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**African Liberation and Unity in Nkrumah's Ghana: A Study of the Role of "Pan-African Institutions" in the making of Ghana's foreign Policy, 1957 - 1966**

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**Citation**

Grilli, M. (2015, November 3). *African Liberation and Unity in Nkrumah's Ghana: A Study of the Role of "Pan-African Institutions" in the making of Ghana's foreign Policy, 1957 - 1966*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/36074>

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**Issue Date:** 2015-11-03

# 1. Ghana's Pan-African Policy from Independence to the AAPC (March 1957- December 1958)

## Introduction

Immediately since its independence, Ghana became one of the main sponsors of African liberation and unity in the continent. The whole foreign policy of Nkrumah's government was based primarily on the achievement of these two targets, both relating to Pan-Africanism. All the strategies designed by Nkrumah to support the unification of Africa and its independence from colonialism will be defined in this thesis as his Pan-African policy.

The first chapter will describe the conception and actualization of Ghana's Pan-African policy during the first phase of Nkrumah's government (March 1957- December 1958).<sup>1</sup> It will focus in particular on the establishment of the first two "Pan-African" institutions of Ghana: the Office of the Adviser to the Prime Minister on African Affairs and the African Affairs Centre.

The first two sub-chapters will present briefly the basis of Ghana's foreign policy as it was elaborated before March 1957.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, its genesis dates back to the period Nkrumah

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<sup>1</sup> That is, from Ghana's independence (6 March 1957) to the All African Peoples' Conference (a Pan-African conference held in Accra on 5-13 December 1958). Kwame Nkrumah (1909-1972) began his political career by being elected Leader of the Government Business of the Gold Coast colony in 1951. He became Prime Minister of the Gold Coast in 1952. He then led the colony to independence winning other two rounds of elections during this path (1954 and 1956). At the time of the Gold Coast independence - when the country changed its name into Ghana - Nkrumah became the first Prime Minister of the country. Until 1960, Ghana's state was still formally headed by the Queen of the United Kingdom, officially represented in the African country by a Governor-General (the last Governor-General, holding the office from March 1957 to July 1960, was Lord Listowell). Only in July 1960, the Republic of Ghana was officially proclaimed and Kwame Nkrumah became its President.

<sup>2</sup> Some of the most important studies on the history of this period make brief references to the early conception of Ghana's foreign policy. See, for instance, See D. Austin, *Politics in Ghana 1946-60*, Oxford University Press, London, 1964, p. 395. Even in the case of studies specifically devoted to the history of Ghana's foreign policy, the part concerning the period before 1957 is often not analyzed in depth. See, for instance, K. Armah, *Peace without Power* and M. Dei-Anang, *The Administration of Ghana's Foreign Relations*. W. Scott Thompson in his *Ghana's Foreign Policy* describes in length the period before Ghana's independence.

spent abroad. There will be a particular focus on his early political experiences and the influence exerted by George Padmore on the young African leader, especially on his Pan-Africanist positions.<sup>3</sup> The figure of Padmore is absolutely crucial. Indeed, the Trinidadian Pan-Africanist did not only support politically Nkrumah but he became a protagonist of the conception and implementation of Ghana's foreign policy. The first sub-chapter will try to trace the *file rouge* between Nkrumah and Padmore's past experiences and their work in the Gold Coast and then in Ghana since the early 1950s. The second one will move the analysis forward, examining in depth the ideological basis of Ghana's liberation and unity policies and the political model Nkrumah wanted to export among the African liberation movements.

The rest of the chapter will describe Ghana's Pan-African policy in the first two years of Nkrumah's rule. This period was dominated by a cautious, yet radical, foreign policy. Since 1957, Nkrumah presented his country as a political guide for the liberation movements in the rest of the continent, promoting nonviolence as the best weapon to conduct the liberation struggle in Africa. Ghana's Prime Minister organized two international conferences to attract governments, parties and movements to the Pan-Africanist principles: the Independent African States Conference (IASC) and the All-African People's Conference. In addition, he established a union with Guinea (November 1958), in order to pave the way for a continental unity project.

In this period, Nkrumah and Padmore worked also on the establishment of two institutions, specifically designed to perform Ghana's Pan-African policy: the Office of the Adviser to the Prime Minister on African Affairs - headed by George Padmore himself - and the African Affairs Centre (AAC). The former became one of the most important institutions of Ghana; established outside the control of the Foreign Service, it was meant to operate using "un-orthodox" diplomatic means.

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However, he provides a very critical analysis of Kwame Nkrumah and George Padmore's contribution to the making of the complex system of Ghana's foreign policy. See W.S., Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, pp. 3-27.

<sup>3</sup> George Padmore (28 June 1903 – 23 September 1959) was one of the most important and renowned Pan-Africanists. Born in Trinidad, he collected political experiences in both socialist and Pan-Africanist circles since the 1920s. He worked as a journalist and activist in the United States, Soviet Union, Germany and the United Kingdom. In 1945, he met Kwame Nkrumah in London.

Padmore's entry into Ghana's politics was not uncontested. He particularly resented the opposition of several elements of the Ghanaian civil service. This troubled relationship was bound to evolve in a general confrontation between the "orthodox" and "unorthodox" machineries of Ghana's foreign policy system. This chapter will present evidences of the clashes between Padmore and other members of the service. There will also be an analysis of the functioning of the brand-new institutions, their aims and targets and the composition of their staff.

## **1.1. From Manchester to Accra**

Ghana's Pan-African policy cannot be understood in all its complexity without making reference to the political biographies of Kwame Nkrumah and George Padmore, the very protagonists of its conception. A young African student one and a Trinidadian journalist the other, they both became supporters of Pan-Africanism in the 1930s, when they also acquired their first experiences in the anti-colonial struggle. Their lives definitely changed once their paths crossed at the Manchester Pan-African Congress, where they started working together to actualize their ideals into a solid political project. Between 1945 and 1957, they began to give shape to what was going to become Ghana's Pan-African policy.

The experience Kwame Nkrumah acquired during the period he spent abroad (1935 - 1947) proved fundamental to give shape to his political thoughts and to provide him with the know-how of politics. In 1935, he left his homeland, the Gold Coast, for the first time, for the United States, where he had planned to pursue higher education. At the time, he was still not involved much in politics. He had also a very general idea on nationalism and Pan-Africanism.<sup>4</sup> The trip to the US was going to change all of that.

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<sup>4</sup> In his autobiography, Nkrumah devotes only few pages to his political experiences before his trip to United States. He mentions his involvement in an association of teachers in the early 1930s. He also refers to his early introduction to politics thanks to Mr. S.R. Wood, at the time secretary of the National Congress of British West Africa, the nationalist party established by Casely Hayford a decade before. He recalls having

During the American period Nkrumah begun studying intensively the most known and influential ideologies.<sup>5</sup> He also examined the activities of American political parties in order to understand how to organize his own.<sup>6</sup> It was in this period, that he met C.R.L. James, a fundamental figure for him and George Padmore.<sup>7</sup> According to Nkrumah himself, James gave an important contribution to his political background as he taught him “how an underground movement worked”.<sup>8</sup> While in the US, Nkrumah also began to be engaged in political activity. He became a leader of the African Students’ Association and he published a political newspaper, “The African Interpreter”.<sup>9</sup>

After ten years in the US, Nkrumah was essentially formed as a politician and ready to undertake the fight for African independence. However, he needed one more step forward. At the time, he was still cut out from the actual front of the anti-colonial struggle

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met Nnamdi Azikiwe and to knowing Wallace-Johnson from his articles and his activity with the labor organizations in Sierra Leone. He also underlines that he was supported for his trip to US by George Grant, the first president of the United Gold Coast Convention, the first party to which Nkrumah was associated after his return from London in late 1947. Still, according to him, it was the news about Mussolini’s invasion of Ethiopia, heard while he was in the UK, which brought him definitely into politics. Quoting from his autobiography: “[...] I heard an excited newspaper boy shouting something unintelligible as he grabbed a bundle of the latest editions from a motor van, and on the placard I read: ‘MUSSOLINI INVADES ETHIOPIA’. That was all I needed. [...] My nationalism surged to the fore; I was ready and willing to go through hell itself, if need be, in order to achieve my object”, in K. Nkrumah, *Ghana: the Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah*, Nelson, Edinburgh 1957, p.27. The episode might sound novelized and Nkrumah’s words rather rhetorical. However, it might also tell a part of the truth on Nkrumah’s path towards political commitment. Before getting into contact with the Western world and generally with world politics, Nkrumah could not have a complete vision of the colonial question. The question of the invasion of Ethiopia was a general catalyst of all the anti-colonial sentiments in the world, including probably the one of Nkrumah himself.

<sup>5</sup> Nkrumah underlines in particular the influence exerted by Marx and Lenin on his vision of socialism and the influence of Garvey for what concerns Pan-Africanism. Quoting from his autobiography: “I concentrated on finding a formula by which the whole colonial question and the problem of imperialism could be solved. I read Hegel, Karl Marx, Engels, Lenin and Mazzini. The writings of these men did much to influence me in my revolutionary ideas and activities, and Karl Marx and Lenin particularly impressed me as I felt sure that their philosophy was capable of solving these problems. But I think that of all the literature that I studied, the book that did more than any other to fire my enthusiasm was Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey published in 1923”, in K., Nkrumah, *Ghana*, p.45. With regard to Pan-Africanism, Nkrumah quoted Garvey only as his source of inspiration. Undoubtedly, he was far more influenced by the political visions of Edward Du Bois and George Padmore than the one of Garvey. For an insight into Padmore’s opinion about Du Bois and Garvey see G. Padmore, *Pan-Africanism or Communism?*, Dennis Dobson, London, 1956, pp.87-151.

<sup>6</sup> They included: Republicans, Democrats, Communist and Trotskyites. See K., Nkrumah, *Ghana*, p.44.

<sup>7</sup> Cyril Lionel Robert James (1901-1989) was a Trinidadian historian, journalist and political activist. He is known to be one of the most important Pan-Africanists of his time and also one of the most radical. James himself wrote about Nkrumah when he traced a political history of his government in Ghana. The book is: C.R.L., James, *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution*.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, p.44

<sup>9</sup> K., Nkrumah, *Ghana*, p.43; Ako Adjei and Jones Quartey were also involved in the publication.

and he needed to come into contact with other important African leaders. Furthermore, he had to acquire other political experiences in order to transform his ideals into a solid political project.

The perfect solution to Nkrumah's needs proved to be his participation to the Fifth Pan-African Congress, held at Manchester in December 1945.<sup>10</sup> By working for the organization of the Congress, he made his final entry into the most advanced anti-colonial circles of the time. Moreover, he could also meet the renowned Pan-Africanist George Padmore, the man who was meant to change his conception of politics forever.

In May 1945, Nkrumah left New York for London in order to participate to the work for the Congress. George Padmore was his only contact in the British capital city and he was the one who welcomed the young African leader at his arrival.<sup>11</sup> At the time, Padmore was heading the Pan-African Federation (PAF), the organization chosen by Du Bois to arrange the conference.<sup>12</sup> As the official head of the Congress organization, Padmore immediately involved Nkrumah into the activities of the PAF and he started working with him hand by hand in the practical work for the Conference, appointing him also as secretary of the Conference itself.

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<sup>10</sup> The congress of 1945 was the fifth of its kind. The others took place in Paris (1919), London and Brussels (1921), London and Lisbon (1923) and New York (1927). They were all preceded by the 1900 London Pan-African Conference. See G. Padmore, *Pan-Africanism or Communism?*, pp.152-170 and Thompson Bakpetu, *Africa and Unity*, Longman Pub Group, 1977, pp.57-60. Legum is the only author who counts the congresses starting with the 1900 conference. The 1945 Manchester congress becomes then the sixth Pan-African congress. See C. Legum, *Pan-Africanism, A Short Political Guide*, Pall Mall Press, London, 1962, pp.24-32.

<sup>11</sup> K. Nkrumah, *Ghana*, p. 49.

<sup>12</sup> William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (1868-1863) is generally considered as one of the fathers of Pan-Africanism. As the "spiritual" leader of the movement, he had an enormous influence on Padmore, especially since the latter break with the communists in the early 1930s. At the time of the conference, he was unanimously considered as the most important personality of the Pan-African movement and he had theoretically the last words in any decision. Still, according to L.E. James, who quotes Adi's "George Padmore and the 1945 Manchester Pan-African Congress", Padmore and his PAF co-opted Du Bois into the congress and not the other way around. See L.E. James, "*What we put in black and white*": *George Padmore and the practice of anti-imperial politics*. PhD thesis, The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), 2012, pp.147-148 and H. Adi-M. Sherwood, *The 1945 Manchester Pan-African Congress Revisited*, New Beacon Books, London, 1995, pp.66-96. Padmore and C.R.L. James' accounts are quite different, since both of them declared that it was Du Bois who involved the PAF in the first place. See C.R.L. James, *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution*, p.65. See also G. Padmore, *Pan-Africanism or Communism?*, p.154. For further information on Padmore's biography see G.R. Hooker, *Black Revolutionary. George Padmore's Path from Communism to Pan-Africanism*, Pall Mall Press, London, 1967; C.R.L. James, *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution* and M. Sherwood, *Pan-African History: Political Figures from Africa and the Diaspora since 1787*, Routledge, London, 2003.

This meeting marked the life of both of them. As for Nkrumah, he found both a mentor and an ally to strengthen his political project. As for Padmore, he met the young and radical African leader he was looking for: someone ready to hand over the Pan-African torch from the “Diaspora” to the Africans.<sup>13</sup>

For Nkrumah, working with Padmore was a fundamental experience. The latter provided him with all his knowledge, acquired in his long years of anti-colonial activities in different countries and with different means.<sup>14</sup> Nkrumah could also appreciate how wide Padmore’s net of political contacts was and how important was this work for the Pan-Africanist struggle.<sup>15</sup> Everything surrounding the conference was a fertile ground for

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<sup>13</sup> According to L.E. James, Padmore saw in Nkrumah the figure of a “statesman”. See L.E. James, “*What we put in black and white*”, p. 194.

<sup>14</sup> Padmore had collected his first political experiences in the United States during the 1920s. Then, he worked in the USSR in the early 1930s as an American specialist and later as the head of the RILU (The Red International of Labor Unions, commonly known as the Profintern) Negro Bureau. At the same time he was lecturer at the Kutvu University and he also became a member of the Moscow City Soviet. While in the USSR, he collected useful political experiences in anti-colonial activities, he dealt with political contacts (for instance, Jomo Kenyatta) and he could travel throughout Africa. When Padmore moved to London, in 1935, he came into contact with the West African Students’ Union (WASU), led by the famous Pan-Africanist Ladipo Solanke. He then joined the International African Friends of Abyssinia (IAFA), an association established after Mussolini’s invasion of Ethiopia in order to coordinate the protests against it. C.R.L. James was its chairman (C.R.L. James, *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution*, p. 64.). Through the IAFA, Padmore came into contact even with West African politics as the organization was born after the so-called Gold Coast Committee. Behind this Committee there were both the Aborigines’ Rights Protection Society (ARPS) and several representatives of the chiefs of the Gold Coast. See G. Padmore, *Pan-Africanism or Communism?*, pp.144-146. In 1937, together with some of the members of the IAFA, he established the International African Service Bureau (IASB), the forerunner of the Pan-African Federation (the organization responsible for organizing the 1945 Manchester Congress). Among its leaders were George Padmore, Wallace Johnson, C.R.L. James, Jomo Kenyatta and Ras Makonnen. The Bureau was a politically independent office devoted to create and held contacts with Pan-African activists worldwide. The aim of the IASB was: “[...] to help enlighten public opinion, particularly in Great Britain (and other democratic countries possessing colonies inhabited by Africans and people of African descent) as to the true conditions in the various colonies, protectorates and mandated territories in Africa and the West Indies”. In Padmore, *Pan-Africanism or Communism?*, p.147. The final step for the IASB was to absorb even Du Bois’s experience and revive early Pan-Africanism. During the war, Du Bois’s “Pan-African Congress” was linked with the Bureau. This association brought, in June 1944, to the creation of the Pan-African Federation. See C.R.L., James, *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution*, p.65.

<sup>15</sup> Padmore had long-term experiences in managing a wide net of contacts. Manchester was the first conference he ever organized in his long political life. However, he had already a solid experience in organizing hundreds of activists worldwide and in dealing with political press. He had worked in these fields in the United States, Russia and Germany before moving to the UK in 1935. While working for the RILU in USSR he dealt with hundreds of African activists. According to James: “In the course of this work [at RILU] he was constantly in contact with African nationalist revolutionaries all over the world and himself visited and helped to organize revolutionary activities in various parts of Africa, acquiring an immense practical and theoretical experience”. In C.R.L. James, *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution*, p. 63. In Great Britain, the experiences with the IAFA (chaired by James) and then with the IASB provided him with further experiences in this field. James wrote



Nkrumah's evolution as a politician. As James underlined: "It was to this circle with its accumulated knowledge, experience and wide contacts that Nkrumah was introduced in June 1945. Nowhere in the world could he have found a better school".<sup>16</sup>

Padmore was for Nkrumah also a source of ideological inspiration. As Mensah had rightly underlined, the former influenced the latter in connecting organically the question of Gold Coast's independence with the liberation of the whole African continent.<sup>17</sup> While in the US, Nkrumah had already declared himself a Pan-Africanist but his call to the coordination of nationalist parties was still limited to British West Africa.<sup>18</sup> In line with this

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about Padmore's experience into the IASB: "Padmore himself carried on an unceasing correspondence with people all over the world. He made a precarious living by being correspondent for a great number of papers in the United States, in the West Indies, in West Africa, in East Africa, everywhere, and, through limited by the political opinions of his employees he gave his readers a steady stream of information about European matters that affected them. The Bureau published a journal in which it was free to say what it pleased and this was sent over the world.[...] The basis of that work and the development of ideas was Padmore's encyclopedic knowledge of Africa, of African politics and African personalities, his timeless correspondence with Africans who made the Bureau and its chairman their political headquarters when in London. C.R.L. James, *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution*, p.65. When Nkrumah and Padmore started working for organizing the conference, Padmore's experience emerged. Nkrumah devoted some lines of his autobiography to their work for the conference. "[...] We worked night and day in George's flat. We used to sit in his small kitchen, the wooden table completely covered by papers, a pot of tea which we always forgot until it had been made two or three hours and George typing at his small typewriter so fast that the papers were churned out they were being rolled off a printing press. We dispatched hundreds and hundreds of letters to the various organizations throughout Africa and the West Indies explaining the aims of the Congress and the political tactics that should be adopted to achieve liberation in the colonies." K. Nkrumah, *Ghana*, p. 52.

<sup>16</sup> C.R.L. James, *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution*, p.77.

<sup>17</sup> J.J. Mensah, *The Bureau of African Affairs*, p.34.

<sup>18</sup> In his autobiography Nkrumah recalls his political experience in the US with African students and his attempts to organize them under one Pan-African framework. Still, no references were made to solid projects of political union apart from an ideal call for unity in a non-specified future. Nkrumah wrote: "I and the Gold Coast students [...] felt strongly that the question of territorial solidarity - that is to say, each territory mapping out and planning its own liberation - could not hope for ultimate success until it was linked up with the other movements in West Africa. We believed that unless territorial freedom was ultimately linked up with the Pan-African movement for the liberation of the whole continent, there would be no hope of freedom and equality for the African and for people of African descent in any part of the world. The idea of West African unity, which, of course, I strongly supported, became the accepted philosophy of the African Students' Association and we directed the students that when they returned to their respective territories they should work hard politically to organize particular areas, but that in so doing they should maintain close contact with the political activities of their territories. By this means they would maintain not only unity within their own territories, but would pave the way for unity among all the territories in West Africa". In K. Nkrumah, *Ghana*, pp.43-44. Nkrumah was undoubtedly influenced by Joseph Ephraim Casely-Hayford (1866-1930), probably the most famous Pan-Africanist of the Gold Coast of his times. Just few years before, Casely-Hayford had established something between a nationalist and a Pan-Africanist organization: the National Congress of British West Africa (NCBWA), which was active between 1920 and 1930. The NCBWA had tried to connect all the nationalists of British West Africa, providing them with a common platform in order to present protests and requests to London. Nkrumah proved his admiration for Casely-Hayford by quoting him in his "Towards Colonial Freedom" (1945): "The future of West Africa demands that the youth of West Africa should start life

position, at the Manchester Congress, he represented the West African region and he advocated the inclusion of a call for unity of the region among the resolutions.<sup>19</sup> Padmore contributed to extend this call to the whole continent, radicalizing his conception of Pan-Africanism.<sup>20</sup> On his part, Nkrumah showed Padmore his own growing political skills and his eagerness to take the lead of the struggle for African liberation and unity.<sup>21</sup>

The Manchester Congress was the occasion for Nkrumah to discuss unification projects with other leaders (for instance, Azikiwe) and to put the basis for a Pan-African platform. Immediately after its closing, he contributed to the establishment of the Pan-Africanist organization West African National Secretariat (WANS) and he became its first secretary-general. This body was created to unite West African nationalist movements under one flag, inheriting the tradition of Casely Hayford's National Congress of British West Africa. The WANS had a short life, immediately interrupted after Nkrumah's return to the Gold Coast (1947). It was, however, an important step forward towards the establishment of a solid Pan-Africanist platform. For the first time, the WANS made reference to a union of African states. Indeed, a secret revolutionary group within the organization called "The Circle" produced a project for a union of socialist republics to be established in British West Africa. Nkrumah and Padmore were both members of the group.<sup>22</sup>

During the period spent in UK, Nkrumah worked also with African students connecting their struggles with the Pan-African one. In 1945, he became Vice President of

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with a distinct objective. Of brain power we are assured. If mechanical skill there is no dearth. What is wanted is the directing hand which will point to the right goal. A united West Africa arises, chastened and inspired with a conviction that in union is her strength, her weakness in discord", K. Nkrumah, *Towards Colonial Freedom*, Panaf, London, 1962, p. vii.

<sup>19</sup> G. Padmore (ed. by), *History of the Pan-African Congress*, Hammersmith Bookshop, London 1963, p.32.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, p.55.

<sup>21</sup> During the period spent in Great Britain (1945-1947), Nkrumah kept exploring the world of politics by studying - as he had done in the US - the local parties in action. He recalls in his autobiography: "When I was in England I had associated myself with all parties ranging from the extreme right to the extreme left in order to gain as much knowledge as I could to help me in organizing my own nationalist party on the best possible lines when I eventually returned to my country", K. Nkrumah, *Ghana*, pp. 79-80.

<sup>22</sup> The third important member of the group after Padmore and Nkrumah was Kojo Botsio (1916-2001), one of Nkrumah's closest friend and political ally. On the "The Circle" affair see K. Nkrumah, *Ghana*, pp.79-81 and pp.85-87. Interestingly, according to Nkrumah, the British authorities misquoted a passage of a document of The Circle in his possession after being arrested. They reported that the aim of The Circle was to establish a "Union of West African Soviet Socialist Republics". The original document did not include the word "Soviet". For the text of the document see K. Nkrumah, *Ghana*, pp.303-304.

Solanke's West African Students' Union (WASU), at the time one of the most important Pan-Africanist organizations. With the WASU, Nkrumah understood the potential of the net of African students to spread Manchester's ideals worldwide. At the time of Ghana's independence, the support to African students became an integral part of Accra's foreign policy.

Padmore was impressed by Nkrumah's ability in dealing with the net of African activists and also by his conviction in the Pan-African cause. With the WANS, Nkrumah had showed him that the time was ripe for the "West Indians" to pass the Pan-African torch to the African continent.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, the future Prime Minister of Ghana also impressed him when he became the first leader to apply the indications of the Pan-African Congress to the struggle for the independence of the Gold Coast, another important achievement towards the road to put Pan-Africanism in practice.

At the Manchester Congress, Nkrumah had discussed concrete strategies for achieving African freedom and he had developed his own conception of nationalism. After the Congress, he worked for translating all the indications of the congress into the reality of the struggle for the Gold Coast's independence. Manchester's final resolutions included two main guidelines to be used by liberation movements: the use of nonviolence and the need to "organize the masses" in order to unite them under one nationalist flag and avoid the rise of tribalism.<sup>24</sup> Nkrumah absorbed both indications and he transformed them into

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<sup>23</sup> Quoting from James: "Nkrumah not only took, he gave [...] to theoretical study, propaganda and agitation, the building and maintaining of contacts abroad he added the organization politically of Africans and people of African descent in London. He helped to found a West African National Secretariat in London for the purpose of organizing the struggle in West Africa. The leading members of this were Africans, and thus Africans with roots in Africa began to take over from the West Indians who had hitherto been the leaders". In C.R.L. James, *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution*, p.77.

<sup>24</sup> On the "organization of the masses" see G. Padmore, (ed. by), *History of the Pan-African Congress*, p.7. With regard to nonviolence, Manchester marked an historical change in this direction on the field of anti-colonialism. Before to the Second World War, the radical wings of the anti-colonial movements were influenced by the communist theories of the people's war of liberation. However, the lack of any revolutionary process in Europe after the war and the success of Gandhi's non violent anti-colonial resistance led the radical Pan-Africanists to choose nonviolence as their main weapon for the independence' struggle. C.R.L. James perfectly describes the shift from the idea of an armed rebellion to that of nonviolence just after the Second World War. C.R.L. James, *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution*, pp.71-74; For an outline of the question of violence related to Pan-Africanism see E.L Dumor, *Ghana, OAU and Southern Africa*, pp.33 and ff. Violence became the last resort, to be "held in reserve" (C.R.L., James, *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution*, p.71) and to be used against colonialism just in case of an armed repression of liberation movements.

successful tactical weapons for the independence struggle of his country. Indeed, he developed his own non-violent resistance method, the “Positive Action” and he established his own mass nationalist party: the Convention People’s Party (CPP).

Once he got back to the Gold Coast, Nkrumah ran the youth wing of the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) for almost two years. At the time, the UGCC was the main nationalist party of the colony but it still represented only the higher classes of urban populations. Nkrumah worked hard to transform it into a true mass nationalist party by spreading UGCC branches throughout the colony. However, he soon realized that he needed a break from the Gold Coast Convention if he wanted to follow the steps indicated by the Pan-African Congress.

In 1949, he finally established a brand new mass nationalist party, the Convention People’s Party. The CPP represented all the classes and ethnicities of the Gold Coast, sponsoring centralization against any federal solution – that is - national unity versus tribalism. On January 1950 - thanks to the strength of the party - Nkrumah could launch the “Positive Action campaign”, a series of protests and boycotts which threatened the stability of the colonial government.<sup>25</sup> The campaign was a successful one: elections for the self-government followed (1951) and the CPP won the majority of the seats. Nkrumah became the first “Leader of the Government Business”.

Padmore was impressed by Nkrumah’s achievements in the field of African liberation. According to Padmore, the victory of the CPP was the result of Nkrumah’s effort to build a modern centralized nationalist movement and his choice to use the Positive Action as its main weapon.<sup>26</sup> These were precisely Manchester’s indication put into practice. According to Padmore, Nkrumah’s experience in the Gold Coast was the last tract

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<sup>25</sup> For Nkrumah’s personal account of the use of Positive Action in the struggle for the Gold Coast self-government see K. Nkrumah, *Ghana*, pp.110-122. See also G. Padmore, *Pan-Africanism or Communism?*, pp.171-185; See also K. Nkrumah, “*What I mean by Positive Action*”, undated CPP pamphlet.

<sup>26</sup> L.E. James quotes Padmore on the question of federalism in 1954: “The West Indies leaders are divided as those in Nigeria on the question of: to who is political power to be transferred in a federal set-up? The only colonial territory that has met this essential prerequisite and which the British Government is ready to make final arrangements...is the Gold Coast”. In G. Padmore, *Labour Party Backs Gold Coast Independence*, Ashanti Pioneer, 3 Sept. 1954, quoted in L.E. James, “*What we put in black and white*”, p.202.

of a path begun with the early Pan-Africanists like Sylvester Williams or Blyden. It was “Pan-Africanism in Action”.<sup>27</sup> Padmore wrote on Nkrumah’s victory of 1951:

This was the first victory for the ideology of Pan-Africanism. It proved definitely the effectiveness of organization and Positive Action based on non-violent methods. ‘Organization decides everything’ emphasized Nkrumah. Ever since that initial victory, the continued strength of the CPP has rested on its superb organization. In the words of the Declaration of the Fifth Pan-African Congress, ‘today there is only one road to effective action – the organization of the masses’.<sup>28</sup>

Later, even James underlined the strict link between Nkrumah’s successful struggle and the Fifth Pan-African Congress: “It took the revolution in the Gold Coast itself to make possible a true evaluation of this policy [the Pan-Africanist one] elaborated in 1945. So it always is with a theory”.<sup>29</sup>

Following Nkrumah’s victory, Padmore finally chose the Gold Coast as his new political and physical home. Interestingly, until then, he had kept different options open. After Manchester, he was still working with the PAF and he had also supported different nationalist movements in Africa.<sup>30</sup> He was particularly close to Azikiwe, who was a successful political leader in Nigeria and an early supporter of Pan-Africanism.<sup>31</sup> In the years 1947-1951, Padmore had followed the political developments in both Azikiwe’s Nigeria and Nkrumah’s Gold Coast, examining the moves of the two leaders.<sup>32</sup> Nkrumah’s

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<sup>27</sup> “Pan-Africanism in Action” is the name of a chapter of *Pan-Africanism or Communism?* referring to Nkrumah’s struggle for independence and its links to the political indications of Manchester, see G. Padmore, *Pan-Africanism or Communism?*, pp.171-185.

<sup>28</sup> G. Padmore, *Pan-Africanism or Communism?*, p.178. He wrote also: “There is absolutely no doubt that the Fifth Pan-African Congress played a key role as the rallying point of the anti-imperialist struggle, and that its resolutions and resulting programs inspired the leaders who participated in its deliberations to carry forward their endeavors in their native territories. [...] That Congress [...] set precise objectives for attainment which formed in essence the basic program of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah and his Convention People’s Party, and governed its organization”. In G. Padmore, (ed. by), *History of the Pan-African Congress*, p.7.

<sup>29</sup> C.R.L., James, *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution*, p.74.

<sup>30</sup> At the time, the organization published a journal, “Pan-African” edited by Ras Makonnen (1900-1983), a famous Pan-Africanist activists who became head of the African Affairs Centre in late 1958.

<sup>31</sup> After Manchester, Padmore published many articles on Azikiwe’s newspaper “West African Pilot”, see L.E. James, “*What we put in black and white*”, p.164.

<sup>32</sup> Since the late 1940s Padmore produced a series of articles for the Gold Coast newspaper “The Ashanti Pioneer”.

success at the 1951 elections finally convinced him that Accra was on the right political path.

According to Padmore, Nkrumah had a tremendous opportunity in his hands. The young Leader of the Government Business could transform the Gold Coast into a guide for other nationalist movements in the continent.<sup>33</sup> From Accra, they could work together on a project to extend nationalism, socialism and Pan-Africanism to the whole continent. Padmore stated: “The Gold Coast is like a lighthouse in a dark continent showing the blacks the way safely into port”.<sup>34</sup> Nkrumah’s words were similar to his.<sup>35</sup>

Since 1951, Padmore had begun working for both the CPP and Nkrumah’s government. He contributed to the evolution of the party organization and he also worked for the constitutional revision of the colony.<sup>36</sup> According to him, Nkrumah’s Gold Coast had far more chances than any other African territory to gain independence, including Azikiwe’s Nigeria. This was due mainly to Nkrumah’s practical achievements, which had given a concrete contribution to the Pan-African cause.<sup>37</sup>

The two of them began working together on a sort of Pan-African foreign policy, since the early 1950s. They considered the CPP as a model for liberation movements in Africa and other colonial territories.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, they promoted the Gold Coast liberation struggle as the ideal path towards independence. The latter became the main theme of a

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<sup>33</sup> Padmore wrote in 1953: “It’s time that K[wame] and his colleagues see themselves in relation to the rest of Africa and not as something isolated. They are the beacon light, and in more than their own interests they cannot afford to fall down”. George Padmore to Ivar Holm, April 1953. Nkrumah MSS/Howard, box 154-41, folder 14, quotes in L.E. James, “*What we put in black and white*”, p.203.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, p.203.

<sup>35</sup> In the so-called Motion of Destiny Speech, of 10 July 1953, Nkrumah stated: “Our Aim is to make this country a worthy place for all its citizens, a country that will be a shining light throughout the whole continent of Africa, giving inspiration far beyond its frontiers”. Quoted in Motion of Destiny speech, 10 July 1953, in K. Nkrumah, *Axioms*, p.76. On the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 1955, Nkrumah had underlined to his fellow citizens the importance of their struggle for all the continent: “[...] I would like every citizen in the Gold Coast - on the coast, in Ashanti, in the Northern Territories - to remember that the hopes of millions of Africans living in our great continent are pinned upon the success of our experiment here!”. Quoted in D. Bosumtwi-Sam, *Landmarks of Dr Kwame Nkrumah*, p.39.

<sup>36</sup> L.E. James, “*What we put in black and white*”, pp.205-207. On Padmore’s contribution to the ideological development of the CPP see also D. Apter, *Ghana in Transition*, Atheneum, New York, 1963, p.349.

<sup>37</sup> Nkrumah was showing Padmore how to be politically concrete. On the contrary, at the time, Padmore had become restless with “café intellectuals” see L.E. James, “*What we put in black and white*”, p.190.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*, pp.203-204.

series of articles and it was also the theme of the book “The Gold Coast Revolution”, published in 1953.<sup>39</sup>

In the meantime, Nkrumah and Padmore had begun working to re-launch a Pan-African platform from the Gold Coast. In 1953, the former organized a new Pan-African Congress in Kumasi.<sup>40</sup> The latter did not participate to the congress, but he started working for the one scheduled next, in 1955 (which never took place).

In view of the proposed congress of 1955, Padmore wrote his most important book, “Pan-Africanism or Communism?”, meant to be distributed at the congress and to be provided to CPP party members. It was, at the same time, a manual of Pan-Africanism and a first attempt to make a history of this political philosophy. With this book, Padmore’s analysis reached the apex. He outlined a program to spread Pan-Africanism from the Gold Coast to the whole African continent and he also presented Nkrumah’s political successes as the model to be followed by the nationalist movements. The book can be considered as a first outline of what later became the Pan-African policy of Nkrumah’s government.

The new African nation – which became independent with the name of Ghana in March 1957 – was planned to become the very center of the struggle for African liberation and unity in the continent. Padmore and Nkrumah had worked for years and years to be ready for an occasion such as this one. Finally, Pan-Africanism could be put into practice and it could be spread from Accra to the whole continent.

Ghana’s independence was approaching and Nkrumah and Padmore had already elaborated the theoretical basis of Ghana’s Pan-African policy. They only had to create proper institutions to attain its targets and to specify the guidelines that the Ghanaian institutions had to follow when dealing with African liberation movements.

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<sup>39</sup> G. Padmore, *The Gold Coast Revolution*, Dennis Dobson, London, 1953.

<sup>40</sup> At the conference, Azikiwe met with Nkrumah to discuss how to fulfill “The liberation of Africa and [...] a strong West African Federation”. Cit. in J.R. Hooker, *Black Revolutionary*, pp.118-119; Padmore missed the conference and he never mentioned it in his writings. See also W.S. Thompson, *Ghana’s Foreign Policy*, pp.4-5.

## **1.2. The Pillars of Ghana's Pan-African Policy and the Guidelines for the African Liberation Movements Supported by Accra**

In the Gold Coast, Pan-Africanism and nationalism had won an important battle. Ghana's independence meant the victory of Manchester's model: the theory had been put into practice. The next step was to export this model to the rest of Africa, developing a proper "Pan-African" policy for Ghana. Nkrumah and Padmore conceived its outline just before independence. Accra was planned to become a shelter for African liberation movements, provided their adherence to the Pan-Africanist ideology. Ghana had to become the "Mecca" of African freedom fighters and, ultimately, the sponsor of a union of African states.<sup>41</sup> In order to achieve these targets, Nkrumah and Padmore worked on the establishment of proper "Pan-African" institutions. Before describing their nature, it is important to analyze the policies they had to perform. Only then it will be possible to understand to what extent Ghana influenced the development of nationalist movements in Africa.

The primary goal of Ghana's Pan-African policy was to support African liberation movements. At the time of independence, Nkrumah and Padmore had to find the best solutions in order to capitalize on Ghana's political strength and to make good use of the available resources. They needed to operate a selection among the liberation movements, in order to create a front of Pan-Africanist parties all over the continent. Finally, they elaborated specific guidelines to be followed by other nationalist movements that were seeking Ghana's support. These were essentially based on the Pan-Africanist theory, but they also included elements taken by the experience Nkrumah acquired during Ghana's independence struggle. They were: a) the development of mass nationalist movements or parties without references to class or ethnicity, supporting centralized states against federalist options (national unity versus tribalism); b) the use of nonviolence in the independence struggle, unless guerrilla warfare was strictly necessary; c) the adherence to nonalignment in world politics. The parties or movements supported by Ghana were meant

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<sup>41</sup> T. Adamafo, *By Nkrumah's Side*, p. 103.



to follow to a certain degree these three guidelines, provided their support to African unity as their final goal.

As for the first point, Nkrumah and Padmore both strongly supported nationalism, but neither of them wanted to promote a division of Africa after the fall of colonialism. As other important Pan-Africanists before them, they considered the independence of African nations only as the first step towards a progressive process of unity of the continent. After the liberation of Africa was assured, the new political entities were meant to merge together into a union based on the model of the United States and USSR. Nationalism, in this sense, was a means, not an end.

Nkrumah and Padmore considered nationalism as the best way to avoid any return to pre-colonial past, an option which could undermine the actualization of the Pan-African targets. Indeed, going back to pre-colonial times would have meant to strengthen “tribalism” and further the “balkanization” of Africa.<sup>42</sup> From this point of view, they considered even federalism as a danger for the African unity project. During the 1950s, Nkrumah had strongly opposed any federalist plan in the Gold Coast and Padmore had backed him in this battle. The next move was to export this policy elsewhere. One of the targets of Ghana’s Pan-African policy became, then, the support to nationalist parties which could fight against federalism and ethnic divisions. Thus, Ghana supported the most representative and inclusive liberation movements, provided their ideological stand was close to Ghana’s.<sup>43</sup> If a single nationalist party or organization could not gain the hegemony of the liberation struggle, Accra supported a united front formed by the most representative

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<sup>42</sup> On Padmore’s opposition to tribalism see L.E. James, “*What we put in black and white*”, pp.207-216 and also pp.228-229. According to Nkrumah, the African states were already potentially weak as they were, they did not need to become even more fragmented. The “balkanization of Africa” was the result of the scramble for Africa of the XIX century and it was the reason why Africa was in danger of alien control even after its liberation. Nkrumah stated in 1961: “The political situation in Africa is heartening and at the same time disturbing. It is heartening to see so many new flags hosted in place of the old; it is disturbing to see so many countries of varying sizes and at different levels of development, weak, and, in some cases, almost helpless. If this terrible state of fragmentation is allowed to continue it may well be disastrous for us all”. In K. Nkrumah, *I Speak of Freedom*, Heinemann, London, 1961 p. xiii. In 1963, he also stated: “So long as we remain balkanized, regionally or territorially, we shall be at the mercy of colonialism and imperialism”. In K. Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite*, Frederick A. Praeger, New York, 1963, p.218. These two passages can be found also in K. Nkrumah, *Axioms*, pp.25-26.

<sup>43</sup> In some cases, Ghana did not support the most representative groups but it backed minorities parties. The reasons behind these choices differ case by case and they will be analyzed further in the thesis.

groups. This policy was made effective especially in Southern Africa, where ethnic or political divisions often created a strong rivalry among liberation movements.

The second pillar of Ghana's Pan-African policy was the belief in nonviolence - particularly in the form of "Positive Action" - as the best way to confront colonialism. The Positive Action had been developed by Nkrumah after Manchester.<sup>44</sup> It was essentially an adaptation of Gandhism to the needs of the Gold Coast independence struggle. As previously noted, Padmore was impressed by the result of the Positive Action campaign of 1950. He devoted several pages of his "Pan-Africanism or Communism?" to the use of nonviolence, presenting Nkrumah's Positive Action as the most successful experiment of this kind in Africa. He wished that all Africans would follow "[...] the footsteps of the Gold Coast along the road of non-violent revolution instead of Mau Mauism".<sup>45</sup>

Since Ghana's independence, Padmore and Nkrumah supported nonviolence over guerrilla warfare, pushing other liberation movements to experiment Positive Action in their liberation struggles. The reason behind this choice was related to tactics rather than to moral considerations. A military confrontation with colonial powers was considered, at least, a suicidal mission. On the contrary, the use of Positive Action could achieve better results with fewer risks of human losses and political disasters than an anti-colonial war. Thus, the use of violence was strongly opposed not because it was wrong in itself but because it was evidently dangerous. The ultimate success of nonviolence was possible, however, only through the development of channels of communication between a mass nationalist party and the colonial government, as it had happened in the Gold Coast.<sup>46</sup>

Both Padmore and Nkrumah knew that in some cases the use of violence was inevitable.<sup>47</sup> In the first period of Nkrumah's rule in Ghana, while the government and its institutions strongly supported nonviolence, they also prepared the ground for giving

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<sup>44</sup> The concept was first introduced by Garba-Jahumpa at the Manchester Pan-African Congress.

<sup>45</sup> In G. Padmore, *Pan-Africanism or Communism?*, p.185; Padmore devoted also an entire chapter of his book to Mau-Mauism, in order to present his ideas on Kenyan politics and to compare the situation in Kenya to the one in the Gold Coast.

<sup>46</sup> In this sense, what happened in Kenya with Mau-Mauism represented quite the opposite situation. See L.E. James, "*What we put in black and white*", p.194.

<sup>47</sup> According to Kwaku Bapui Asante (former Principal Secretary of the African Affairs Secretariat (1961-1966) Nkrumah was essentially a realist. He preferred nonviolence above all but he was ready to use violence in case the colonialists or neo-colonialists would push African freedom fighters towards an open war. Interview with K.B. Asante, Accra, 6<sup>th</sup> September 2012.

support to the armed rebellion, when it was necessary. During the years 1957-1958, Ghana's official position on the use of violence reflected this duality to the point of being contradictory.

The third pillar of Ghana's Pan-African policy was the support to nonalignment. In line with its position in Cold War politics, Accra strongly sponsored those parties which could maintain an equal distance between the East and the West. Since Manchester's Congress, nonalignment had become a peculiar tract of the Pan-Africanist field. When the Cold War erupted, even Nkrumah and Padmore refused to take a stand for one bloc or the other. Pan-Africanism had to be neutral, as its success could not depend on the events of the Cold War. The liberation movements had only to absorb the best the two blocs could offer in order to defeat colonialism and neo-colonialism. In Nkrumah's political discourse, neutrality lost its negative acceptation and became "Positive Neutrality" or "Positive Nonalignment". It became the weapon to affirm the "African personality", that is to say, the peculiar needs, the values, the desires and the aspirations of the inhabitants of the African continent.<sup>48</sup> No one was ever to speak for Africans in the international stage, nor, clearly, in their own nations.

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<sup>48</sup> The two ideas of Positive Neutrality and African Personality were strictly related. The concept of African Personality in foreign relations consisted in the promotion of African thoughts and targets for the liberation and development of the continent. The first to use this term had been the famous Pan-Africanist Edward Wilmot Blyden (1832-1912). See E.L Dumor, *Ghana, OAU and Southern Africa*, p.28 and C. Legum, *Pan-Africanism*, pp.4-5. Nkrumah used it once he adjusted it to the peculiar needs of his period. He wanted to provide Africa with a strong voice on the international ground. According to him, the continent could contribute to world peace, especially through active nonalignment (Positive Neutrality), the application of the African Personality and the support to the United Nations. He stated in 1958: "Our earnest and passionate desire is to exert through our African Personality whatever influence we can bring to bear on the side of peace, in the hope of persuading the two main power blocs to come together to find a peaceful and permanent solution to their outstanding differences within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations", quoted in A. Quaison-Sackey, *Africa Unbound, Reflection of an African Statesman*, F.A. Praeger Pub., New York, 1963, p.36. As for the "Positive Neutrality", Armah explains in few words its basic principles as part of part of Nkrumah's foreign policy: "They [the non-aligned countries] would even go to the extent of taking sides in the dispute, but, as a matter of principle, they declared themselves against any permanent or long-term involvement on the side of one or the other of the parties to the cold war. [...] Nkrumah's principle of positive neutrality or Positive Nonalignment was pragmatic. It was essentially a foreign policy of pragmatic non-committal. By eschewing commitment to super power bloc alliances in the early post-independence period, and by rejecting the notion of automatic alignment in the cold war, Ghana gave herself time to think. Nonalignment as a foreign policy was well suited to that period of experimentation". In K. Armah, *Peace without Power*, p.141.

Ghana had joined the group of non-aligned states - including India, Egypt and Indonesia - since the 1955 Bandung's conference, when it was still called Gold Coast.<sup>49</sup> After independence, nonalignment became an integral part of its foreign policy and, at least in the period between 1957 and 1958, it was substantially respected. Since 1957, Accra promoted Positive Neutrality both in international gatherings and among the nationalist parties supported. Nonalignment could assure the liberation movements a true freedom of action before, during and after independence. Only with this freedom, Pan-Africanism could be finally victorious in the continent.

The three pillars discussed above were the very foundation of Ghana's Pan-African policy and they were the main tracts requested by Accra to the parties which were seeking its support. The next step for Nkrumah and Padmore was to create proper instruments to perform this policy and to channel the African liberation movements on these binaries. Nkrumah's first move was to involve Padmore in the foreign relation system of Ghana. It was a mutual benefit for both of them: the former could be assured on the effectiveness of Ghana's Pan-African policy; the latter could finally acquire the resources he needed to launch a Pan-African and socialist revolution in Africa.

### **1.3. The Establishment of the Office of the Adviser on African Affairs**

Padmore and Nkrumah had worked for years to bring Pan-Africanism into action. The first step had been made. Ghana was independent, ready to support African liberation and unity and also to sponsor its political model in Africa. After the Pan-African policy was drafted, it was time to work on the instruments to enact it. Since 1957, new institutions had to be designed and old ones had to be re-designed. The first of a series of "Pan-African" institutions was established outside the "orthodox" government machinery: the Office of

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<sup>49</sup> The Gold Coast Government had sent an observer, since it was still a colony. For further information on the Gold Coast delegation to Bandung see M. Dei-Anang, *The Administration of Ghana's Foreign Relations*, pp.19-20.

the Adviser to the Prime Minister on African Affairs. The new body, headed by Padmore himself, was essentially involved in the recovery of information and in giving support to liberation movements in Africa. It had a difficult genesis: both Nkrumah and Padmore had to work to win the resistance of part of the civil service and also part of the CPP against its establishment. This opposition unveiled a clear difference of outlook between “radicals” and “non-radicals”, a confrontation which characterized Ghana also in the following years.

At the independence celebrations, Nkrumah made it clear to his compatriots that Ghana was called to fulfill a mission for the whole continent.<sup>50</sup> At midnight of 6<sup>th</sup> March 1957, he pronounced his famous statement: “The independence of Ghana is meaningless unless it is linked up with the total liberation of the African continent”.<sup>51</sup> The Prime Minister summarized in one sentence the very core of Ghana’s Pan-African policy. Unless the whole continent was freed, no real achievement could be made towards a true independence, not even for Ghana. Only a free and united Africa could assure a true progress and the final entry of the African territories among the nations of the world. Ghana was bound to play a leading role in this process and every resource of the new-born nation had to be spent to achieve the target. Thus, the whole system of foreign policy of Ghana had to focus on the support to African liberation and Unity.

In September, Nkrumah invited Padmore in Ghana as he wanted to work with him on the actualization of this political project. Their primary goal was to examine every possible solution to transform Ghana’s foreign policy system into a Pan-Africanist instrument. Nkrumah himself took over the Ministry of Defence and External Affairs in order to take control of the situation.<sup>52</sup> They finally elaborated two solutions to achieve this target. In both cases, Padmore was meant to play a key role.

Nkrumah’s first option was to involve Padmore in the Ghanaian government by appointing him to a cabinet post, possibly at the Ministry of Defence and External Affairs

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<sup>50</sup> Padmore attended the celebrations as one of the most prestigious guests. His presence testified the political alliance and the personal friendship between him and Nkrumah. He was also wearing the *kente* cloth robe to show symbolically his support to Ghana’s independence. G.R. Hooker, *Black Revolutionary*, p.130. See also L.E. James, “*What we put in black and white*”, p.221.

<sup>51</sup> Nkrumah, Midnight pronouncement of Independence at Polo Ground, Accra, 5 March 1957, extract in K. Nkrumah, *Axioms*, p.77.

<sup>52</sup> The Ministry of Defence and External Affairs was renamed Ministry of External Affairs in July 1958. In May 1961 it became the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

or to grant him with a post of Adviser on African Affairs at the Ministry itself. This way, the Trinidadian Pan-Africanist could work on the “radicalization” of the institution, since the Foreign Service was hardly considered ready to perform a progressive Pan-African policy. It must be underlined that the original members of the Foreign Service had all been trained by the British back in 1955-1956.<sup>53</sup>

This option had two main critical points. First of all, Nkrumah and Padmore did not want to involve the British-trained civil service in the anti-colonial struggle. They also thought that some men of the Foreign Service were not even experienced in this kind of activities. Secondly, part of the government and the Foreign Service had doubts about Padmore’s appointment to a post related to African affairs since he was a non-African foreigner and thus supposedly not qualified for the job.

As for the first point, Nkrumah was dubious not only about the Foreign Service but also about part of the civil service as a whole. Generally speaking, he always had some reservations towards men trained by colonial authorities. Even if he usually appreciated the British-trained personnel, he feared to count too much on them, especially when dealing with African liberation and unity.<sup>54</sup> Modeled on the colonial civil service, the Ghanaian civil service was - or held to be - apolitical and “neutral in matters of a partisan nature”.<sup>55</sup> On the contrary, Nkrumah and Padmore needed reliable, but also ideologically aligned

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<sup>53</sup> In September 1955, a group of eighteen men had been selected to receive a training program by the Commonwealth Relations Office. They were: Grant, Quarshie, Anthony, Kofi, Quaison-Sackey, Arkhurst, Dadzie, Akwei, Boateng, Amonoo, Debrah, Kumi, Asante, Sekyi, Brew, Addae, Quarm and Arthur. As Dei-Anang points out: “The more senior officers in these groups were sent on attachment to British embassies and high commissions after brief orientation courses at the Foreign Office and the Commonwealth Relations Office in London. The others were sent to the London School of Economics for a six months course before their allocation to British missions overseas and by 1956 they were posted to British diplomatic missions overseas”. In M. Dei-Anang, *The Administration of Ghana’s Foreign Relations*, p.11. See also. T. Adamafo, *By Nkrumah’s Side*, p.8.

<sup>54</sup> According to Dei-Anang, Nkrumah considered the disadvantages but also the advantages of dealing with British trained personnel: “With his declaration of the policy of total liberation from colonial rule, Nkrumah could not overlook the fact that Britain was one of the two countries with the largest colonial territories in Africa. If he had had his way, he might have wished that his first team of Foreign Service officers had been trained elsewhere than in Britain. In the other hand, their training in Britain had some advantages. Britain was a great world power and her capital was a busy nerve center and an useful listening post in international affairs”. In M. Dei-Anang, *The Administration of Ghana’s Foreign Relations*, p.12.

<sup>55</sup> K. Armah, *Peace without Power*, p.26; a number of Civil Servants, including the ones of the Foreign Service, were trained during the Colonial period by the British. See T. Adamafo, *By Nkrumah’s Side*, p.87.

men.<sup>56</sup> Since 1957, the Ghanaian Prime Minister pushed for the establishment of a politicized civil service.<sup>57</sup> The Foreign Service made no exception. Michael Dei-Anang succeeds in few words to describe Nkrumah's point of view:

From independence Nkrumah entertained misgivings about the Foreign Service. He had doubts about its capacity to interpret his African policies with his own vigor and vision. It was unrealistic to expect British training of the new Ghana Foreign Service personnel to be marked by any degree of enthusiasm for decolonization: Nkrumah was neither foolish nor naïve enough to believe that Britain would train Africans in anti-imperialistic tactics.<sup>58</sup>

The lack of experience of the Foreign Service in anti-colonial and Pan-Africanist activities was also a issue.<sup>59</sup> A good curriculum could not replace the skills acquired while fighting for African liberation and unity.

The other difficulty with Padmore's appointment at the Ministry was the opposition of several men of the Foreign Service and also of some members of the government. Since he was not a Ghanaian or an African, they considered him ill-suited to work in the African Affairs.<sup>60</sup> Generally speaking, they disliked the presence of too many foreigners hired by Nkrumah as his advisers or directly within the ranks of the government.<sup>61</sup> They also

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<sup>56</sup> They needed men with "African personality". Interview with K.B. Asante, Accra, 4<sup>th</sup> September 2011.

<sup>57</sup> Nkrumah's radical projects for Ghana included also the establishment of a radicalized civil service. Still, for years tactical considerations contributed to convince Nkrumah to slow down the process. The main reason for that was, at first, the lack of personnel to form a radicalized civil service. The great majority of civil servants had acquired their knowledge in colonial times with British training and Nkrumah needed them during the first years of his government. For creating a radicalized civil service, Nkrumah had to work on creating a school of administration which at the same time could also work as an ideological school. Such a project was realized in 1961 with the foundation of the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute of Winneba.

<sup>58</sup> M. Dei-Anang, *The Administration of Ghana's Foreign Relations*, p.12.

<sup>59</sup> K. Armah, *Peace without Power*, p.27. When Armah describes the establishment of Padmore's Office, he refers to it with the name "Bureau of African Affairs". This is a mistake as the BAA was created only after Padmore's death as the evolution of the previous office.

<sup>60</sup> J.J. Mensah, *The Bureau of African Affairs*, p.37; interviews with K.B. Asante, D. Bosumtwi-Sam and E.A. Richter; G.R. Hooker, *Black Revolutionary*, p.132.

<sup>61</sup> See W.S. Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, pp.20-23. According to Senkyire - at the time head of the National Association of Socialist Students Organization (NASSO) and later Minister of Cooperatives - these criticisms must not be over-emphasized. Generally speaking, the members of the Ghanaian government and the Ghanaian civil service did not have problems with the presence of foreigners. Interview with Baffour Kwaben Senkyire, Accra, 11<sup>th</sup> November 2013.

criticized Ghana's involvement into the Pan-African question as it was not in the interest of the nation.<sup>62</sup>

Due to the uneasiness of the "Foreign Service" option, Nkrumah and Padmore had to opt for a second solution: the establishment of an institution specifically designed to work for African liberation unity. This office was planned to work outside the direct control of the Ministry, although it was still officially part of it. In this context, Padmore would depend only on Nkrumah and he could solve the confrontation with the "non-radical" civil servants by choosing his own staff. The name of the new institution - established in September - was: the "Office of the Adviser to the Prime Minister on African Affairs" and Padmore was appointed its head.

The Office – in line with Padmore's past experiences - was designed as a small agency, acting like an "investigative body, a propaganda forum" and a "center for exchanging views with other African leaders".<sup>63</sup> Its first task was to recover information and contacts, both useful instruments for the Pan-Africanist struggle. At the beginning, Padmore capitalized on his personal contacts and then he worked to enlarge Ghana's political net.

The new institution had also to fulfill another fundamental duty: to provide political and financial aid to African liberation movements. The work consisted mainly in assisting political refugees in Ghana and to support the nationalist parties both in Accra and on the battlefields. The institution also became an instrument to spread Ghana's influence throughout the continent, since it promoted nationalist and pan-Africanist propaganda within the ranks of the liberation movements and in other political circles. Finally, the Office had to work for African unity. In this particular field, the Ministry of Defense and External Affairs and the CPP were also directly involved. Thus, the Office had to cooperate

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<sup>62</sup> In 1957, according to Thompson, the men of the Foreign Service openly criticized Nkrumah's Pan-African policy. However, he does not provide evidences on how many they were. According to him, few of them "took Nkrumah's phrase, that Ghana's independence was meaningless until Africa was free, very seriously". W.S. Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, p.20. The American historian also include Alex Quaison-Sackey in the list of the most critical ones, despite few years later the Ghanaian diplomat became one of most radical elements of the Foreign Service. The latter also wrote a book to present the very basis of Nkrumah's Pan-African policy: A. Quaison-Sackey, *Africa Unbound: Reflection of an African Statesman*, F.A. Praeger., New York, 1963.

<sup>63</sup> NLC (National Liberation Council), *Nkrumah's Subversion in Africa, Documentary evidences of Nkrumah's interference in the affairs of other African states*, Ministry of Information, Accra, 1966, p.3.



with them. For instance, it participated together with the Ministry and the Party to the organization of the Pan-Africanist conferences held in Ghana in 1957-1958. Padmore himself acted as a sort of Ghanaian diplomat by taking part in several trips to promote the gatherings and to support the African unity project.

For Padmore, the work in Ghana was rewarding. He could work in his field but in a completely new and favorable environment. As James stated: “Once more George sat in an office with adequate resources, doing the work he had done in the Kremlin and in his little London flat”.<sup>64</sup> The big difference between this experience and the previous ones was that he had more money, more power and more freedom of action to put his ideas into practice.<sup>65</sup>

The Office of the Adviser to the Prime Minister on African Affairs was officially registered under the Ministry of Defense and External Affairs, but it was completely autonomous from it. It was *de facto* responsible only to the Minister, at the time Nkrumah himself. Padmore had to report only to him.<sup>66</sup> For the following two years, the expenses of Padmore’s office were recorded under those of the Ministry as “extraordinary” and, as such, controlled by Nkrumah alone.<sup>67</sup> This way, the financial autonomy - and therefore the political autonomy - of Padmore were guaranteed. Nobody in the government or in the Parliament had access to the extensive financial figures of the Office and this independent status was bound to be inherited (and strengthened) by the Bureau of African Affairs after Padmore’s death.<sup>68</sup>

The establishment of the new “Pan-African” institution of Ghana had only one obstacle: criticisms by the Foreign Service. For months, several civil servants of the Ministry criticized Padmore’s appointment to the post of Adviser on African Affairs and they also opposed the establishment of the Office itself. Apparently, the bases of the

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<sup>64</sup> C.R.L. James, “*Notes on the Life of George Padmore*”, unpublished manuscript, p.61, quoted in W.S. Thompson, *Ghana’s Foreign Policy*, pp.29-30.

<sup>65</sup> Hooker defined the period spent in Ghana as his “months of power”. See G.R. Hooker, *Black Revolutionary*, pp.109-140.

<sup>66</sup> K. Armah, *Peace without Power*, p.27.

<sup>67</sup> PRAAD, SC/BAA/357, “Yearly Expenditure – Ministry of Defense and External Affairs – 1957/1960”, (handwriting).; Still, officially, the budget of Padmore’s Office was under Adu’s control. In W.S. Thompson, *Ghana’s Foreign Policy*, p.29.

<sup>68</sup> Interview with Ernest Anthony Richter, Accra, 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2011.

criticism were still the same: Padmore was not considered qualified for the job, nor was the Office perceived as useful for Ghana's foreign policy. As Thompson wrote in his *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, the strongest attacks came from A.L. Adu, who was Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Defense and External Affairs.<sup>69</sup> According to the historian, Adu criticized Padmore's appointment on the ground that he was not competent on African Affairs, since he was a West Indian.<sup>70</sup>

In fact, the situation was even more complicated. There were also other reasons, more solid, for Adu's criticism and for those of other civil servants. At the time, Nkrumah and Padmore did not make clear to the Foreign Service the role the new Office was going to play. The Ministry had been cut out from the work with the liberation movements, but the Prime Minister had failed to explain the reason why. The real reason behind this was that Nkrumah and Padmore considered the Foreign Service not sufficiently fit ideologically to work in anti-colonial activities. Once this passage was clarified, Adu partially withdrew his attacks, although he was still skeptical on Nkrumah's mistrust of the Service. As he wrote years later:

It took some time before Nkrumah defined the role Padmore was to play, namely, to head an office outside the orthodox government machinery to carry through his policy for the emancipation of those parts of Africa still under foreign rule and therefore to work with nationalist movements and political parties, an area of activity which it would be inappropriate for civil servants to engage in at that time. Once he made his position clear, I not only withdrew my opposition but in fact collaborated enthusiastically in getting his office established, including negotiating for a vote for him.<sup>71</sup>

Adu essentially denied that the difference of outlook between the Foreign Service and Nkrumah was so wide. He acted as the voice of those in the Ministry who felt distrusted by the Prime Minister:

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<sup>69</sup> Adu was *de facto* the head of the Ghanaian Foreign Service since 1956. See M. Dei-Anang, *The Administration of Ghana's Foreign Relations*, pp.11-12.

<sup>70</sup> W.S. Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, p.29. Few years later, Adu became Secretary to the Cabinet, See K. Armah, *Peace without Power*, p.27.

<sup>71</sup> M. Dei-Anang, *The Administration of Ghana's Foreign Relations*, p.13.

I can say that the Service was constantly seeking to know what Nkrumah expected of it and to organize itself to respond. The prejudice against the so-called colonial mentality of civil servants generally was, however, very strong. The difference was therefore more imaginary on the part of the politicians than real.<sup>72</sup>

Adu's criticisms did not have any repercussion on Padmore's appointment. However, it represented the first episode of the confrontation between the "unorthodox" and "orthodox" systems of Ghana's foreign policy that was going to last for years.

In the period spent at the Office, Padmore showed a cold attitude towards the Foreign Service, Adu *in primis*. At first, he obviously did not appreciate the opposition to him and to the Office. Later, he also started criticizing the interferences of the Ghanaian bureaucracy, including the one of the Ministry of Defence and External Affairs, in his work. He considered his office as a fully independent body and wanted it to be a "light", flexible institution, capable of performing its missions in a short amount of time. Bureaucracy could only endanger the independence and efficiency of the institution. In July 1958, Padmore was already complaining about the delays caused by bureaucracy. He wrote to the administrative officer of his office:

Please note that unless this office frees itself from much of the traditional bureaucratic procedure which weighs like the Alps upon us, we shall not be able to devote our efforts to constructive work. We shall be failing in the main purpose for which the Prime Minister established this office directly under his personal supervision and control.[...] from now on, let us "stream-line" the work of this office as much as possible without unduly offending the "sacred cow", bureaucracy, especially as you and others in this office are members of the Service.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> M. Dei-Anang, *The Administration of Ghana's Foreign Relations*, p.13. Adu is fundamentally right: the Ministry of Defense and External Affairs proved to be ready to deal with some of the Government's Pan-African policies, namely, the diplomatic support to the unification of the continent and the support to Nonalignment. On the contrary, the de-colonization policy was handled by Padmore's Office alone. See K. Armah, *Peace without Power*, p.28.

<sup>73</sup> PRAAD, SC/BAA/165, Letter, Padmore to the Administrative Officer, 30<sup>th</sup> July 1958.

The conflict between Padmore and the bureaucrats, as Hooker highlights, must not be considered strange since “[...] bureaucrats necessarily would have a horror of the unorthodox approach practiced by this ex-Comintern figure”.<sup>74</sup>

Padmore had to work hard to find the right men among the Ghanaian civil servants to run the Office. Due to the difference of outlook he had with the civil service, he had to look outside of Ghana to find what he was looking for. One detail was important: the key figures of the Office had to be experienced in anti-colonial activities and they had to be ideologically aligned to Padmore himself.

#### **1.4. The Staff of Padmore’s Office in the Years 1957 and 1958**

Padmore had resources only to run a small office, so he could not hire many employees. He had to choose them carefully among the ranks of the civil service.<sup>75</sup> In the case of his personal collaborators, the selection criteria were even stricter. He had to be sure to find reliable men, with a solid ideological stand as well as a deep experience in the anti-colonial struggle, the same characteristics he pretended by his collaborators in his past experiences. Eventually, he chose a Ghanaian and a man of the Diaspora, James Markham and Ras Makonnen. Both men were “radicals” and they had solid political backgrounds. They were also strong supporters of the Pan-Africanist ideology. Padmore did not choose them by chance. He selected them precisely for these reasons and consequently he gave them the most important positions of the Office. Up to winter 1958, the institution was practically run by Markham, Padmore and Makonnen, a sort of triumvirate.<sup>76</sup> With the appointments of

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<sup>74</sup> G.R. Hooker, *Black Revolutionary*, p. 135. According to Legum, quoted by Hooker, the Foreign Office “refused to let Padmore use their cable service and denied him access to their files”.

<sup>75</sup> All the members of the Office, apart from Padmore and one of his collaborators, were Ghanaians. The list of the employees, with references also to their ethnicity, can be found in AGPL, BAA/un-catalogued “Gabon File”, *Members of staff*, typescript, undated.

<sup>76</sup> G.R. Hooker, *Black Revolutionary*, p.133.

his two collaborators, Padmore confirmed his will to run the institution with his own rules, including the staff selection criteria.

Markham was an Ewe, former editor of the *Evening News* of Accra in 1949, who helped Nkrumah in organizing the election campaign of 1951.<sup>77</sup> Later, he worked for the Anti-Colonial Bureau of the Asian Socialist Conference in Rangoon (where he spent two years) and he attended the Bandung Conference in 1955. In the same year, the CPP called him to run the office of the Pan-African Movement launched at the 1953 Kumasi Conference.<sup>78</sup> Markham was a perfect example of what Padmore was looking for: a radical who also had previous experiences in Pan-Africanist activities.<sup>79</sup> Moreover, he had a useful background in journalism, one of the activities of the Office that Padmore wanted to expand in order to spread Pan-African propaganda throughout Africa.

Markham began working for the Office on 16<sup>th</sup> December 1957, carrying out the duty of Information and Research officer.<sup>80</sup> He became, *de facto*, the most important man after Padmore during 1957-1958. The list of his duties covered practically every aspect of the work of the Office. He was responsible for the recovery of information in the African territories, he had to keep contacts with the freedom fighters and he had to supervise the production of monthly bulletins on African Affairs. He also had to work for the organization of conferences in Ghana, including the production and distribution of publications that followed them. Finally, he had to coordinate the support to political refugees in Ghana and in the rest of Africa.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>78</sup> W.S. Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, p.5 e D. Austin, *Politics in Ghana 1946-60*, pp.283-84. The Office, however, never opened.

<sup>79</sup> Markham was the one who introduced Kofi Batsa (future editor of the radical Pan-Africanist magazine *The Voice of Africa*) to the journalism career and to the world of socialism. K. Batsa, *The Spark*, pp.6-7.

<sup>80</sup> AGPL, BAA/un-catalogued file/All African People's Conf., Letter (typescript), Padmore to Adu, 17<sup>th</sup> December 1958.

<sup>81</sup> The list of duties of Markham is the following: "1) Collecting back-ground and current information on political, economic and cultural developments on all dependent African territories under British, French, Portuguese Administration as well as trust territories under United Nations. 2) Keeping regular contacts with leaders of the various political parties in those territories and briefing the Government on trends in those countries in order to formulate its attitude on specific matters in pursuance of its "African personality". 3) Producing monthly bulletins on current developments in the territories mentioned in paragraph one as well as those independent African States where Ghana has not yet any diplomatic Mission. 4) Responsibility for all pre-conference arrangements. 5) Implementation of Conference Resolutions and editing of all Conference publications. 6) Drawing of memoranda on such subjects as directed by the Adviser on African Affairs. 7)

While Markham was a Ghanaian, Makonnen, like Padmore, was a man of the Diaspora. Born as George Thomas N. Griffith in British Guyana, he had entered the world of Pan-African politics in the 1930s, when he changed his name in Ras Makonnen. A “gifted speaker”, as Nkrumah defined him, Makonnen had been treasurer of the IASB, administrator of the hostel of the same organization, general secretary of the Pan-African Federation and editor of *Pan-Africa*, the journal established after the Fifth Pan-African Congress.<sup>82</sup>

Padmore had met him for the first time in 1935 in London and he worked with him for years. He particularly appreciated Makonnen’s ability in dealing with finances and Pan-Africanist propaganda.<sup>83</sup> As a veteran of anti-colonial organizations, Makonnen had a perfect profile for a post at the Office. Ideologically speaking, he was also very much in line with Padmore.

Makonnen had settled in Ghana in 1956, prior to independence.<sup>84</sup> In December ‘57, Padmore hired him at the Office, and his choice was backed by Nkrumah. For almost a year, Makonnen worked side by side with the Adviser on African Affairs, trying to make good use of their common experiences at the IASB and PAF. During this period, they also conducted an internal struggle on ideology with elements of the CPP and the National Association of Socialist Students Organization (NASSO).<sup>85</sup> This can be considered as one

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Responsibility for matters dealing with African political refugees seeking asylum etc. in Ghana. 8) General administrative duties relating to the office. 9) General Correspondence.” See AGPL, BAA/un-catalogued “Gabon File”, “Present Duties of Mr. Markham”, undated typescript (most probably 1958).

<sup>82</sup> As for the definition of “gifted speaker” see K. Nkrumah, *Ghana*, p.52.

<sup>83</sup> In *Pan-Africanism or Communism?*, Padmore devoted some lines to Makonnen: “Mr. Makonnen was elected honorary treasurer [of the IASB]. It was largely through his exertions that the International African Service Bureau and later the Pan-African Federation were able to establish themselves successfully and launch the International African Opinion. As financial officer, Makonnen was responsible for raising most of the funds to defray the expenses of the Fifth Pan-African Congress. He later took the initiative of establishing *Pan-Africa*, a journal of African life and letters, which became the principal medium through which the ideology of Pan-Africanism was expounded throughout the Black World”. In G. Padmore, *Pan-Africanism or Communism?*, pp.146-47.

<sup>84</sup> K.K. Prah, *Ras Makonnen: True Pan-Africanist*, The Weekly Review (Nairobi), January 6<sup>th</sup>, 1984 in *Beyond the Color Line: Pan-Africanist disputations, selected sketches, letters, papers and reviews*, Africa World Press, Trenton, 1997, p.23.

<sup>85</sup> According to Hooker, Padmore, Makonnen and Markham “[...] shared serious doubts about the socialist convictions of many CPP luminaries, and they were not discreet in their criticisms. The ostentation and arrogance that had previously characterized many of these leaders was undoubtedly distasteful to Padmore, who ridiculed their small-time pomp and objected to their definition of socialism. With this in mind, he did

of the first examples of the struggle between “radicals” and “moderates” within the Ghanaian state and the Party.

Padmore had found in Markham and Makonnen the right men to run the Office. He could rely on them for the solution of the delicate questions of Ghana’s Pan-African policy. The decision had not been easy. The Adviser on African Affairs had to choose carefully the perfect profiles to fulfill the duties of the Office. After that, the institution was ready to support Nkrumah’s first moves on the African scene.

### **1.5. Ghana’s First Moves on the African Scene and the Role of Padmore’s Office**

In the years 1957-1958, Ghana performed a very careful foreign policy. In order to avoid the fears of the West, Nkrumah worked hard to improve the relationship with the US, the Commonwealth and the UN. Padmore’s Office begun to support this policy, in particular the work at the UN. In the meantime, the Ghanaian Prime Minister and his Adviser on African Affairs started working for the first Conference of Independent African States (IAS), to be held in Ghana in April 1958. The IAS Conference was one of the first chances to present Ghana’s Pan-African policy. Thus, Padmore’s Office was directly involved in the arrangements for this important gathering.

Before working for the actualization of Ghana’s Pan-African policy, Nkrumah had to prepare the political ground. The first indication of Manchester was to maintain African liberation and unity out of the confrontation between the two blocs. Thus, Nkrumah’s first mission was to make clear to USA and USSR that Ghana wanted to maintain a “Positive Neutrality”. In 1957 and 1958, he promoted Ghana’s image as the one of a non-aligned and non-radical country, opened to both the two sides of the cold war. The operation was

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what he could to instill proper views in the CPP youth. The organ he concentrated upon was the National Association of Socialist Students Organization (NASSO) [...]”. In G.R. Hooker, *Black Revolutionary*, p.133.

successful, even though more with the West than with the East. Ghana, indeed, strengthen its relationship particularly with the two main powers of the West (USA and UK) and, through their support, joined the UN.

The Americans particularly welcomed Ghana's attitude towards them. According to Thompson, at the time, Ghana could have even been considered as a Pro-West country.<sup>86</sup> In 1957, Washington inaugurated its embassy in Accra. One year later, Nkrumah visited the United States and he had a meeting with Eisenhower. To achieve the same results, the USSR had to wait respectively the years 1959 and 1961.

In 1957, the Ghanaian Prime Minister also made his nation become a member of the Commonwealth, one of the most important associations of states in the world. Again, by entering the Commonwealth, he particularly pleased the West, specifically the ex colonial motherland Great Britain.

At first, Nkrumah did not express his radicalism in the Commonwealth. He used its platform to assure again the West of the goodwill of Ghana. At the 1957 Commonwealth Prime Minister's Conference, Nkrumah succeeded in presenting himself as a non-aligned leader with no will of revenge against Ghana's ex-colonial master. He also confirmed his refusal of the Communist ideology.<sup>87</sup>

Ghana had an immediate political return. The Commonwealth sponsored its entry in the United Nations, one of the main targets of Nkrumah's foreign policy in this period. Accra's adherence to the UN had a strong political meaning. Indeed, since the times of

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<sup>86</sup> Thompson particularly supports this idea. According to him, due to Ghana's economical needs (financing of the Volta River Project above all), Nkrumah was more interested in forming relations with the West than with the East. He also explains, quite convincingly, why Ghana's neutralism was welcomed by the West: "They [the Ghanaians] could announce without fear that their foreign policy would be one of «positive neutralism», because the hard Western attitude towards nonalignment was on the retreat at this time, just after Suez". In W.S. Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, p.15; At the independence celebration, the United States were represented by the Vice-President Richard Nixon, while USSR was represented only by the Minister of state farms. Egypt, at the time one of most radical African countries, was not even invited. See *Ibidem*, pp.28-29.

<sup>87</sup> With regards to Nkrumah's declarations against Communism at the Commonwealth conference see W.S. Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, p.42; at the time he was Prime Minister of the Gold Coast, Nkrumah refused to hire public servants with attested communist convictions (February 1954). For further details on this issue see: "Communists Barred from Jobs", *West Africa*, 6<sup>th</sup> March 1954; "Gold Coast Attitude to Communists in Public Service", Extract from 'Commonwealth Survey', 5<sup>th</sup> March 1954; "Gold Coast Action on Communists, Employment Banned in Public Posts", *The Times*, 26<sup>th</sup> February 1954. All these documents can be found in BNA, BW/90/240/ *West Africa: General* (1954-1973).



Manchester, the UN was considered the best ally for the Pan-African cause.<sup>88</sup> In the following years, Nkrumah sponsored the UN as a guardian of the rights of the new African nations, at least until the Congo crisis showed the weaknesses of the international organization. As the Ghanaian Prime Minister announced to the National Assembly, the respect for the principles of the UN charter became “an integral part of [Ghana] foreign policy”.<sup>89</sup>

Nkrumah used the UN as a platform to present his Pan-Africanist ideas to the world and to spread Ghana’s influence throughout the continent. From the chairs of the assembly, Ghanaians began to denounce colonialism and they presented a project to unite Africa politically. They also worked with other independent African countries to form an “African group” in order to vote together on relevant questions concerning the continent. Ghana also joined important commissions of the UN. Padmore’s Office monitored and supervised all these activities.

One of the first task of Padmore as the Adviser on African Affairs was to work on the establishment of the *United Nations Regional Economic Commission for Africa*. In January 1958, Nkrumah himself asked him to deal with this matter.<sup>90</sup> Padmore had to make sure that Ghana had an important role in the commission, possibly having its headquarters established in Accra. The question involved a sort of competition with three other independent African countries: Egypt (since January ’58, UAR), Sudan and Ethiopia.<sup>91</sup> Padmore’s mission was to ensure that Ghana prevailed over possible competitors in the struggle for the political influence in Africa.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> As the *Atlantic Charter* had been the basis of the struggle for self-determination in West Africa, the *Charter of the United Nations* was sponsored by the Pan-African movement as a guarantee of the rights of freedom and self-determination for the African people. A group of West African newspaper editors headed by Nnamdi Azikiwe published a memorandum entitled *The Atlantic Charter and British West Africa* in 1943. See G. Padmore, *Pan-Africanism or Communism?*, pp.152-153.

<sup>89</sup> Nkrumah’s speech at the National Assembly, Accra, 3 September 1958. In K. Nkrumah, *Axioms*, p.131.

<sup>90</sup> PRAAD, SC/BAA/165, Letter, Padmore to Nkrumah, 21<sup>st</sup> January 1958.

<sup>91</sup> Egypt changed its name in United Arab Republic when the union with Syria was established on 11<sup>th</sup> January 1958.

<sup>92</sup> Padmore’s work on the United Nations Regional Economic Commission for Africa issue allows to introduce some interesting elements. In order to solve the problem, Padmore had to work hand by hand with the Minister of Defence and External Affairs. Padmore came into contact with the Ghanaian ambassador in Washington, Daniel Chapman, in order to work on the matter. After discussing the issue with Ako Adjei, Padmore suggested Chapman some guidelines he could use. See PRAAD, SC/BAA/165, Letter, Padmore to Chapman, 14 January 1958. This must not be considered strange. Padmore was more than willing to work

Immediately after, the Adviser on African Affairs had begun working to the organization of a conference with all the independent African states, the main target of Ghana's foreign policy in 1958. The first Independent African States' Conference (IASC) was planned to be held in Accra, in April 1958. At the beginning of the year, Padmore himself took part in a tour of the seven other independent African countries, in order to invite them to the conference.

The IASC had been conceived at the 1957 Commonwealth Conference. It was one of the first attempts ever made to reunite North African countries with Sub-Saharan countries, namely Liberia, Ethiopia and Ghana. Nkrumah wanted to promote cooperation between the participants, but he also wanted to present them his ideas on African Personality and African unity. The IASC was considered as an instrument of Ghana's Pan-African policy. No project of African unity could be, indeed, realized without the participation of the other independent African states. For this reason, Padmore's Office had a key role in the conference arrangements.<sup>93</sup>

At first, the Ministry of Defence and External Affairs held a very low profile. Padmore and Nkrumah had tried as much as possible to cut out the Foreign Service from the organization of the IASC. They did not trust the service in dealing with this issue, especially since the conference was meant to be an instrument to spread the Pan-Africanist ideology in the rest of independent Africa. Adu - who had been appointed conference's secretary general by the ambassadors - was not confirmed in his post by Nkrumah. Instead, the Ghanaian Prime Minister and Padmore tried to have him substituted with Appadorai, an Indian diplomat.<sup>94</sup>

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together with the Minister, provided his Office could maintain its independence. Padmore also supported the Minister with his personal political contacts, in this case the Israeli, long time friends of his, who could offer them the political support that Ghana needed in the UN to have the commission established. See PRAAD, SC/BAA/165, Cable, Mordechai Kidron (Deputy Head of Israel's permanent delegation to the UN) to Padmore, undated.

<sup>93</sup> Padmore wrote to his friend Dobson just before the conference: "The arrangements...are largely in my hands". J.R. Hooker, *Black Revolutionary*, p.135. He also tried to provide a number of copies of his *Pan-Africanism or Communism?* for the conference. Unfortunately, the copies arrived only after the IASC was closed. In J.R. Hooker, *Black Revolutionary*, p.136.

<sup>94</sup> The story is told in two versions by two different sources. One is told by Adu himself, who recalls the appointment of Appadorai, an Indian diplomat, as secretary-general of the conference by Kwame Nkrumah. There are no references to Padmore's role in the issue. Quoting from Adu's notes: "I recall Nkrumah's deep uneasiness about the Foreign Service's competence to organize the first Conference of Independent African

However, the situation changed during the conference. At the closing of the IASC, the Foreign Service proved itself more reliable than expected. Thus, Nkrumah and Padmore declined part of their criticisms.<sup>95</sup> The Ministry could be involved in the struggle for African liberation and unity, provided the special role played by the Office of the Adviser on African Affairs on these matters.

After the IASC, Padmore continued working on the political platform born out of it. He, Nkrumah and Kofi, a diplomat, took part to a trip among all the countries that attended the conference, in order to discuss the establishment of an UN African Group. Moreover, the trip was made to strengthen the contacts with independent African countries since any project of unity could only be achieved with their participation.

Ghana's Pan-African policy was finally being implemented. The IASC had been only the first of a series of initiatives to spread Nkrumah's ideas on African liberation and unity. Others followed. The most important one is undoubtedly the All-African People's Conference (AAPC), a Pan-African gathering of nationalist parties to be held in Accra at the end of the year.

The AAPC was conceived as a sort of new Pan-African congress. Organized officially by the CPP, this conference was conceived as an opportunity to gather together as many African liberation movements as possible and to discuss with them African liberation and nationalism. Being a Pan-African gathering, Padmore's Office had obviously a key role in the organization.

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States because of his belief that the Service, including me, was not tuned in to the African movement. He even tried to recruit an Indian diplomat, Dr Appadorai 'Secretary-General of the Indian Council of Foreign Affairs' to take charge of the arrangements". In M. Dei-Anang, *The Administration of Ghana's Foreign Relations*, p.13. The other account is the one of Thompson, who attributes Adu's exclusion from the conference arrangement to Padmore alone. Quoting from Thompson: "The ambassadors made Adu the conference's secretary-general [...] Padmore had not thought Adu competent to organize the conference (their rivalry was in the open by this time) and so arranged behind Adu's back for the services of Dr. A. Appadorai, the secretary-general of the Indian Council on Foreign Affairs". In W.S. Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, p.34.

<sup>95</sup> According to Adu, Nkrumah was "[...] very generous in his tribute to the Foreign Service when the Conference proved that it had measured up to all that was required of it and that, in comparison with the officials from the other seven African states who later joined the Conference Secretariat, our officials stood out in terms of their ability and grasp of the objectives that the Conference sought to achieve". In M. Dei-Anang, *The Administration of Ghana's Foreign Relations*, p.13.

With the work for the IASC, the Office of the Adviser on African Affairs had fulfilled its first mission within the Pan-African strategy of the government. In this first case, the tasks of the institution were still very limited, since even Nkrumah was making cautious steps on the African scene. In the following months, he definitely made his entry into African politics and Padmore's office began operating to support Ghana's struggle for African liberation and unity.

## **1.6. African Unity and the Ghana-Guinea Union**

At the IAS Conference, African unity was discussed, but no concrete proposals were put on the table. The opportunity to transform the Pan-African theory of unity into reality came just a few months later. In October 1958, Guinea finally achieved a troubled independence from France. The country was left by the French in a terrible state and the Guinean leader Sékou Touré was ready to seek help from anywhere. Nkrumah took advantage of the situation and proposed a deal to Touré: Ghana would support Guinea in exchange for a political union of the two. Padmore had sponsored this project since it could have been a useful instrument to propose African unity to other countries. The idea of uniting the African continent under the same flag had always been part of Nkrumah and Padmore's political agendas. For years, however, they also acknowledged the need for an intermediate step towards regional unions. In the 1950s, they supported West African Unity, while at the same time they were still working for the unification of the whole continent.<sup>96</sup>

At the time of Ghana's independence, Nkrumah and Padmore eventually diverged on the "regionalist" question. The former began supporting a straight path towards the "United States of Africa", while the latter persisted in his idea of establishing regional

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<sup>96</sup> The 1953 Kumasi conference, for instance, was organized to bring together all West African nationalists, like Azikiwe, who could share the same idea of a Federation of West African states. D. Austin, *Politics in Ghana 1946-60*, pp.283-84.

federations to be later merged into a united Africa. In *Pan-Africanism or Communism?*, Padmore exposed his point of view:

Pan-Africanism looks above the narrow confines of class, race, tribe and religion. [...] Its vision stretches beyond the limited frontiers of the nation-state. Its perspective embraces the federation of regional self-governing countries and their ultimate amalgamation into a United States of Africa. In such a Commonwealth, all men, regardless of tribe, race, colour or creed, shall be free and equal. And all the national units comprising the regional federations shall be autonomous in all matters regional, yet united in all matters of common interests to the African Union. This is our vision of the Africa of Tomorrow – the goal of Pan-Africanism.<sup>97</sup>

In the first period of Ghana's independence neither Nkrumah's vision nor Padmore's prevailed. In 1958, however, the "Guinea question" put the discussion on "Regionalism" back on the table.

In October, Sékou Touré led Guinea towards independence after a harsh political confrontation with the ex-colonial master, culminated with the "no" vote at the French Constitutional Referendum. The French left the country, but only after having despoiled it completely. Guinea was now finally independent but completely ruined economically. In order to avoid a disaster, Touré could only seek help elsewhere in Africa. Ghana was the best candidate to answer this call.

Both Padmore and Nkrumah considered supporting Guinea as the best occasion to launch a project of political unity. Ghana would come to Guinea's assistance, but only in exchange of Touré's promise to sign a union between the two states. According to Mensah, Padmore was the one who suggested Nkrumah to provide a loan of 10 million pounds to

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<sup>97</sup> G. Padmore, *Pan-Africanism or Communism?*, p.379. According to Botsio, Adjei and Markham, -interviewed by Thompson - Padmore had lost his hopes in a "continental union" project during his trip around Africa in February. W.S. Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, p.60. Probably, Thompson is referring to the fact that Padmore had lost his hopes in a straight and quick "continental union" project, without any passage through a long process of establishment of regional federations. But, as it has been underlined just above, this is nothing new. It was already clear that Padmore believed in the need of regional integration to attain the final goal of the "United States of Africa", which in the end remained his final hope and dream.

Guinea to save the country's economy.<sup>98</sup> Thanks to this generous offer, Touré could not refuse to discuss the proposal of unification, and he eventually accepted Nkrumah's deal.

The Ghana-Guinea Union was proclaimed the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November 1958, even before a proper constitutional chart was signed. At first, the Union was meant to have a symbolic meaning rather than a practical utility. Indeed, the AAPC was approaching and the Union was a way to show to other liberation movements the path towards a united Africa.

Padmore and Nkrumah's vision of the union differed considerably. The former was supporting the idea that the Ghana-Guinea Union was a regional federation to be merged with other federations only at a later stage. The latter wanted to present the Union as the base for a continental state. At first, Padmore's position prevailed and Nkrumah and Touré's first communiqué announced the establishment of a union of West African states.<sup>99</sup>

In line with Padmore's point of view on African unity, the "Call" to the AAPC conference - written by Padmore himself - advocated the "amalgamation or federation of territories on a regional basis".<sup>100</sup> Opening the AAPC, Nkrumah advocated the need for a union of West African states to be included in a continental union only at a later stage.<sup>101</sup> Padmore had won the day, at least for the moment. He had succeeded in convincing Nkrumah to present a "regionalist" plan for African unity. In such way, small, non-radical

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<sup>98</sup> J.J. Mensah, *The Bureau of African Affairs*, p.52.

<sup>99</sup> C.E. Welch, *Dream of Unity, Pan-Africanism and Political Unification in West Africa*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca N.Y., 1966, p.301.

<sup>100</sup> "The Call", All-African Peoples Conference, Accra, 1958, quoted in W.S. Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, p.61. At the conference, projects of regional unions were amply discussed.

<sup>101</sup> At the opening speech of the AAPC, Nkrumah stated: "[...] And looking forward, we see that, coupled with the consuming aspiration for freedom spreading like a forest fire across Africa today, there is an equally irresistible current which is rising higher and higher as the final day of liberation advances. And that is the burning desire among all the peoples of Africa to establish a community of their own, to give political expression in some form or another to the African Personality. It is this desire which animated my Government and the Government of Guinea to initiate recently certain action which we hope will constitute the nucleus of a United West Africa which will gain the adherence of other independent States as well as those yet to come. We further hope that this coming together will evolve eventually into a Union of African States just as the original thirteen American colonies have now developed into the 49 States constituting the American community. We are convinced that it is only in the inter-dependence of such African unity that we shall be able truly to safeguard our individual national freedom. We have no illusions about this being an easy task. But with the spirit and determination there, and the goodwill and co-operation of our people, we shall, I am firmly convinced, reach our objective". In All African People's Conference, *Speech by the Prime Minister of Ghana at the Opening and Closing Sessions on December 8<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, 1958*, Community Centre, Accra 1959. Interestingly, Nkrumah made reference to the United States of America as the best model for a Union of African States. Some years later, his model turned into the one of USSR.

countries like Liberia would have been more inclined to discuss with Ghana about projects of federations.

Padmore and Nkrumah's confrontation on the "regionalist" option had not ended. For months, Ghana's position on the matter was far from being clear. The Ghana-Guinea union was promoted both as a West African federation and as the base for a Union of African states. According to Armah, this confusion on the nature of the African unity project was the "reflection of the fluidity of the overall concept in the minds of its advocates".<sup>102</sup>

After some months the situation changed: Nkrumah's vision begun to prevail. The Ghana-Guinea union was no more associated only with the West African region. The official declaration of the union ("Conakry declaration"), signed on the 1st of May 1959, referred to a: "Union of Independent African States [...] to be opened to all independent African States or Federations adhering to the principles on which the Union is based".<sup>103</sup>

References to West Africa disappeared also at Sanniquellie, in July 1959, when Ghana, Guinea and Liberia met to discuss a new project of unification. The name of the proposed union was "The Community of Independent African States". Article 8 of the Sanniquellie declaration was practically the copy of the first article of the "Conakry" one.<sup>104</sup>

After Sanniquellie, Nkrumah's opposition to the "regionalist" option became even stronger. At the time, Ghana was still involved in several regional boards with colonies or ex-colonies of British West Africa. Since 1959, the Ghanaian Prime Minister gave the order of gradually withdrawing Ghana from all the West African boards (West African Cocoa Research Institute, West African Currency Board, West African Frontier Force, etc.).<sup>105</sup> Nkrumah's move was strongly criticized by the countries involved in the Boards, particularly by Nigeria. They considered such a choice in contradiction with Ghana's call for unity in the continent. In reality, Nkrumah considered such boards as colonial entities.

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<sup>102</sup> K. Armah, *Peace without Power*, p.93.

<sup>103</sup> Article 1 of the Basic Principles of the Union of Independent African States - also known as "The Conakry Declaration"; in C. Legum, *Pan-Africanism*, pp.160-61.

<sup>104</sup> AGPL, BAA/un-catalogued "Gabon File", "The principles of the Sanniquellie declaration, July 19, 1959". The complete declaration can also be found in C. Legum, *Pan-Africanism*, pp.162-63.

<sup>105</sup> See O. Aluko, *Ghana and Nigeria 1957-70, a Study in Inter-African Discord*, Barnes & Noble, New York, 1976, pp.63-66.

The Ghanaian leader was defining step by step his vision of regionalism. He considered all the projects of regional union in Africa as colonial or semi-colonial bodies. The Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland - also known as Central African Federation (CAF) - became the favorite target of his attacks. The clash between Nkrumah and the CAF's Prime Minister Roy Welensky - begun in 1958 - was bound to continue in the next years together with Ghana's actions against the CAF and other federations.

While in 1958 Nkrumah was defining Ghana's policy on African unity, he and Padmore had also to clarify its position on African liberation. In the months before the AAPC, Padmore's Office had begun to provide practical support to African nationalists. Moreover, Padmore and Nkrumah had also to deal with the UAR, the other protagonist of the African liberation struggle among the independent African states.

## **1.7. African Liberation and Cold War in 1958: Accra's Troubled Relationship with Cairo**

In 1958, another important protagonist of the independence process emerged: Nasser's United Arab Republic. Established in February as the union of Syria and Egypt, the new state represented another source of support for the liberation movements. Indeed, the UAR promoted a radical foreign policy, based on the support to African liberation and a call for the unity of Africans and Arabs. From many perspectives, Nasser's UAR and Nkrumah's Ghana had a similar foreign policy. As the AAPC was approaching, Accra needed to define its position towards the UAR, potentially an ally but practically a rival. Cairo was already heavily involved in the African liberation process and Ghana had to choose between competing with it or sign an alliance for achieving common targets. On this choice, it also depended Accra's relationship with the East and the West. Finally, the rivalry between the two prevailed. Thus, Accra was involved in a political confrontation with Cairo in which the influence on liberation movements was at stake. During 1958, questions like the use of



violence in the liberation process and the relationship with USA and USSR were amply discussed by Ghana and the UAR. Nkrumah could not ignore a country which was rising in importance in Africa, very active especially in the fields of interest of Ghana's Pan-African policy. The UAR was established in January 1958 and it inherited Syria and Egypt's political radicalism, even if it still maintained a non-aligned stance. Cairo had also a radical foreign policy, based on both Pan-Africanism and Pan-Arabism. Thus, similarly to Accra, Cairo was very active on the African scene, especially in the support to liberation movements. The two countries could be both rivals and allies; it only depended on how their relationship would evolve.

Nkrumah was willing to collaborate with Nasser - who shared with him a similar vision of African politics - but he had to face three main problems. First of all, Cairo was close to Moscow and Nkrumah feared to involve the Soviets into the decolonization process. Secondly, Nasser was sponsoring at the same time Pan-Africanism and Pan-Arabism, a duality which was unacceptable for Nkrumah. Thirdly, the UAR was economically more strong than Ghana and, with Moscow at its back, it could overwhelm Accra politically. Thus, in 1957-1958, Ghana kept a double attitude towards the UAR, studying its moves on the African scene.

At first, Nkrumah tried to sign a political alliance with Nasser, even before Egypt joined Syria into the UAR. The marriage between the Ghanaian leader and the Coptic Egyptian Fathia Rizk - celebrated on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 1957 - also contributed to strengthen the relationship between the two states, endangered by Accra's collaboration with Israel.<sup>106</sup>

While apparently Nkrumah's operation had been a success, the cracks on the alliance with the UAR started manifesting just immediately after. In fact, the two countries shared different views on how to manage the African liberation process and they had different perspectives on the Cold War. During 1958, they held a political confrontation on these and other matters. The debate between the two states was followed with interest by the Westerns and the Soviets, both interested in understanding how an alliance between Cairo and Accra could affect the decolonization process in Africa.

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<sup>106</sup> W.S. Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, pp.46-51.

The first issue they discussed was the use of violence in the liberation process. It emerged at the IASC, when the Algerian question was faced. Ghana held a relatively moderate position, pushing the IAS to recognize nonviolence as the best way to deal with the liberation of Africa, including Algeria's independence struggle.<sup>107</sup> The Egyptians strongly opposed this vision, as they had no objection to the use of violence in the decolonization process. The clash between Ghana and UAR on the use of violence showed a clear difference of outlook between the two. Nasser did not share the political tradition of Manchester and Nkrumah was not willing to give up on one of the pillars of his Pan-African policy. On the question of violence as well as on many others, the UAR was still more radical than Ghana.

The confrontation between Accra and Cairo was not only limited to the use of violence. At the IASC, they held also very different positions on the role the two superpowers had to play in the African liberation process. In line with the Pan-Africanist strategy of Positive Neutrality, Nkrumah wanted to keep the decolonization out of the Cold War. He wanted to establish a fund for freedom fighters financed only by the independent African states, keeping it independent from both the East and the West. The UAR opposed this fund since it did not want to generate a competition between it and the one of the Afro-Asian Solidarity Organization, a Soviet-backed anti-colonial platform where Cairo was already involved.<sup>108</sup> Nasser did not hesitate to call for Moscow's support in the liberation process - even if officially maintaining a non-aligned stance – whereas Nkrumah opposed any external influence.

In the final analysis, as the IASC had showed, Nkrumah and Nasser were not politically in line. Still, the possibility of a tactical pact between the two was not a remote one. The African liberation process could have been strongly affected by such a measure both in the short period – especially with the upcoming AAPC – and in the long one.

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<sup>107</sup> Ghana proposed to add to the final resolutions the term “by peaceful means” to the phrase “to make every possible effort to help the Algerian people towards the attainment of independence”. W.S. Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, p.36. See: Declaration of the IAS conference, Accra, April 15-22 1958, Section 3 – The Question of Algeria, article 6; in C. Legum, *Pan-Africanism*, p.142.

<sup>108</sup> W.S. Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, p.37.

The Western Powers were particularly interested in this question, as they considered a possible alliance between Nasser and Nkrumah as a threat for the political stability of post-colonial Africa. A liberation process led by two allied radical states could open the door to a political revolution in Africa, and this scenario was not acceptable for the West, especially since Moscow could take advantage of the situation.

Since early 1958, London prepared a series of reports on Ghana's foreign policy with a special focus on its relationship with the USSR and the Arab countries, including the UAR. Through the reports, the British wanted to have a clear idea of the situation before the AAPC, so they could take countermeasures in case the conference turned out to be a subversive instrument.

The British discovered soon that Ghana's attitude towards the UAR could be easily defined as cold. One of the first reports, submitted just before the IASC, showed that Nkrumah's Ghana had a scarce interest in associating too much with Nasser's UAR.<sup>109</sup> In Ghana, the "Israeli party" led by Padmore had still more power than the "Egyptian" one.<sup>110</sup> Even after the IASC, the situation did not change relevantly.

Still, some personalities of the Western front kept warning against a subversive plan led by Cairo and Accra to rule Africa. One of the strongest voices among them was the one of Roy Welensky, the Prime Minister of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Welensky had no problems in pointing the finger to what he considered a Soviet-backed plan to bring a communist revolution in Africa. According to him, the AAPC was the weapon to organize such an uprising led by Accra and Cairo. Welensky's accusations were taken by the British government with a certain perplexity, since they knew about the mutual contempt between him and Nkrumah. However, it is interesting to go through them in order

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<sup>109</sup> During the preparatory trip of the conference, one of the members of the Ghanaian delegation, Kofi, was asked by a British diplomat at Tunis about the political relationship between Nkrumah and Nasser. In particular, the diplomat asked Kofi about UAR's position towards the establishment of the Black Star Line, a maritime company created in Ghana with Israeli funds. Kofi's answer was emblematic of the scarce interest towards the Ghana-UAR alliance by many Ghanaians at the time. He told the British diplomat: "That is why Dr. Nkrumah married an Egyptian!". See BNA, FO/371/131182, Letter, Dearden (British Embassy, Tunis) to Smith (African Department, Foreign Office), March 1, 1958. On the Black Star Line see W.S. Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, p.37.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibidem*, p.47.

to better understand the political implication of Accra and Cairo's relationship in view of the AAPC.

Welensky considered Nkrumah a dangerous crypto-communist, who could lead Africa towards Moscow. As for Nkrumah, he had strongly opposed the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland and its Prime Minister since before Ghana's independence. According to the Ghanaian Prime Minister, the Federation was not a simple regional union, but in fact a means to strengthen the white rule in Africa. A note of the British Foreign Office of August 1958 underlined that Nkrumah had a better opinion of South Africa than the CAF. At the time, he was considered "anti-Welensky".<sup>111</sup>

In August 1958, Welensky made a speech in which he warned about a plan led by USSR, Egypt and Ghana to transform the African liberation process into a communist uprising. According to him, by supporting the liberation movements through Ghana and the UAR, the Soviets were trying to attract the continent on their side. In this scenario, the AAPC was a call to arms by the communists. The speech is interesting as it allows to understand how certain personalities of the Western world still held suspects towards Nkrumah and his Pan-African policy:

[...] Russia's hand lies behind nationalism in Africa. [...] I cannot think of any African nationalist organization whose activities are not in the long run preparing the way for international Communism. [...] Ghana has emerged as the focus of anti-colonialism for the present, but by marriage and by inclination Ghana and Egypt are walking hand-in-hand, as is shown by the fact that Ghana is supported by Cairo in its object of a continent-wide liberation movement, as well as in its staging of the conference of independent African States in Ghana. This support was clearly endorsed by the establishment of the permanent Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee.<sup>112</sup>

Nkrumah rejected all the accusations. Accra was very far from being a communist agent of Moscow. Furthermore, Ghana's political relationship with Egypt was not as idyllic as Welensky had described it. On August 25 1958, the British Embassy in Washington wrote

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<sup>111</sup> BNA, FO/371/131182, Front page of file J 1021/5 of 25/28 August 1958.

<sup>112</sup> BNA, FO/371/131182, Extract from "East Africa and Rhodesia" of Thursday, September 4, 1958 (the speech was made in August).

to the Foreign Office in London to underline the bad reaction of the Ghanaians to Welensky's speech. Moreover, they added that even the U.S. State Department considered Nkrumah disenchanted about Nasser, even if he kept acting publicly as a friend.<sup>113</sup>

Still, London kept an eye open on Welensky's warnings.

During the summer, the Prime Minister of the CAF exchanged views with the British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan on how to counter communist activities in Africa, including also the AAPC.<sup>114</sup> The question was taken seriously by Macmillan who did not want to risk the fall of Africa in the hands of Khrushchev. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September 1958, the Commonwealth Secretary met Nkrumah and discussed with him about the upcoming AAPC. The minute of the conversation clarifies Nkrumah's attitude towards Nasser in 1958 and his position towards African liberation:

Dr. Nkrumah came to lunch today. [...] He [...] spoke a good deal about Nasser whom he distrusted. He thought that Nasser had allowed himself to get into the Russian coils but did not really wish to be anything but neutral. He was skeptical about Arab nationalism, pointing out that the Egyptians were not Arabs and belonged to Africa and not Asia. He was cagey about his Conference of African Political Parties and I warned him that if he were determined to have it we could not of course stop him but that I hoped he would try and be a moderating influence. [...] Dr. Nkrumah is going ahead with his proposed conference of African political parties. [...] Dr. Nkrumah was pleasant and apparently understanding but I am sure he sees himself as champion of "Africa for the Africans". I therefore fear the worst from the conference and I gather scallywags from Colonial territories are already assembling.<sup>115</sup>

Nkrumah calmed down the British suspects on the real nature of the AAPC. According to him, the conference was going to be only a gathering of African nationalists claiming for their freedom and for the unity of the continent. Neither the UAR nor the USSR had anything to do with it. As in 1958, Nasser was more a rival than an ally.

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<sup>113</sup> BNA, FO/371/131182, Letter, Bottomley (British Embassy in Washington D.C) to Smith (Foreign office), August 25, 1958.

<sup>114</sup> BNA, PREM/11-3239, Series of Letters between Macmillan and Welensky.

<sup>115</sup> BNA, FO/371/131182, The Commonwealth Secretary to British Prime Minister, typescript, 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1958.

Nkrumah had been very cautious in claiming any alliance with Nasser. There were political reasons, of course, and they had already been presented. But there was also a tactical reason. In view of the AAPC, Ghana did not want to attract the fears of the West on its Pan-African policy. For Nkrumah, the Conference was the best occasion to present officially his ideas on African liberation and unity. Thus, he did not want to throw this chance away by associating Ghana with a radical, pro-Soviet state.

Even though Nkrumah had momentarily reassured the West, Washington, Paris, and London were still keeping an eye on him to see how he would deal with the de-colonization process. In the meantime, however, Ghana could launch its Pan-African policy with the wind in his sails. The AAPC was approaching and Nkrumah and Padmore were working hard on its organization. The actualization of Ghana's Pan-African policy depended on the success of the Conference.

## **1.8. The Establishment of the African Affairs Centre**

One of the first aims of Ghana's Pan-African policy was to attract as many liberation movements as possible towards Ghana and Nkrumah's ideology. The final goal was to create a united front of nationalist parties which could bring a continental government to life. Padmore's Office had a key role in this mission: widening its already ample net of political contacts. However, there was a significant problem in view of the AAPC: Accra had no structures to welcome African freedom fighters. Without a place where to host nationalists in Ghana, the mission of gathering them together in Accra was likely to fail. Makonnen suggested to create a proper center for this purpose, in order to have also an instrument for Ghana's Pan-African policy after the conference. The planned new institution was meant to be at the same time a hostel and a political training center. The new institution was called African Affairs Centre (AAC) and it was bound to be the second "Pan-African" institution of Ghana, directly depending on the first one.

Padmore and Makonnen had decided to invite to the AAPC all the African liberation movements, regardless of their political outlook, as long as they endorsed the political agenda of the conference.<sup>116</sup> Still, it was also important to have as many liberation movements as possible on Ghana's side before the AAPC took place. The most important mission of Padmore's Office in 1958 was to find these nationalist parties and link them to Ghana. The Adviser on African Affairs was already in touch with several African political leaders, some of whom he had met in Moscow and in London many years before.<sup>117</sup> The Trinidadian Pan-Africanist spent the end of 1957 and the beginning of 1958 strengthening these old contacts and working on new ones to attract their parties to Ghana.

In March 1958, a first count of Padmore's results could be made. During the first independence anniversary, a group of African nationalists was invited. The group included Padmore and Nkrumah's old friends such as Azikiwe and Garba-Jahumpa but also other important personalities like Mboya, Murumbi, Apithy and Djibo Bakary.<sup>118</sup> The occasion was propitious to show them and their parties the contents of Ghana's Pan-African policy and to introduce them to the AAPC. This first group became the basis of the list of delegates for the conference to be held in December. Ghana's struggle for influence towards liberation movements had officially begun.

The Office of the Adviser on African Affairs had provided accommodation to the guests of March at Accra's hotels. Indeed, the institution was not capable of hosting directly the nationalists, since its building was only a small bungalow.<sup>119</sup> The lack of a proper structure for official guests represented a double problem for Ghana. First of all, accommodating the guests in local hotels was very expensive for the government. Secondly, Ghana's promise to provide support to freedom fighters could not cope with the lack of proper structures to host them. Makonnen was particularly aware of the political risks in case Nkrumah failed to find a solution. He wrote in his autobiography:

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<sup>116</sup> PRAAD, SC/BAA/165, Letter, Padmore to Nkrumah, 19<sup>th</sup> August 1958.

<sup>117</sup> For instance, Kenyatta and Azikiwe. See G.R. Hooker, *Black Revolutionary*, pp.6 and 16.

<sup>118</sup> W.S. Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, p.31. The latter was meant to become the first political refugee hosted in Ghana.

<sup>119</sup> For a map of the area of the Office of the Adviser on African Affairs (and the future Bureau of African Affairs) see AGPL, un-catalogued AA/Office Stationery Equipment And Accommodation (BAA-8), map at pag.178.

[...] if we in Ghana were going to provide any lead, it was essential that there should be facilities whereby visiting revolutionaries or freedom fighters could be accommodated and made useful themselves and to the development of an African ideology. There had to be structures, and this was a desperate need, because from time of independence in 1957 there had been groups of stragglers from various countries to be found in Ghana. But they were living like kings, taking a bottle of whisky here and there, and charging it to the government.<sup>120</sup>

Makonnen discussed the matter with Padmore, who was also very critical about the lack of structures. In the summer, other guests arrived, including ministers of other African countries and the Office became overwhelmed by the requests of accommodation. The situation soon turned out to be unmanageable and the need for a solution could not be delayed anymore.

The 19<sup>th</sup> of August 1958, Padmore wrote to Nkrumah to expose him the issue and to propose a way out. After having provided accommodation to several visitors from Dahomey and Ivory Coast, his Office was having difficulties in hosting six African ministers. Indeed, there was no more money to pay the hotel bills. Thus, Padmore presented him Makonnen's proposal to establish a hostel for freedom fighters and official guests in Accra. It is the first reference of the future project of the African Affairs Centre. Padmore wrote:

This weekend, we are expecting at least six Ministers from various French territories. [...] Our difficulty is in finding accommodation for them. Our hotel bills with the Ambassador Hotel are too expensive. Makonnen informs me that there are a number of empty houses that are used occasionally as government rest house in the Cantonments area. He suggests that one of them should be set aside for use when we have these African visitors, as more of these people shall be visiting Ghana. But this action cannot be taken without your approval.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> R. Makonnen, *Pan-Africanism from Within*, p.212.

<sup>121</sup> PRAAD, SC/BAA/165, *Letter*, Padmore to Nkrumah, 19<sup>th</sup> August 1958.



Padmore sponsored Makonnen for the role of manager of the new hostel. According to him, the Guyanese Pan-Africanist was doing a very good work with the recruitment of African nationalists for the conference. Thus, he had the perfect profile for the job. Thanks to him, the AAPC was expected to be success:

You will be pleased to know that the preparatory work of the conference is well in hand. Mak [Ras Makonnen] is Chairman of the planning committee [...] I have every confidence that it is going to be a tremendous success judging from the number of enquiries that are coming in daily asking for representation. As you know, we have decided to invite all organization regardless of their political outlook as long as they endorse the points of the agenda.<sup>122</sup>

Nkrumah and Padmore needed a reliable and trustable man to deal with the creation and the running of such an important institution. Makonnen already had years of experience in political activity and management. In the United Kingdom, he had worked as treasurer of the IASB, the PAF and also the Pan-African Congress itself. Moreover, he had successfully run a hostel for African activists in London.<sup>123</sup> At the time, Makonnen himself was more than willing to make a more significant contribution to Ghana's Pan-African policy than the one he was making with his work at the Office of the Adviser on African Affairs.

Nkrumah finally accepted Padmore's proposal and he gave Makonnen free hand to work for the new Centre. Makonnen was aware of the difficulties of running such a project, with no big funds and basically no time ahead, but he was ready to take the risk:

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<sup>122</sup> PRAAD, SC/BAA/165, *Letter*, Padmore to Nkrumah, 19<sup>th</sup> August 1958.

<sup>123</sup> James explains the outstanding role of the Guyanese Pan-Africanist in the life of the IASB and PAF: "The Bureau [IASB] needed money and organization in order to live a material existence at all. This had been supplied in the first case by Makonnen, another West Indian, a man of fantastic energy and organizational gifts who found the money, found the premises, kept them in order not only as an office but as a sort of free hostel for Africans and people of African descent and their friends who were in any way connected with the Bureau or needed assistance, organized meetings, interested people and did his share as propagandist and agitator". In C.R.L., James, *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution*, p.76

I was considered a seasoned veteran, and it was assumed I'd get on with the job without any program being laid down. It shouldn't be too different from some of the things I'd been doing in African welfare work in Manchester, Liverpool and other places.<sup>124</sup>

The Guyanese Pan-Africanist begun to work to the future African Affairs Centre (AAC) in September. He only had three months to find the resources to run the new institution. His first task was then to find cheap solutions to the needs of the Centre. He finally found an area close to the Accra airport, where there were twenty-five chalets of the pre-independence period. The place was perfect. The buildings did not need serious works of renovation and there was enough room to host the guests of the conference. Furthermore, the Centre was close to the airport, a strategic position which would allow freedom fighters to move quickly in case of danger. The AAC was formally depending on Padmore's office but practically it was run solely by Makonnen, who collected the funds to finance all the works for the Centre.<sup>125</sup>

At the opening of the AAPC, the Centre was ready to work. The new hostel was bound to host African freedom fighters even after the conference. In this sense, it became one of the most important instruments of Ghana's Pan-African policy, since, at the AAC, hundreds of African nationalists were bound to cross their paths. Moreover, it became also a place where to provide members of nationalist parties with ideological training, directly supplied by the Centre or by the CPP.

Ghana had finally the structures to fulfill its targets. The AAPC was the occasion to present them to the liberation movements invited in order to attract them towards Pan-Africanism. With the conference, a new season was beginning. Ghana was ready to lead the African liberation and unity struggles. The next sub-chapter will deal with the AAPC, in the attempt to describe the role it played in African politics and in the evolution of Ghana's Pan-African policy.

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<sup>124</sup> R. Makonnen, *Pan-Africanism from Within*, p.212.

<sup>125</sup> The land where the chalets were was under the control of the Office of the Adviser and, after Padmore's death (Sept. 1959), of the Bureau of African Affairs. See AGPL, un-catalogued AA/Office Stationery Equipment And Accommodation (BAA-8), "Certificate of Allocation, Accra, site for Taycot Bungalows", 16<sup>th</sup> October 1959.

## 1.9. The All-African People's Conference

With the AAPC, Nkrumah and Padmore finally succeeded in gathering most of the liberation movements in Accra. With the opening of the African Affairs Centre, Ghana offered his territory as a shelter and base for every freedom fighter in need. The conference was also an opportunity to promote Nkrumah's ideas on African liberation and unity. It marked what is probably the highest level of popularity ever experienced by Nkrumah in his political career. It also marked the end of the "diplomatic" approach to foreign policy experienced by Ghana during the first year and a half after independence. From then on, the struggle for African liberation was meant to be fought on the field.

The All-African People's Conference was the most important Pan-African gathering ever held since the 1945 Manchester Congress. The name was chosen by Nkrumah, in spite of Padmore's objection: the term "All-African" instead of "Pan-African" underlined the new tradition that came with independent Ghana.<sup>126</sup> Even if the name was new, the conference was undoubtedly considered in line with the other Pan-African congresses and conferences held since 1900. The only relevant difference was that with the AAPC the Pan-African movement had finally taken roots in Africa. Padmore's dream had become a reality.

The conference gathered together more than two hundred delegates representing thirty-six nationalist organizations.<sup>127</sup> It was a precious occasion for Nkrumah to expose his plans for African liberation and unity to the rest of the continent. It was also a chance to present the achievements of Ghana and to propose them as examples to be followed by other countries.

At the AAPC, the CPP - the official organizer of the conference - was directly and indirectly presented as a model nationalist party. According to the Ghanaians, the party had proved its organizational efficiency and its ideological integrity during the liberation struggle of the Gold Coast. Moreover, it had successfully responded to the Pan-African call

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<sup>126</sup> Thompson quotes James Markham on this issue. W.S. Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, p.58.

<sup>127</sup> PRAAD, ADM/16/1/11, "List of Official Delegates" as part of AAPC, News Bulletin of the All African People's Conference, issued by the Permanent Secretariat.

for the use of nonviolence. From this point of view, it was the party which had better applied the Manchester's indications. All the other parties were invited to follow the steps of the CPP, provided the colonial powers granted them the basic political rights. Kojo Botsio, leading figure of the party and head of the steering committee of the conference, stated:

The Secret weapon of the CPP was organization. Together with organization is the demand for universal adult suffrage. The right of one individual to one vote regardless of race, color or creed. Universal adult suffrage is the key to the final attainment of independence. With the united will of the people behind you, the power of the imperialist can be destroyed without the use of violence".<sup>128</sup>

Questions regarding frontiers, regionalism, colonialism, racism, federalism, liberation were discussed. Five committees met each day of the conference (which took place on 5-13 December 1958) to discuss these and other issues.

Before the conference produced its own resolution, Nkrumah tried to provide what he thought were the steps towards the achievement of the "highest standard of life" in Africa: 1) the attainment of freedom and independence; 2) the consolidation of that freedom and independence; 3) the creation of unity and community between the free African states; 4) the economic and social reconstruction of Africa.<sup>129</sup> The whole Pan-African policy of Ghana was summarized in few words.

In the meantime, very practical discussions on African liberation took place outside the halls of the conference and far from world media ears. The AAC - which was hosting the majority of the delegates – became also the seat of confidential meetings between the liberation movements and the Ghanaian government. According to Makonnen:

There were really two types of meetings; there were the official ones at the conference hall where heads of states would be talking in general terms about the future of Africa; and

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<sup>128</sup> "People's Conference Plans, Permanent Body", Africa Special Report, December 1958, p.4, quoted in H. Adom, *The Role of Ghana in African Liberation and Unity, 1957-1977*, unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Temple University, 1991 p.84.

<sup>129</sup> H. Adom, *The Role of Ghana in African Liberation and Unity, 1957-1977*, p.82.

that's where the foreign reporters would be. Then there were the unofficial meetings at the Centre or at the chalets where you'd find the trade union element mixing with the ideological groups from various countries. They kept off the high-level generalizations about African freedom, and dealt with the practical questions of liberation.<sup>130</sup>

The AAPC became the first occasion to spread the Centre's name throughout Africa. All the liberation movements in the continent were invited to send some of their members to the AAC and to keep the contacts with their representative in Ghana. Padmore's Office was coordinating all the operations.

At the conference, Lumumba and Roberto and other important political activists established contacts with Nkrumah's government and their parties began to collaborate with the "Pan-African" institutions of Ghana. Even the Algerian *Front de Libération Nationale* (FNL), represented at the AAPC by Franz Fanon, established an office in Accra. Thus, after the AAPC, Nkrumah could count on a "network of admirers" in the continent, some of whom, like Kaunda, were going to support him even after his fall.<sup>131</sup>

The resolutions of the AAPC covered practically every question concerning African liberation, promoting a Pan-African platform to coordinate the efforts of the freedom fighters against colonialism.<sup>132</sup> In line with Nkrumah's Pan-African position, the AAPC promoted nonviolence over guerrilla warfare.

The conference achieved also another important target: the establishment of a permanent steering committee and a secretariat to be settled in Accra. The latter had to play a role similar to the one of the AAPSO for the Afro-Asian world. It was meant to gather all the liberation movements under the same umbrella and to coordinate their actions. A "freedom fund" was also created in order to collect all the money provided by the independent African countries. A similar initiative had been unsuccessfully proposed by Ghana at the IASC.

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<sup>130</sup> R. Makonnen, *Pan-Africanism from Within*, p.214

<sup>131</sup> W.S. Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy*, p.61.

<sup>132</sup> For an analysis of the conference and its resolutions see, for instance: J.B. Gewald, *Hands off Africa!!: an overview and analysis of the ideological, political and socio-economic approaches to African Unity expressed at the first All-African People's Congress held in Accra, Ghana in December 1958*, s.n., 1990.

The AAPC proved important to amplify the requests and the protests of the African liberation movements. Africa's political evolutions were under the spotlight in both the East and the West. For what concerns Ghana, the conference was a political success. Accra was proposed as one of the headquarters of the African liberation struggle.

## **1.10. Conclusions**

The period 1957-1958 marked a crucial step towards the fulfillment of Ghana's Pan-African policy. At the end of this period, Accra had won the confidence of hundreds of freedom fighters, ready to count on Nkrumah's support. The Office of the Adviser on African Affairs had done a meticulous and successful work, considering that at the time of the AAPC, it was only one year old. Nkrumah and Padmore's past experiences proved fundamental in this operation, without the two of them it would not have been possible to set up such an efficient institution.

The AAPC marked ideally the end of the first period of Ghana's foreign policy and opened a new phase. The "diplomatic" and relatively moderate approach of 1957/1958 was going to be followed by a more "militant" one. It was time to put the Pan-Africanist theory into practice.

Those two years had been important to give shape to Padmore's Office and to the African Affair Centre. The next step was to develop them in order to support efficiently the African liberation movements. It meant working on their structures, on the composition of their staff and also on the policies they had to perform. The two "Pan-African" institutions had to be completely adapted to the challenges of the African liberation struggle. The next chapter will describe the evolution of Ghana's Pan-African policy and its institutions between January and September 1959.