifested ambivalence on race, despite his growing Pan-African consciousness, and professed commitment to liberation. He was particularly troubled by a speech Carmichael had delivered at a conference in Havana, Cuba in which he seemed to narrowly and racially construct Black Power (see Carmichael 1967). After reading the speech, Nkrumah inferred that Black Power, as represented by Carmichael, seemed racialized and too narrowly focused on the black struggles in the US and the African diaspora. Nkrumah avowed that though induced by racially configured conditions and experiences, to be effective, Black Power had to transcend race,

especially since the problems and situations that produced Black Power transcended racial boundaries ("*Kwame Nkrumah to June Milne, October 6, 1967*" in Milne 1990:186-187). Consequently, despite its connection to the black struggles in America, Nkrumah (1968b, 1973b) stressed the global relevance and breadth of Black Power.

Nkrumah began *The Specter of Black Power* by reviewing the history of Pan-Africanism from its beginnings in the Diaspora to its home in Africa with the hosting of the *First Conference of Independent African States* in Accra, in April of 1958, and the *All African Peoples Conference* in December of the same year. He discussed the shared and unifying challenges of oppression, racism and exploitation. Though much of Africa was independent, imperialism had not been totally eliminated. Neocolonialism retained stranglehold on Africa through alliances with reactionary domestic elements, thereby obstructing the goal of achieving the total liberation of the continent, and the creation of an All African Union government and socialism (Nkrumah 1968b, 1973b: 36-43). In a letter to Grace and James Boggs, Nkrumah characterized Black Power in the United States as a movement riddled by crises and bereft of ideological consistency ("*Kwame Nkrumah to Grace and James Boggs, December 6, 1968*" in Mbalia 2011: 20-21). Yet, he believed the challenges were not insurmountable. Black Power had to be linked to the vanguard revolutionary African movement. He implored Black Power advocates in the United States to consider their movement integral to, and aligned with, the broader vision and goal of, the African revolution and the AARPA ("*Kwame Nkrumah to James and Grace Boggs, November 2, 1968*" in Milne 1990: 270-271).

This was all the more imperative because it is in the actualization of the African Revolution that the goals and visions of the black struggles in America would be realized. There could not be an independent black nation distinct from a unified Africa. Nkrumah called on Black Power activists in America to volunteer for service in the AARPA. Black Power would be fulfilled, "when Africa is free and united." ("*Kwame Nkrumah to James and Grace Boggs, December 9, 1968*" in Milne 1990: 271-272) Regardless of locations, therefore, blacks were involved in the same struggles for liberation, and thus, there was a compelling need for coordination through a unified entity. Nkrumah portrayed Black Power as a global phenomenon, exemplified by the struggles of oppressed and impoverished peoples in North and South America, the Caribbean, and wherever else peoples of

African descent lived. It was therefore incumbent on liberation movements in all regions (United States, South and Central America, the Caribbean and Latin America) to unfurl the Black Power banner and to understand that ultimately their destinies were inextricably tied to the political unification of Africa (Milne 1990: 14). He again stressed the importance of a unified organization and leadership; especially a “personality” leader; one individual who embodied the movement.

Nkrumah therefore reconfigured Black Power into a global anti-imperialist and anti-neocolonialist ideology that encompassed the struggles of oppressed peoples of all races and nationalities. In this broadening of Black Power, Nkrumah was essentially reaffirming precisely what Malcolm X had done with the concept “Black Revolution.” In order to broaden and deconstruct what Malcolm X perceived to be a disadvantageously localized and provincialized movement in America, he had called for a broadening of the meaning of “Black Revolution.” (Malcolm X 1965: 50) He insisted that the concept not be confined to the United States. Black Revolutions were occurring everywhere, including the Caribbean, Latin America, South and Central America. They constituted streams in a larger ocean of struggles (ibid.).

Nkrumah’s redefined Black Power became a global phenomenon and an essential wing of the “African Revolution” worldwide. Within his ideological framework, the Black Power upsurge in the United States heralded the armed phase of the revolution. Black Power underscored the failure of reformism and other peaceful strategies in the United States. Despite determined efforts toward integration, blacks remained marginalized within a white dominated and racialized nation. The independence of Ghana, therefore, ushered a new phase for American blacks, and all peoples of African descent and oppressed peoples worldwide – a new front in their struggles against colonial rule and settler-domination.

Conclusion: The Balloons that Didn’t Fly

Nkrumah construed his stay in Guinea as transient, and invested so much emotionally and physically on attempting to “fly the balloons” (his euphemism for overthrow of the NLC). This endeavor consumed much of Nkrumah’s time and limited resources available to him during his Conakry years. Nkrumah had his hopes raised and dashed by false promises, some

by persons of dubious intentions, who claimed to be working clandestinely for his restoration, and repeatedly predicted the imminent collapse of the NLC. The “Balloons will fly anytime,” Nkrumah kept hoping (“*Kwame Nkrumah to June Milne, December 21, 1968*” in Milne 1990: 275; see also his letters from *February 18, 1969*, *ibid.*: 294-295; from *February 15, 1969*, *ibid.*: 294; from *September 25, 1970*, *ibid.*: 381-382; and from *October 23, 1970*, *ibid.*: 383). Unfortunately for him, no balloons flew over Accra.

In September of 1970, with his health declining and “not as it should be,” a frustrated Nkrumah wrote, “the disappointments are the balloons have somehow got me down.” (“*Kwame Nkrumah to June Milne, September 25, 1970*” in Milne 1990: 381-382) Nonetheless, he did acknowledge, perhaps subconsciously, the possibility that he might not shepherd the revolution to its fruition. He once cautioned his seemingly overzealous admirer, Stokely Carmichael, against personalizing and narrowly associating the African revolution with any one particular individual. He lectured Carmichael on what he termed “the inevitability of the African Revolution.” (*ibid.*) The revolution would occur, Nkrumah now professed, regardless of individual proclivities. The role of the leader was to set the tone and prepare the ground. Though he might not live to see the outcome, the leader should be satisfied that he had done enough to inspire generations to continue long after his departure.

Nkrumah would reiterate this point in a letter to the black American activist Grace Boggs,

“Revolutionary struggle is a constant matter of ups and down, of advance and retreat, of attack and repulse. The revolutionary fails only when he surrenders. As long as he continues the struggle—in whatever manner he can—he stretches himself towards the ultimate goal of victory. Though he, the individual, dies in the struggle, he has not failed. The sum total of his endeavors, his aspirations, his efforts, merge with the people who continue toward victory.” (“*Kwame Nkrumah to Grace Boggs, September 24, 1968*” in Milne 1990: 261)

This is ironic given Nkrumah’s emphasis on iconic leadership. But times seemed to have changed. Nkrumah probably came to the realization that there would be no counter coup in Ghana. On his death bed in Bucharest, Romania, where he had been flown for medical treatment, Nkrumah could

only hope that his lifelong endeavors would indeed merge with those to whom he would leave the revolution.

The specter of what Ghana, or the entire Africa, would look like had Nkrumah been reinstated is best left to the imagination. No one could truly tell what the actual, the real character of a unified All-African political edifice would resemble. In fact, there was much that Nkrumah kept to himself and there was an air of secrecy about his plans for a return to power, but the thought of it was haunting him and those in his company. He had much he was working on in preparation for his return to Ghana, including "a new national anthem for Ghana, making a song for the Ghana Socialist Pioneer; a song for the Black Stars etc." He asserted also that he had "invented a salute for the new Socialist Party of Ghana." (*"Kwame Nkrumah to June Milne, September 30, 1967"* in Milne 1990: 184-185) Upon return to Ghana, Nkrumah's plans also included the creation of "a freedom fighters headquarters," similar to what he had seen in Mao's China (Milne 1990: 9).

From what Nkrumah revealed, the liberated Africa of the future would be built on bloodbath, violence, and repression; the annihilation of the imperialists, neocolonialists and their domestic lackeys who Nkrumah accused of conspiring to stymie Africa's progress. Based on his political models (China and the Soviet Union), one can reasonably imagine what the new Africa he now envisioned would look like. In a letter to Milne in which he discussed a possible name for a unified Africa, Nkrumah asked her to change his initial choice of "United States of Africa abbreviated 'USA' to simply 'Africa'." (*"Kwame Nkrumah to June Milne, October 30, 1967"* in Milne 1990: 193) He would decide on a final name "when the time comes." He stated that the choice would be either "Peoples Republic of Africa," or "Union of African Socialist Republics." (ibid.: 193)

Had Nkrumah been reinstated to power in Ghana and successful in realizing his new Pan-African utopia, one outcome would most probably have been the creation of a "Union of African Socialist Republics" along Soviet or Chinese centralist-communist lines. This would have brought to fruition what Nkrumah once envisioned with WANS in the 1940s. However, twentieth century world historical and political developments offered some insights into the likely nature, character and consequences of this entity, and they are not altogether endearing.

Nevertheless, though routed through anti-democratic strategies and ideologies, Nkrumah's unified Africa would, he insisted, be grounded in scientific socialist values and imbued with the humanism of traditional African societies (Nkrumah 1973a [1966]). It would exclude, he argued, the exploitative and anti-humanist attributes of imperialist and capitalist societies and worldviews.

Although the Africa of Nkrumah's vision conjured terror, and smacked of grandiosity and superfluity of an overly ambitious and quixotic imagination that seemed dismissive of, or oblivious to, existential challenges; embedded within that grandiosity was the essential humanism of Nkrumah; a humanism that he considered inherently African, and which, with commitment and perseverance, and sans imperialist interference, would ultimately prevail.

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