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Standbild von Kwame Nkrumah vor seinem Mausoleum (im Hintergrund)
in Accra (Ghana). Foto: Nina Paarmann.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Bea Lundt, Christoph Marx

In 2016, it will have been fifty years since Kwame Nkrumah (1909–1972), the first president of an independent Ghana, was removed from power by a military coup. This anniversary is an occasion to look into the political biography and the impact of one of the most influential and controversial politicians on the African continent in the 20th century. It is also an opportunity to appreciate the academic work and document the discussions, by both historians and the wider public, concerning Ghana's first ruler.

LIFE OF NKRUMAH - A SHORT OVERVIEW

Kwame Nkrumah was born in 1909 into a polygamous family in Nkroful, a small village in the southwest of the British crown colony of the Gold Coast.[1] His father, a goldsmith, died while Nkrumah was still attending school. Nkrumah was raised by his mother, a market woman and trader, and he received his early education in a Roman Catholic mission school. After finishing school he went to Achimota College, an elite boarding school near Accra, where he trained to become a teacher. In 1935, he travelled to the United States to continue his studies and stayed there for ten years, becoming involved in a variety of political and cultural activities. From there, he moved to London, where he lived for another two years before sailing back to the Gold Coast. On his return to Africa, his political career commenced, leading him quickly to prominence. His newly founded Convention People's Party (CPP) used the slogan 'Independence now!' and steered a course for confrontation with the British colonial power. This brought Nkrumah in conflict with the British authorities, who finally sent him to prison, but when he won the election in 1950, he was released and became head of government. He started reforms to industrialise and modernise the country on the basis of a moderate African socialism. When the Gold Coast assumed its independence under the name 'Ghana', he turned to radical socialist politics. This brought him into conflict with the western world during the Cold War. Nkrumah transformed Ghana into a republic in July 1960 and became its first President. His increasingly authoritarian rule, along with an economic crisis, led to confrontation with various social forces in his own country. On his way to a state visit in Hanoi in 1966, he

[1] Nkrumah himself published an autobiography: *Ghana. Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah*, Edinburgh 1957.

was deposed by a military coup. Nkrumah remained in exile for the rest of his life and died in Bucharest in 1972. A prolonged history of military dictatorships followed – interrupted briefly by an intermezzo of civilian governments. It was Jerry Rawlings (born 1947), first himself a military dictator, who stabilised the economy and became the democratically elected President of Ghana in 1992.

CONTROVERSAL STATESMAN

The years of Nkrumah's rule are still a bone of contention. The controversy was not so much due to the fact that he was the first head of government of an independent African country south of the Sahara, but rather because of the multitude of his activities, the radicalism of his ideological convictions, and the contradictions in his politics. Nevertheless, Nkrumah was something of a role model for a number of his colleagues. He was a major protagonist of African liberation and economic independence. When he led the Gold Coast as the first sub-Saharan African country to win independence and international recognition, he certainly fulfilled a dream for many Africans.

As a pioneer of decolonisation, he taught his people to confront the colonial powers with demands for independence. Nkrumah used the opportunities colonialism offered to gain power and fight against foreign domination. As the first political leader of the Gold Coast, he refused to cooperate with the British rulers within the colonial framework and broke out of the gradualism and complacency of the colonial powers. He ended the cooperation of his country's elite with the colonial government. Instead, he mobilised the population, especially in the cities, to flex his political muscle and to show the colonial powers that the people of the Gold Coast were no longer content with British rule. Developing the tools of power politics and the strategies of social mobilisation, he succeeded in wrestling the initiative from the colonial rulers. He pushed them into a defensive role, even when they arrested and imprisoned him. It was a triumph for him and a humiliation for Great Britain when the governor had to appoint him chief minister while he was serving a prison sentence, and he emerged from custody as the new ruler of his country. Many others, like Guinea's Sekou Touré (1922–1984) just one year later, followed in his footsteps. Even when Nigeria developed an alternate way to decolonisation, which at the time was regarded as more 'orderly', it was Nkrumah who cleared the way.

But this liberator of Ghana, who was an example for others in Africa, transformed himself within a short time into an authoritarian president. He became a tyrant who killed the goose that laid the golden egg when he fought against the economic power of the prosperous cocoa farmers and crushed the entrepreneurs the country needed. He inspired others with his vision of African unity, but his own ambitions for leadership of the continent were so obvious that he aroused the suspicions of other African leaders.

It is not easy to view a politician like him clearly, because he always combined personal aggrandisement with the legitimate aspirations of the African peo-

ple. Nkrumah wanted to unite the different African population groups into nations and develop a Pan-African identity. At the same time, he polarised public opinion. To the present day, his image remains ambiguous, and he provokes contention: should he be remembered as an unscrupulous dictator or as a great visionary and hero of independence? There are good arguments for both sides; one or the other tendency was dominant in different phases of Nkrumah's life.

For these reasons, it is worthwhile to pay attention to the life of Kwame Nkrumah, to study his ideology and political philosophy in different contexts. Whereas it is important to analyse his politics in a Ghanaian context, he should also be seen as a role model for other African independence movements. The narrative on Nkrumah is part of colonial history and decolonisation in a globalised world and is also part of the current discussion on cultural memory. This volume includes articles written by scholars from Africa, Europe, and America and represents current trends in the research on Nkrumah. But most importantly, it documents the discussions about Nkrumah in Ghana.

The book is divided into three main sections, representing major trends in the discourse on Nkrumah: 'Vision and Politics'; 'Opposition and Coup'; and 'Memory and Place in History'.

VISION AND POLITICS

In 2009, the winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, Wangari Maathai (1940–2011), praised Kwame Nkrumah as one of those five Africans, who 'live their lives for something larger than themselves ... who had a vision for their continent'.[2] Nkrumah studied in the US and Great Britain. These years deeply influenced his visionary political thought. As a young man, Nkrumah had already been exposed to the ideas of Marcus Garvey (1887–1940) and W. E. B. du Bois (1868–1963), both of whom were active in the United States. This fact, as well as his contact with Nnamdi Azikiwe (1904–1996) from Nigeria, induced him to study in the USA. Many future African leaders studied overseas, but most went to European capitals such as London or Paris. These ten years (1935–1945) had a profound impact on his later policies. Beyond his academic success with two bachelor's and two master's degrees, there were at least two major experiences that influenced Nkrumah. The first was racism; in the southern states, Jim Crow laws ruled, but there was also a great deal of racism in everyday life in the northern states since the great exodus of African Americans from the Deep South after World War I. Nkrumah does not dwell extensively on his experiences with racism, but he was certainly more often and more intensively confronted with racist practices than would have been the case had he studied in Europe. The second impact was the United States as a new world power after World War I. The US certainly was the inspiration and model for Nkrumah's ideas and plans for a United States of Africa, since he had seen how a former colony could develop to become a great power when it grew

2 Wangari Maathai, *The Challenge for Africa. A New Vision*, London 2009, 286f.

into a continental state and had access to the mineral and agricultural resources of a vast country.

From early on, notably during his stay in the US, Nkrumah thought in terms of a Pan-African movement. He wanted to overcome existing colonial boundaries and made several attempts to transform his visions into practical policies. He was part of the international network of Pan-Africanist and anti-colonial activists; in this context, he attended the Pan-African Conference in New York in 1944 and was involved in organising the Pan-African Congress in Manchester in 1945. During the 1940s, he made the acquaintance of C. L. R. James (1901–1989) and George Padmore (1903–1959). The dynamism of his personality and the pose of political prophet made him one of the leading Pan-Africanists, which enabled him to actually take Pan-Africanism from the diaspora back to Africa.

Even a passionate Pan-Africanist like Nkrumah had to confine himself to colonial boundaries when he became the leading politician in the first sub-Saharan African nation-state. When he returned to Ghana at the invitation of the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) to become their full-time secretary, he established himself as the most dynamic political leader in the territory. Nkrumah worked within the colonial political system using the chances and methods available to him. The techniques of gaining power, which Nkrumah developed very quickly and with great dynamism as soon as he returned to the Gold Coast, are of interest not only to students of Ghanaian history. They give insights to anyone who wants to study the history of African decolonisation, because Nkrumah gave the model, the 'script' that was later used in different local variations in other African countries. Nkrumah developed a feeling for political situations; he gained popularity by using the media and presenting himself skilfully as the most radical anti-colonial politician in the country, which made him very popular with the many people who were discontented under colonial rule: cocoa farmers, war veterans, students, and jobless people, not only in the urban areas but also in the rural regions and the country at large.

During his years of political activism, he made political power very much the centre of his endeavours, seeing it as the precondition for any further move. After his fall from power and exile in Guinea, Nkrumah published a number of influential books and articles.[3] He tried to interpret his own deposition within a broader framework, which he called 'neocolonialism'. This word captured the continuation of colonial influence through economic dependency and, especially, by cultural means.[4] His own analysis made apparent that his most famous slogan 'Seek ye first the political kingdom' was insufficient. The recognition of lingering eco-

3 Kwame Nkrumah, *Neo-Colonialism. The Last Stage of Imperialism*, London/Edinburgh 1965; id., *Africa Must Unite*, New York 1970; id., *Handbook of Revolutionary Warfare. A Guide to the Armed Phase of the African Revolution*, New York 1969; id., *Revolutionary Path*, London 1973.

4 Bea Lundt, 'Colonial Mentality in the Post-Colonial Era. On the Genesis, Manifestations and Development of a Form of Consciousness between Europe and Africa', in: id./Sophie Wulk (eds.), *Global Perspectives on Europe. Critical Spotlights from Five Continents*, Berlin 2016, 69–104.

nomic dependency was nothing completely new for Nkrumah, but it received an added urgency and emphasis in his later writings. Economic independence and self-sufficiency were the preconditions for true independence and Africa's future place in world politics, as he proclaimed the need for a united Africa in the Organization of African Unity (OAU) (founded in 1963) and on numerous other occasions. On the one hand, the OAU with its headquarters in Addis Ababa was much inspired by Nkrumah's call for African unity, but at the same time, it was an organisation of states and as such cemented national boundaries.

In this broad network and under these influences, Nkrumah developed his ideology. As ARNO SONDEREGGER (Vienna) shows, the period from the 1930s to the 1970s, often described as a 'development era', was even more characterised by the 'shadow of colonialism'. It challenged the young Nkrumah to understand the 'modernisation of exploitation'. George Padmore (1902–1959), six years older than Nkrumah and working in anti-imperialist circles in London, became an ideological mentor and a lifelong friend to the younger man, whom he met in 1945. He followed Nkrumah in 1957 to live in independent Ghana and gave a Marxist tinge to Pan-Africanism. Sonderegger argues that Padmore's perspective of Pan-Africanism remained broader, while Nkrumah, the politician, was forced to reduce Pan-Africanism's outreach to meet the specific needs of his country.

Nkrumah regarded the members of the CPP as politically unsophisticated and lacking in ideological finesse. To change this, he founded the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute in Winneba in 1961. Here, future political leaders and administrators for Ghana were to be educated in two-year courses in socialist ideology and 'Nkrumahism', which Nkrumah described as 'scientific socialism applied to countries emerging from colonialism'. But politicians from other parts of the continent also attended the institute in order to study and spread Nkrumah's ideal of African liberation and unity. KOFI DARKWAH (Winneba/Accra) reconstructs the history of the Institute from what remained of the records after a great deal of material was destroyed during and after the military takeover. His paper is based on interviews with some of the scholars who worked at the Institute. During the five years of its existence, the centre succeeded in providing cadres from liberation movements of different African colonies with the necessary training and logistical support. We can get an impression of Nkrumahism's influence by the fact that even a conservative like Malawi's Kamuzu Banda (1896–1947) spent some time in Ghana before returning to his home country to take up the political leadership there. Robert Mugabe (born 1924), who in 1980 became Prime Minister and in 1987 President of independent Zimbabwe, lived for a couple of years in Ghana, where he met his wife and studied for a period at the Institute.

Nkrumah certainly had an influence on party officials and freedom fighters from other countries. His political machinations were effective especially because of his impact on the broader population. He convinced people by his anti-colonialist perspectives as well as his personal charisma. He succeeded in broadening the popular movement for independence and opening it to a greater political role for women. Nkrumah not only used their potential in the independence movement but also contributed to a more equitable gender balance during his

years in office, as CYRELENE AMOAH-BOAMPONG (Legon) argues. In the context of African research on gender, she argues that European influence established 'western norms of male superiority' during the colonial period. In contrast, the influential market women in Ghana played a particularly decisive role in the mass mobilisation, and during the Nkrumah era, the state supported the development towards more egalitarian gender roles.

The use of pre-colonial history as a cultural resource was an important aspect of Nkrumah's ideology. When he applied Ghana, the name of a precolonial kingdom located northwest of the existing nation, to the new country, he was attempting to invoke a historical tradition of African political structures. His concept of an 'African personality' was adopted especially in the fields of cultural studies, arts, and theatre. In 1963, Nkrumah founded an Institute of African Studies as part of the University of Ghana in Legon near Accra. In his inauguration speech, Nkrumah emphasised the mediaeval tradition of African culture and demanded research on 'the depth of the African soul'.[5]

It was during this phase of emerging and promising success that the protest against and criticism of Nkrumah began.

OPPOSITION AND COUP

There is also a darker side of decolonisation, which can be seen in Nkrumah's interest in securing his own power base. KWAME OSEI KWARTENG and MARY OWUSU (Cape Coast) analyse the heterogeneous opposition movement that began in 1951. British indirect rule was based on cooperation with traditional authorities, who opposed the new situation. But also the small Europeanised educated elite, the 'intelligentsia', were soon estranged from the movement. After World War II, they felt neglected by Nkrumah's populist approach and collaborated with the colonial administration. Religious groups suspected him of being a Marxist and an atheist; the Ashanti opted for a federal government and feared being dominated by the southern part of the country, as of Accra, a southern city, was chosen as the national capital. Kwarteng and Owusu give a periodisation of the opposition against Nkrumah in different phases and explain why all attempts to form a united front within one opposition party failed.

NANA YAW B. SAPONG (Legon) takes a closer look at the crucial years from 1948 to 1951 and the forces that brought about political change. He tells the story of Nkrumah and the opposition against him in a slightly different way. He does not emphasise the splintered and uncoordinated forms of protest but addresses opposing forces as 'social movements', referring to the approach of Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow. If we concentrate only on the person of Nkrumah, we overlook the history of organised forms of collective action against foreign domination

5 Nkrumah, *The African Genius*, Reedited in: Takyiwaa Manuh/Esi Sutherland-Addy (eds.), *Africa in contemporary Perspective. A Textbook for Undergraduate Students*, Accra 2013, VI–XII, here: X.

long before Nkrumah appeared on the scene. Looking back to the 1830s, Sapong describes chiefs as the 'Old Guard', who rejected British intervention in their affairs. After the 1920s, resistance was taken over by the 'New Guard' and later on by the 'Verandah Boys', young urban people, who often worked as houseboys or secretaries and had no other place to sleep than their masters' verandas. Nkrumah mobilised these people through the CPP from 1949 onwards, culminating in a 1950 strike. Nkrumah was found guilty as the organiser of this illegal strike and, as a prisoner, was elevated to the status of 'political martyr'.

SAMUEL ANIEGYE NTEWUSU (Legon/Leiden) analyses why Nkrumah's attempts at developing the agricultural potential of Northern Ghana eventually failed. Cooperation between the British and the chiefs was regulated in treaties, and the chiefs were represented in the Legislative Council. In 1900, the northern territories were integrated into the Gold Coast. Traditional cultivation methods were much improved during the following decades. The production of cotton was mechanised with the use of cotton bales and presses. But Nkrumah's plans for mechanisation and installing big state farms were unfitted to a situation still marked by traditional farming methods. Although programmes to train people in modern agriculture were initiated, these courses were as unsuccessful, as were other government endeavours in the Northern Region. Ntewusu analyses how the misunderstandings between the political concepts and traditional forms of agricultural work ended in confusion, mismanagement, and crop failures.

Nkrumah tried to abolish, or at least demote, chiefs using the argument that there was no place for an aristocracy within a modern democracy. Revolutionary ideology, his own brand of socialism, and radical anti-colonialism were also used in another case of eliminating potential challenges to his rule. Nkrumah used all means at his disposal to bring the agricultural entrepreneurs, the cocoa farmers, under government control and destroy any economic power that was independent of the state. So Ghana was, on the one hand, a shining model of decolonisation, but on the other, it became an example of abuse of power by an ambitious politician. Was this self-aggrandisement or, as he claimed, a precondition for a policy of revolutionary change? The sometimes brutal way he pushed rivals aside and later even had them arrested and incarcerated gives evidence that a pluralistic democracy with a broader party system and open discussion of different positions was not part of Nkrumah's vision for Africa's future. He transformed Ghana with astonishing speed into a dictatorship.

After a number of assassination attempts against his person, Nkrumah further entrenched himself in power. Whether these attempts were really the cause or just a welcome pretence for a crackdown on the opposition cannot be decided. But it is obvious that Nkrumah quite quickly ended democratic competition and free speech. This transformation into an authoritarian form of rule culminated in the establishment of a one-party state in 1964 through a doubtful referendum. Arguments in favour of the one-party state insist that only this political framework makes it possible to integrate a multitude of different ethnic groups.

OTTO POHL (Legon) sheds new light on the army coup that removed Nkrumah from power in 1966. He uses American sources that were declassified in 1999 and

published in Ghana in 2005. During the Cold War, both the United States and the Soviet Union watched developments in the new state of Ghana because of its model function for other African states. The CIA in particular observed the growing friendship between Ghana and the Soviet Union with deep suspicion and distrust. This was the ideological context of the CIA's support of anti-Nkrumah forces in Ghana and its activities to destabilise Nkrumah's government. American politicians regarded Nkrumah's book *Neo-Colonialism. The Last Stage of Imperialism* (1965) as an attempt 'to undermine our interests'. The military junta that overthrew Nkrumah was supported by the USA, and the coup itself was 'directly linked' to the one against Sukarno in Indonesia. Pohl comes to the conclusion that Nkrumah's fall from power was planned at least one year before it actually happened by various partners in cooperation with the CIA.

MEMORY AND PLACE IN HISTORY

Cultural memory and the politics of memory have been intensely discussed in the last several years. The images of historical persons are not only based on political facts and events but are complex constructions involving discourse, imagination, symbols, and places of memory, thereby changing and adapting to different perspectives and attitudes. It is significant that opinions on Nkrumah and his rule oscillate between extremes; he is seen as either a dictator or a hero. Sometimes, the historical perspective shows a shift from the more positive first phase of the struggle for independence to a condemnation of his authoritarian rule after 1957.

FELIX MÜLLER (Berlin) gives a historiographical overview of the changing assessments of Nkrumah's rule during the last four decades. The period of the 1969–1975 liberal–conservative parliament, led by Kofi Busia's Progress Party, was characterised by a complete condemnation of Nkrumah's reign. The accusations against Nkrumah included attacks against his person: that he was opportunistic and became a politician only because his intellectual career had run into a dead end. Some historians criticised him as an egotist interested only in personal glory. This tendency changed during the 1980s, when Nkrumah was historically rehabilitated. The reason for this reassessment, in Müller's view, was the new political stability in Ghana, which allowed for a new approach to the early years of the post-colonial state. As an exemplary study of Ghana's historiography this contribution traces historians' changing perspectives.

CAROLA LENTZ (Mainz) uses different material but comes to similar conclusions. She describes the statues of Nkrumah and their fate after his downfall and explores their symbolic meaning in the context of nation-building. Nkrumah's government encouraged a personality cult which found expression in a number of statues that were displayed in public spaces. Lentz characterises the controversies surrounding these statues as 'monument wars'. After the military coup, these statues disappeared; some were even publicly damaged or destroyed. This anti-Nkrumah attitude changed after 1972, when Nkrumah received a state funeral in Accra. A mausoleum was built in the capital, and in 2007, one of the statues was

recovered and placed there. Discussions about Nkrumah will continue, but the Memorial Park in the capital will remain a place of lasting memory within a stabilised society.

Nkrumah proved to be an energetic moderniser after assuming the office of chief minister. Although he was educated mainly in the cultural sciences, he nevertheless developed a profound interest in technical issues. Ghana invested heavily in infrastructure projects such as roads, electrical grids, and dams and also in the extension of education and health services. HARCOURT FULLER (Atlanta) analyses Nkrumah's attempts to modernise Ghana with the help of science and technology. Part of this programme was the construction of a nuclear reactor intended to improve energy generation, a plan that made Eastern and Western powers equally nervous. It also stood in contrast to Nkrumah's proclaimed repudiation of nuclear power and was responsible for the erosion of his credibility. Industrialisation was accompanied by educational measures intended to give the people a better understanding of technical processes. Fuller describes Nkrumah's efforts to win experts, hold exhibitions, and build museums for technology. Nkrumah relied on the financial support of the United States for the Volta River (Akosombo) Dam, even as he negotiated with Eastern powers to realise his dream of Ghana's becoming a nuclear power. Fuller concludes that Nkrumah's 'white elephant' projects failed and, therefore, industrialisation remains incomplete.

Although an ambiguous figure, Nkrumah remains an ever-present memory in Ghana today. His birthday is celebrated every year as a bank holiday. As a highly educated man, he serves as a role model for pupils. His portrait is on the exercise books that are distributed for free to schoolchildren. Although his political interventions in academia are criticised at the University of Ghana Legon near Accra,[6] the country's second university in Kumasi is named after him: the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) and proudly builds on the ideas of its patron. Nkrumah enjoys even greater prestige at the University in Cape Coast: 'Nkrumah accorded education a top priority in his scheme of national development',[7] concludes the *History of the University of Cape Coast* in 2012. The book is dedicated to him, calling him '*Osagyefo*', 'Redeemer', the honorific used during his time as president. In the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana, his Pan-African visions are still of central importance. He is important for identity politics within the arts and still looms large as a moderniser. He supported the Ghana Medical School, which allowed the first qualified Ghanaian surgeon, Charles Odamtten Easmon (1913–1994), to perform the first open-heart surgery in Accra in1964.

Nkrumah's ambiguous legacy is aptly expressed by two African intellectuals. Wole Soyinka criticised Nkrumah's reign in 2008 as a 'false mystical, romantic

6 Francis Agbodeka, *A History of University of Ghana. Half a Century of Higher Education (1948–1998)*, Accra 1998. Nkrumah is criticised because of his authoritarian interventions in ignoring the traditions of the house and the preferences of the academic staff, 138ff.

7 K. Osei Kwarteng/S. Y. Boadi-Siaw/Da. A. Dwarko, *A History of the University of Cape Coast. Fifty Years of Excellence in Tertiary Education (1962–2012)*, Cape Coast 2012, 3.

way, we felt we were the generation to produce this. I often refer to my generation as the "wasted generation" because of that disparity between vision, aspiration, and achievement.'[8] Similarly, Wangari Maathai writes on Nkrumah: 'Today, many Ghanaians and other Africans realise he was a wasted talent.' [9] But in history, is anything wasted?

In our interconnected world, it is more important than ever to exchange knowledge and research among scholars from different parts of the world. This book intends to improve the cooperation and to deepen the discussion between African and European researchers on a challenging and current topic in post-colonial African history.

A great deal of cooperation between Ghana and Europe was necessary to finalise this volume. First of all, we want to thank our authors who entrusted their research results to us and communicated with the editors in a sympathetic manner. Prof Jürgen Elvert, (University of Cologne) Head of the Ranke Society and the Advisory Council (Wissenschaftlicher Beirat) were kind enough to include this volume in the Society's publication series. We are also thankful to Kelly Thompson (Flensburg), who edited the English texts. Ingo Löppenberg did the formatting, together with Şahin Mavili. We say thank you very much to all of them.

Bea Lundt/Christoph Marx
September 2016

8 Wole Soyinka, Foreword in: Ivor Agyeman-Duah (ed.), *An Economic History of Ghana. Reflections on a Half-Century of Challenges and Progress*, Banbury 2008, 1.

9 Wangari Maathai, *The Challenge for Africa. A New Vision*, London 2009, 32.

VISIONS AND POLITICS

HOW THE EMPIRE WROTE BACK

Notes on the Struggle of George Padmore and Kwame Nkrumah

Arno Sonderegger

Abstract: In the history of Pan-Africanism, the relationship between George Padmore and Kwame Nkrumah – both outstanding agents and symbols of the anti-imperialist and anti-colonial struggle – has a special place. From their first meeting in1945 until Padmore's death in 1959, theirs was a close friendship and working alliance concerning the political effectiveness of Pan-Africanism. They shared a common vision and a common cause. Focusing on the double issue of anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism, this paper looks at that history from various angles and stresses the validity of important parts of their analyses.

In recent years, historians of Africa have increasingly come to consider 'development' the dominant catchword of the decades from the 1930s to the 1970s, subsequently broadening its semantic reach to include not only economics (planned investments to foster economic growth) but also society (investments in educational and health facilities), and, lastly, politics (limited African participation in decision-making processes). Frederick Cooper, for instance, called the years from 1940 to 1973 'the development era'.[1] This allows for taking into account the fact that the African decolonisation that started in the 1950s was actually not the radical breaking point that it was imagined to be back then. Indeed, the 'shadow of colonialism' loomed large over much of the 20th century.[2] However, the emphasis on development must not lead us to consider the events of the times in terms of a progressive story. This would be a severe misreading of the past, not only on theoretical grounds (teleology, normativity, anachronism),[3] but because it contradicts what is known about the concrete events of the time in question. French historian Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch aptly named the beginnings of the 'development era', when colonial authorities started thinking about how to capitalise on their colonial possessions, 'the modernisation of exploitation'.[4] This is quite to the point. It resulted in growing resistance on behalf of colonial peoples and the claims to decolonisation that reached a first peak in the wake of World War II.

1 See Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940. The Past of the Present*, Cambridge 2002, 85ff., 91ff.

2 See Arno Sonderegger et al. (eds.), *Afrika im 20. Jahrhundert. Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, Vienna 2011, 9ff., 231ff.

3 See Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question. Theory, Knowledge, History*, Berkeley 2005, 12–22.

4 Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, *Petite histoire de l'Afrique*, Paris 2011, 178ff.

The two men who are at the centre of my text played important roles in the struggles that relate to colonialism, development, and decolonisation. Early on, they grasped the limitations of imperialism and colonial rule and did everything open to them to challenge foreign rule. Both of them sought to seize the opportunities for African emancipation that arose in course of their lifetimes. George Padmore (1903–1959) and Kwame Nkrumah (1909–1972) belonged to almost the same generation, but in other respects, they were remarkably different. One came from Africa, the other from the Caribbean. Padmore had already built a distinguished career as political activist when they first met, while Nkrumah was not a political factor at all.[5] But Padmore instantly recognised something in Nkrumah, and, according to his biographer, 'he seems to have transferred his hopes for a united free Africa from [Nigerian Nnamdi] Azikiwe to Nkrumah, though at times he grew impatient even with the latter.'[6] There is some truth to this statement as well as in the following:

> 'he [Padmore] was immensely more experienced and cosmopolitan, but, unlike the younger man, Padmore was too sophisticated, too prone to doubt, too humorous to match Nkrumah's single-mindedness. … Nkrumah, by any standard, was no commonplace anti-colonialist; he was a revolutionary.'[7]

My text is loosely structured in two parts. The first two chapters give the context in which the close relationship between the two men developed and highlight the great emphasis both of them placed on African liberation and Pan-Africanism. The next two chapters focus on one crucial matter, which was sharply criticised by both but with distinctively different emphases: colonial rule and global imperialism.

I. KWAME NKRUMAH'S POLITICAL CAREER AND RELEVANCE

Seventy years ago, in 1945, the political star of Kwame Nkrumah started to rise. In less than a decade, he would gain in both regional and international influence and was to grace the cover of *Time Magazine*, which aptly titled him 'Gold Coast's Kwame Nkrumah'.[8] Not long after, with Ghana's declaration of independence on 6th March 1957, Nkrumah was given the title *Osagyefo*, meaning

5 On Padmore's political career in the 1920s and 1930s, see Jonathan Derrick, *Africa's 'Agitators'. Militant Anti-Colonialism in Africa and the West, 1918–1939*, London 2008; Susan D. Pennybacker, *From Scottsboro to Munich. Race and Political Culture in 1930s Britain*, Princeton 2009.

6 James R. Hooker, *Black Revolutionary. George Padmore's Path from Communism to Pan-Africanism*, New York 1967, 91.

7 Hooker, *Black Revolutionary*, 91–92.

8 *Time Magazine* 9th February 1953, front cover.