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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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Recapitulation of the Thesis and Final Considerations

This thesis has attempted to provide a better understanding of the functioning of the “Pan-African” institutions of Ghana, designed by Nkrumah and Padmore to support African liberation and unity and to spread the Pan-African message in Africa. As the thesis has tried to demonstrate, the BAA, the AAC and the Institutes played a fundamental role in the history of Ghana’s foreign policy and they also strongly influenced the internal political life of the African nation. Radical Pan-Africanism was an integral part of Nkrumah’s political programme in Ghana. In this perspective, the three Pan-African institutions held a key role both in supporting the radicalization of the Ghanaian civil service (with a strong resistance of the latter) and in promoting the Ghanaian institutional and political models throughout Africa. Thanks to the analysis of new sources, this thesis has also offered an insight into the work of the BAA, the AAC and the Institute among the ranks of African liberation movements. Hence, it has been possible to evaluate the degree of influence exerted by Ghana on the African nationalist movements. Furthermore, this study has explained how Nkrumah gained a relevant political return - at least in the first period of his rule in Ghana - by being one of the main supporters of African freedom fighters.

As the thesis has showed, the history of Nkrumah’s Pan-African policy can be divided in five main phases, each one of which has been presented in a specific chapter. Such phases meant changes of strategies for the whole Ghanaian Foreign Service and also for the “Pan-African” institutions. As Nkrumah’s political position changed through the years, also the “Pan-African” institutions had to adapt to the new tasks they had to perform during each new political phase.

This study has been opened by an overview of the theoretical bases of Ghana’s Pan-African policy from its early conception to its actualization. As the thesis has shown, Nkrumah and Padmore defined its lines after years of political elaboration and after considering Ghana as the perfect platform where to actualize Manchester’s call for the liberation and unity of the continent. Together, they transformed Ghana into the torch-

bearer of Pan-Africanism in the continent, making Accra a shelter for any African freedom fighter in need of assistance. Nkrumah and Padmore needed to operate a selection among the liberation movements, in order to create a front of Pan-Africanist parties in the continent. Thus, they elaborated some specific guidelines to be followed by those nationalist parties that were willing to receive Ghana's support. As the thesis has tried to prove, these guidelines were based on the Pan-Africanist theory but also on Nkrumah's political achievements in the struggle for Ghana's independence, that is, the construction of the CPP as a modern mass nationalist party, the use of the "Positive Action", and the adherence to nonalignment. From chapter one to chapter five, several examples has been provided in order to support this hypothesis. In 1957, Padmore and Nkrumah created the first of a series of "Pan-African" institutions in order to attain the targets of Ghana's Pan-African policy: the Office of the Adviser to the Prime Minister on African Affairs. Even in this case, as the thesis has tried to demonstrate, Nkrumah and Padmore's past experiences proved fundamental. The Office of the Adviser on African Affairs was *de facto* shaped on anti-colonial agencies such as the International African Service Bureau and the Pan-African Federation where Padmore himself had worked for years. This as well as other past experiences had been quite useful in order to set the foundations of the Office and of the others "Pan-African" institutions. The first chapter has also explained how the Office of the Adviser on African Affairs and the African Affairs Centre were included in the Ghanaian system of foreign policy and how the two institutions worked with the Foreign Service. This operation proved difficult, since it implied a collaboration between different systems of foreign policy, one operating with "orthodox" diplomatic means and the other with "un-orthodox" ones. This difficulty was bound to evolve, eventually, in a direct confrontation between "militants" and civil servants. Even Padmore's involvement in Ghanaian politics had been contested by the service which – as the thesis has showed – was still not willing to yield its power to an independent, radical and non-Ghanaian figure like Padmore. The first chapter has explained how the Ghanaian diplomacy and Padmore's Office worked during the first two years of Nkrumah's rule. In particular, the chapter has provided an insight into the work of Padmore's Office for the Independent African States Conference and the All-African People's Conference, the most important appointments of the period 1957-1958.

After the AAPC (December 1958), Accra could claim to have conquered the confidence of hundreds of freedom fighters, ready to count on Nkrumah's support. The Office of the Adviser on African Affairs proved to be an efficient body considering that at the time of the AAPC it was only one year old. Even the African Affairs Centre, the second "Pan-African" institution created just before the conference, proved its efficiency by opening its doors to the first African political refugees. As the thesis has tried to demonstrate, all these results could not be considered the product of chance but the result of a hard and effective work, based on Padmore and Nkrumah's political expertise and carried out by Padmore and his staff with a remarkable efficiency.

Between January and September 1959, specific policies concerning the support to African liberation and unity were elaborated. Ghana's Pan-African policy was the result of a deep theoretical debate but it was also – and this is one of the crucial points of the thesis – the product of the praxis of the daily struggle for the freedom and unity of the continent. Chapter two has described this process of elaboration and it has also examined the way the "Pan-African" institutions of Ghana adapted to the needs of African nationalist parties. The impact of these changes was huge, since their effects lasted until the fall of Nkrumah in February 1966. In this period, Ghana defined for the first time its policies for the support of political refugees, African students, and opposition parties. It also clarified its stand towards the use of armed struggle in the liberation process. Finally, Padmore's Office set up the foundations for a proper Pan-African propaganda machinery. As this study has argued, Padmore's imprint on the definition of these policies was fundamental and it lasted long after his death, occurred in September 1959. Thanks to almost fifteen years of work, Padmore contributed to the establishment of a system of foreign policy that was able to turn the Pan-African theory into practice. At his death, he left the Office and the Centre as institutions perfectly shaped for dealing with the struggle for African liberation and unity in the next years. Indeed, many of the policies implemented after October 1959 were clearly still influenced by his ideas on African politics and his practical indications in terms of political strategy. As a matter of fact, the evolution of the "Pan-African" institutions of Ghana followed Padmore's prior plans, as it was the case with the establishment of the BAA (October 1959) and the foundation of the Ideological Institute (1959-1961). Padmore

had also left Nkrumah with a qualified staff, personally selected thanks to his autonomous management of the Office. In particular, this thesis has provided an in-depth examination of the rise of A.K. Barden as Padmore's "successor". As this study has shown, Barden was not only a "militant" but also a skillful and charismatic employee, selected by Padmore for his qualities and trained specifically to deal with the activities of the Office. From this point of view, the account of the rise of Barden offered by Thompson hardly matches the historical reality. Padmore – as the thesis has argued – had no reason for selecting a man only for his military experience and not for his political and managerial skills.

The new BAA – born after Padmore's Office - was an even more independent institution, better financed and more integrated with the CPP than the former Office of the Adviser to the Prime Minister on African Affairs. As explained in chapter three, various reforms were put in place to respond to the challenges of the new political phase in Africa, a period in which several countries reached the independence and many others challenged the colonial authorities with a renovated vigor. Nkrumah proved that he could continue along the road traced by Padmore even if his mentor and friend had died. After Padmore's death, the Ghanaian Prime Minister (since July '60, President of the Republic of Ghana) created a specific body to discuss any question concerning African affairs: the African Affairs Committee. Nkrumah appointed all the most important figures of the party and the state as members of this body. Thanks to the documentation of the archives of the Bureau of African Affairs and the so-called "Nkrumah's papers" (kept at the PRAAD – Accra section) –this thesis has provided for the very first time detailed information concerning the work of the Committee, which operated between October 1959 and March 1960. The period of the management of the African Affairs Committee was a crucial one. The "Pan-African" institutions of Ghana were improved and Ghana's Pan-African policy was also radicalized. The Bureau became more powerful than Padmore's Office had ever been and it became a precious instrument of the CPP both in Ghana and in Africa. Barden, new acting director of the BAA, became one of Nkrumah's closest advisers on African affairs and set up a wide net of agents in the whole continent. At the end of 1960, he could report to Nkrumah a satisfying outcome of the work done in Africa, even if, generally speaking, Ghana's Pan-African policy had suffered a harsh defeat in Congo. Through the analysis of

the documentation of the BAA, the author has provided the reader with an insight into the work of Barden's office in Southern Africa and in Congo. Barden worked in first person on the battlefield in order to fulfill the missions Nkrumah had given him. Still, despite his efforts, the fall of Lumumba signed Nkrumah's defeat and it brought the need for a change of pace.

Nkrumah responded to the failures in Congo with a radicalization of his Pan-African policy and a general reform of the "Pan-African" institutions and of the Foreign Service. Between January 1961 and December 1962 – the period examined in chapter four - the whole Ghanaian state was interested by a process of radicalization. Analyzing the documentation of the Bureau of African Affairs, this study has described in the details the nature of the reforms of this period. One of the major changes operated by Nkrumah was the establishment of the African Affairs Secretariat (AAS), a sort of new radical Ministry of Foreign Affairs designed to deal specifically with the African continent. The Ghanaian President also strengthened the propaganda machinery in order to have his Pan-African message delivered throughout Africa and also counteract the anti-Nkrumahist propaganda which was mounting among moderate African states. Moreover, as the thesis has shown, Ghana increased its investments in the training of African freedom fighters so as to influence them politically and have their support for the creation of a front of Pan-Africanist (and Nkrumahist) states. In 1961, Nkrumah finally opened the Ideological Institute of Winneba to both Ghanaians and freedom fighters. Ghanaians were expected to be trained ideologically in order to form a new radicalized civil service, while freedom fighters were supposed to bring back to their countries what they had learnt at the Institute. This way, as this study has argued, Nkrumah hoped to spread Pan-Africanism and Nkrumahism in Africa and to export the Ghanaian political and institutional models to other countries. In 1961, Ghana also began providing African nationalists with military training, a crucial turning point for Nkrumah's Pan-African policy, which until the Congo Crisis had been based on nonviolence. The Bureau emerged stronger from this process of radicalization. To a certain extent, the BAA was becoming even more influential than the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the AAS. As a result, the confrontation between "orthodox" and "un-orthodox" agencies progressively increased. As the thesis has

explained, the main source of friction between the “parallel agencies” in this period was Barden’s influence on the appointments of diplomats and within the Ghanaian embassies. In the meantime, while Ghana’s Pan-African policy was following the radical course dictated by Nkrumah, Accra had to face an increasing number of enemies. Nkrumah’s new radical policies attracted the fears of moderate African countries backed by UK, France, and USA. The Western powers and countries like Ivory Coast or Nigeria multiplied their efforts to debunk Nkrumah’s influence on African politics. In the fourth and in the fifth chapters of the thesis there are evidences of the use of anti-Nkrumahist propaganda by these countries.

In the period between January 1963 and February 1966, Kwame Nkrumah Ghana speeded up the ongoing process of radicalization. As a result, even Nkrumah’s foreign policy was radicalized. A harsh confrontation with other independent African states and Western powers emerged. Barden kept working to improve the power of the Bureau both in Ghana and in Africa and to spread the Nkrumahist ideology in the continent. The thesis has provided a detailed analysis of the mission of the BAA against the East African Federation, an interesting case study in order to understand how the Bureau worked abroad and the way it was influencing the appointments of diplomats in Ghana. As this study has argued, at first Barden’s work in Africa proved successful, at least in attracting the support of the most radical freedom fighters towards Ghana. However, in the long run, as Nkrumah suffered a growing political isolation, Barden became the scapegoat of the failures of Ghana’s foreign policy. The director of the BAA had to pay the political price of the use of “unorthodox” methods to sustain African liberation and unity. In 1965, the Ghanaian President finally decided to discard the director of the BAA. It was a last attempt to regain some credibility in the African scene and to calm down the fears of the Ghanaian Foreign Service over the increasing power of the director of the Bureau. Barden was defeated by enemies both outside and inside Ghana. Still, not even the removal of his controversial figure was enough to modify the difficult position of Ghana in Africa. At the Accra OAU Conference (October 1965) Nkrumah suffered an harsh political defeat which, *de facto*, signified the failure of his Pan-African policy as a whole. At the time of coup (February 1966), the Ghanaian President was politically isolated by most of the other African leaders.

As underlined in the introduction, one of the crucial points of this thesis was the use of new sources and a more detached analysis of known sources in order to challenge the most ideological visions which flourished among the scholars after the fall of Kwame Nkrumah. After the 24th of February 1966, the NLC launched a process aimed at the removal of Nkrumah's political influence in Africa, starting obviously from Ghana itself. At the end of this operation, few countries openly admitted having been supported and influenced politically by Nkrumah's Ghana. The Anti-Nkrumah campaign also affected most of the early studies on this period. Authors like Thompson, Bretton and, later, Mazrui, severely criticized both the conception and the execution of the foreign policy of the government of the deposed President. However, for decades, these and other scholars could base their statements only on few sources, with regard, in particular, to the activities of the BAA, the AAC, and the Institute. As this thesis has tried to demonstrate, a detailed analysis of the activities of the "Pan-African" institutions can provide a clear understanding of the real degree of influence which Nkrumah's Ghana exerted in Africa until the coup of 1966 and, therefore, to reconsider the history of Nkrumah's foreign policy in a new light. This dissertation tried to accomplish this target through the use of new sources and analyzing the history of Ghana's Pan-African policy from Accra's perspective. The papers of the archive of the Bureau of African Affairs in Accra, the "Nkrumah's papers", and the documents of the British Intelligence have proved to be precious instruments to accomplish this goal. Still, the work is far from being over. This study can be considered only as a first phase of research, before the whole history of Nkrumah's foreign policy can be put under revision. This dissertation has tried to provide a first overview of the argument and it has introduced new elements for further discussions. Other researches should follow this one, and the author himself hopes to develop the path of research opened by his dissertation in a variety of directions.