

Eastern Illinois University

The Keep

Masters Theses

Student Theses & Publications

Spring 2020

"That New Africa Is Ready to Fight Its Own Battles": Kwame Nkrumah, the United States, and the Quest for a Modern Ghana, 1957-1966

Godwin Gyimah
Eastern Illinois University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://thekeep.eiu.edu/theses>



Part of the [Africana Studies Commons](#), [African History Commons](#), [American Studies Commons](#), [Diplomatic History Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Gyimah, Godwin, "'That New Africa Is Ready to Fight Its Own Battles": Kwame Nkrumah, the United States, and the Quest for a Modern Ghana, 1957-1966" (2020). *Masters Theses*. 4802.
<https://thekeep.eiu.edu/theses/4802>

This Dissertation/Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Theses & Publications at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Masters Theses by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.

Eastern Illinois University

**“THAT NEW AFRICA IS READY TO FIGHT ITS OWN BATTLES”: KWAME
NKRUMAH, THE UNITED STATES, AND THE QUEST FOR A MODERN GHANA,
1957-1966**

A Thesis Submitted to
The Faculty of the College of Arts and Humanities

in Candidacy for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Department of History

by

Godwin Gyimah

Charleston, Illinois

May 2020

Acknowledgements

Blessed be the name of God Almighty for His abundant grace, wisdom, knowledge, and understanding in the pursuit of this project. My gratitude goes to Dr. Edmund Wehrle for his commitment and input in completing the thesis. I express my appreciation to Professor Emeritus. Roger Bearden Beck, Dr. Sace E. Elder, Dr. Brain Mann, Mr. Steve Brantley, and Mr. Andrew Cougill. My credit also goes to the Department of History and the Booth Library of Eastern Illinois University for their guidance and research direction. The history department faculty members were my family away from home.

Special gratitude goes to Mr. and Mrs. Dankyi, Madam Afua Fosua Vida, my aunt, Gloria Gyemfua, my sister, Eugene Anokye, my younger brother, my family, and Ms. Esther Apreku Adzo. Lastly, I would like to thank all my friends for their continued support and encouragement towards the completion of this thesis.

Dedication

I dedicate this work to Pastor and Mrs. Dankyi, Church of Pentecost, Richmond District.

Abstract

This project examines the United States-Ghana relationship and how the relationship transformed Ghana, 1957-1966. African leaders such as Dr. Kwame Nkrumah had declared: "That new Africa is ready to fight its own battles and show that after all, the black man is capable of managing his affairs." Despite the non-alignment philosophy, Ghana was not neutral regarding the West and East blocs rivalry. The thesis argues that it was through the United States' government and private firms' contributions that Ghana was able to achieve the mark of a modern nation through industrialization, universal education, and the expansion of international trade economy.

The United States government and the Kaiser company, a private firm, contributed to the development of the Volta River Project, which increased industrial activities in Ghana through the production of hydroelectric energy needed to supply electricity for households and industries. In the end, the project benefited both the United States and Ghana as Ghana moved towards modernization while the Kaiser Company maximized profit, and the United States government was able to counter the Soviets expansion in Ghana. President John F. Kennedy's Peace Corps and Cornell University's programs expanded the Ghanaian education system by increasing enrolment, the number of graduates, and shaped most Ghanaians for a white-collar job. Ghana-American relations increased trade activities through the exchange of trade products. America's organization of the biggest Trade Fair in Ghana in 1961 helped Ghanaians to learn new skills, to acquire techniques in operating trade equipment, and to recognize the importance of private and smaller firms in national economy. This research fills a significant gap in the historiography by examining the political, social, and economic interactions between Ghana and America. It as well discusses governmental and private organizations' roles together with how personal relations among statesmen transformed Ghana into a modernized country.

Contents

Acknowledgement	ii
Dedication	iii
Abstract	iv
Introduction	1
Chapter 1 The Volta River Project.....	15
Chapter 2 In the World We go : The Peace Corps Program in Ghana....	58
Chapter 3 Ghanaian Trade Relations with The United States	84
Chapter 4 Conclusion.....	106
Bibliography	113

Introduction

As African colonies began achieving independence during the Cold War era, Africans began to participate in world politics and implemented strategies for nation-building. In the course of African countries gaining independence, some Europeans and Americans began to express interest in these new African countries through the forming of alliances. Although Europeans and the United States desired to assist the new African countries, foreign powers protected their parochial interests. The Europeans and the United States exhibited support through various means, including offering aid through private companies to support university education and businesses.¹ According to Jay Lovestone, an American trade union leader, "Africa has become the real battleground and the next field of the big test of strength, not only for the free world and the Communist world but for our own country and our allies who are colonialist powers."²

No country was more central to this battleground than Ghana. Achieving independence in 1957 after a painful colonial past, Ghanaians sought self-sufficiency and sovereignty. However, Ghana realized its goals could not be achieved without help from the outside world (foreign countries). Thus, with extreme trepidation, Ghana's leaders faced the irony of depending on other nations to help Ghana achieve political and economic independence. In the early 1960s, Ghana forged an awkward but temporarily fruitful relationship with the United States. This alliance yielded real gains, but it was also beset by frequent tensions that ultimately undermined a relationship that was perhaps doomed from the start.

¹Moses Awinsong Allor, "The Power of the Periphery: Aid, Mutuality and Cold War U. S-Ghana Relations, 1957-1966" (MA Thesis, Eastern Illinois University, 2017), 1.

²John C. Stoner, "We Will Follow a Nationalist Policy, But We Will Be Neutral: American Labor and Neutralism in Cold War Africa, 1957-1962" in *American Labor's Global Ambassador: The International History of the AFL-CIO During the Cold War*, eds. Robert Anthony Waters, and Geert Van Geothem (New York: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2013): 240.

The beginning of America's relations with Africa dates to the transatlantic slave trade period in the seventeenth century. A group of African slaves was shipped to the United States.³ Nevertheless, the United States did not have much influence on Africa during the nineteenth and early twentieth century due to European dominance as the colonial masters of Africa. The dominance of the Europeans declined after World War II. After the Second World War, a new global awareness, and the need to compete with the Soviet Union spurred the United States' relations with Africa into a new phase. Superpower competition between Russia and America compelled the United States to take a new look at Africa. Russia sought to spread its communist ideology while the United States hoped to spread its capitalist philosophy. The United States and Russia's geopolitical competition created the Cold War.⁴

During the Cold War, African leaders, countries, and Africans were faced with having to decide with which of the blocs to form an alliance. Most African nations opted to remain aloof from the Cold War. African leaders emphasized independence, neutrality, and positive non-alignment. The president of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah, declared: "That new Africa is ready to fight its own battles and show that after all, the black man is capable of managing his affairs."⁵ However, the drive to create a modernized and developed nation presented significant challenges for the newly independent nation. Initially, Ghana had a powerful trade relationship with most neighboring countries in Africa. Nonetheless, lack of experienced professionals coupled with financial challenges- marks of many new nations—slowed Ghana's development.

³Alusine Jalloh and Toyin Falola, *The United States and West Africa: Interactions and Relations* (Rochester: University Rochester Press, 2008), 1.

⁴"Race Relations in the United States and American Cultural and Informational Programs in Ghana, 1957–1966," National Archives, August 15, 2016, <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1999/winter/us-and-ghana-1957-1966-1.html>.

⁵"Kwame Nkrumah Independence Speech in Ghana on 6 March 1957," African Heritage, Accessed February 19, 2019, <https://afrolegends.com/2012/10/04/kwame-nkrumahs-independence-speech-on-6-march-1957/>.

As such, Ghana sought outside leverage. It shifted back and forth, leaning at times to the Americans, and at other times to the Soviets. United States-Ghanaian relations, therefore, were hardly linear and smooth.⁶

From the declaration of the new nation's independence, the importance of Ghana and America's strong relations was clear from the presence of United States delegates and African-Americans at the ceremony inaugurating the new nation. Prominent African Americans, including Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., attended Ghana's 1957 independence ceremony. Due to the significance the United States placed on its alliance with the new nation, the Eisenhower administration dispatched vice president Richard Nixon to attend the Independence Day ceremony. At one point, the vice president effusively asked observers, "How does it feel to be free." Surprisingly, the bystanders replied, "We would not know. We are from Alabama."⁷ The presence of the African-Americans, such as King, indicates how important the American government perceived the new nation, Ghana, in the future of world politics and economics. African Americans who honored the independence day ceremony rejected the general impression of Europeans and Americans. African Americans' connections with Africans to assist in their struggle for independence were deemed an act of disloyalty to European nations and America.⁸

Over the next ten years after Ghana's independence, America invested heavily and contributed to the transformation of the new nation. The United States invested in the new nation's agricultural, educational, trade, and military sectors. The United States benefitted from Ghana through the exploitation of its resources, and Ghana served as

⁶"Race Relations in the United States and American Cultural and Informational Programs in Ghana, 1957-1966,"

⁷"Race Relations in the United States and American Cultural and Informational Programs in Ghana, 1957-1966,"

⁸Kevin Gaines, *American Africans in Ghana Black Expatriates and the Civil Rights Era* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 9-10.

the home for Peace Corps volunteers, NGOs, missionaries, and other American organizations. Ghana had little to offer to the outside world, and it leaned on America's investment for its industrial development, trade interaction, educational development, and the growth of its infrastructures.

This thesis argues that it was through Ghana's relationship with the United States during the first decade of the new country's birth that the quest for a modern nation was achieved. Ghana's relations with America aided in Ghana's goal of self-sufficiency. The thesis posits that personal relations, rather than wholly economic and national interest played a pivotal role in Kennedy's assistance to Ghana and contributed towards the nation's transformation. During the decolonization era, the formation of relations with a country with a strong economy became key in transforming the "Third World" nations. African leaders wanted to transform their nation and experience the modernize level of the Western and Eastern powers. Hence, Ghana's initial relations with foreign powers were strongly guided by the need to satisfy industrialization, universal education, and promote international trade. Ghanaians sought to advance their political, economic, and social systems to surpass what they had inherited from the colonial master.

Nkrumah had declared non-alignment and positive neutrality, yet it was through the support of the United States government, private companies, and his friend, Kennedy, that his quest for a modern Ghana materialized. Over the next ten years, when Nkrumah was in power, Ghana's social, economic, and political systems grew competitively. Ghana spent more than 100 years under the British hegemony and colonial legacies provided political, social, and economic systems in Ghana. However, Ghana's relations with Britain did not ensure significant development by 1957. Ghana's relations with the United States in the post-independence era played a pivotal role in

shaping the new country. Ghana grew to surpass that of many "Third World" countries. The new country experienced significant progress in terms of science and technology, professionalization, urbanization, industrialization, centralization of the state institutions, mass democracy, and public education. The progresses Ghana attained were indicators of what Michel Foucault describes as elements of modernity.⁹

From the 1950s, the development of universal education, industrialization, professionalization, centralization of the state institutions, existence of democratic institutions, free-market capitalism, individualism, artistic progress, and international trade characterized the idea of a modernized nation. Modernization became much popular in the minds of the people in the "Third World" during the Cold War Era. Nkrumah wanted Ghana to achieve the height of these transformations in a short time as a mark of a modern nation in the Cold War period. While modernized nations existed in the world before the Cold War period, many countries in the "Third World" were not modernized when measured along the lines of industrialization, universal education, international trade, scientific and technological progress.¹⁰

The United States influenced and was influenced by Ghana's political, social, and economic developments as the two nations interacted with each other. Personal relationships among statesmen coupled with the economic interest and America's national interest to intervene in the "Third World" shaped American and Ghanaian relations. Although America-Ghana relations encountered significant obstacles en route to Ghana's modernization, the Ghanaian and American culture shaped the relationship between the two nations. The Ghanaian culture of being generally friendly while maintaining non-alignment in the acceptance of support from other foreign powers

⁹Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 1st ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977), 170–77.

¹⁰Greg Barnhisel, "Perspective USA and the Cultural Cold War: Modernism in Service of the State," *Modernism/modernity* 14 no. 4 (November 2007): 730-734.

shaped Ghana's foreign policies.¹¹ The American dream that each American must have the freedom to achieve a better life, also guided American foreign relations. The American political culture that Alexis de Tocqueville described in the 1830s as characterized by elements such as liberty, equality, democracy, individualism, the rule of law, nationalism, capitalism, and open markets shaped American relations with Ghana.¹²

This project focuses on the first decade after Ghana's independence (1957-1966), essentially the period of Kwame Nkrumah's tenure as the head of Ghana. The study examines the United States' contributions to shaping Ghana's transition after independence. Specifically, the thesis focuses on the political, social, and economic influence of the United States on Ghana and how Ghana influenced the United States together with Ghanaian receptiveness (and sometimes resistance) to that guidance. It analyzes three areas of influence: the development of the Volta River Project (modeled on the American Tennessee Valley Authority), the creation of a national education system through the Peace Corps program, and other policies by both governmental and private organizations, and the strengthening of anti-communist trade relations. The study intends to show how the United States contributed to Nkrumah's quest to modernize Ghana through industrialization, universal education, and trade relations.

Organization of the Study

Chapter One describes Ghana-America interaction by focusing on the development of the Volta River Project (modeled on the American T.V.A.). It details the background to the construction of the Volta River Project, and the developmental role of the United States, the Kaiser Aluminum and Chemical Company, the Volta

¹¹USHistory.org, "American Political Attitudes and Participation." *American Political Culture: American Government Online Textbook*, Accessed February 29, 2020, <https://www.ushistory.org/gov/4a.asp>.

¹²USHistory.org, "American Political Attitudes and Participation,"

Aluminum Company (VALCO), and other organizations. Additionally, it examines the benefits the project created for the United States, Ghana, and the various organizations involved in the interaction. Chapter Two provides a detailed discussion on U.S. support in building the Ghanaian educational system. The chapter examines the colonial system of education, its post-independence challenges, Nkrumah's educational vision, the contributions of the Peace Corps program towards Ghana's education system and the challenges both the United States government and volunteer teachers faced during the Peace Corps period. This chapter also reveals how Cornell University, as a separate institution in the United States, contributed to Ghana's educational system during the first decade. Chapter Three details the strengthening of anti-communist trade relations. The chapter examines the interaction between the American government, private organizations, individuals, and Ghana. It also discusses potential trade interactions, the United States Trade Fair, the activities of American statesmen in Ghana, and the status of Ghana's trade relations at the end of Nkrumah's era. Finally, Chapter Four offers and ties together the three areas of development as conclusions.

Historiography

Over the years, historians have developed an interest in examining United States foreign policies in Africa during the Cold War era. Several historical studies have examined United States' interactions with African countries, especially Ghana. Most of the existing literature focuses on state-state relationships while ignoring the interactions between private organizations in the United States and Ghanaian relations. Moreover, some scholars have prioritized national ideology and economic interests as the only significant areas of America-Africa relations. These studies tend to ignore how Ghanaian and American statesmen's relationship influenced other areas of Ghana's development.

In her 2013 book, *Foreign Intervention in Africa, From the Cold War to the War on Terror*, African specialist Elizabeth Schmidt argues that during the Cold War, nations formed bilateral and multilateral relations. Each nation's alliances centered on the benefits the nation envisaged to obtain from the others. Developing countries formed alliances to obtain assistance in helping them modernize. Schmidt posits that political competition among the various powers influenced European interest in Africa. She asserts that economic interests and not personal relationships guided state-to-state interactions.¹³ Schmidt argues that Africa's path to modernization was not dependent on the relationship with the United States or any other foreign power. For Schmidt, the impression that Africans were the cause of all their problems is erroneous. Africa's problems were a direct result of the influence of foreign nations, Schmidt asserts. She avers that the powerful nations aimed to manipulate African nations to satisfy superpower political, economic, and social interests. America, Russia, and various European powers did not promote Africans' desire for modernization.¹⁴

Schmidt argues that powerful nations were encroachers who sought to monopolize African politics, economics, and social affairs for the benefit of foreign nations. Her argument reinterprets the nature of the relationship which existed between African nations and the various world powers during the Cold War era. According to her, foreign nations intervened in Africa to ensure the parochial interest of foreign powers. She cautions historians to stop blaming Africans for their predicaments. In some instances, the Cold War could be described as an invasion of Africa by superpowers.

¹³Elizabeth Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention in Africa: From the Cold War to the War on Terror* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 1.

¹⁴Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention in Africa*, xiii.

We as historians must understand that, whereas the superpowers sought to promote their own national interests through their interactions with Africa, they also played a significant role in transforming Africa. Foreign powers served as interveners in shaping newly independent nations that faced diverse problems at the time of their independence. Some foreign aid was aimed at reducing the poverty rate in newly independent nations. African nations were agents who, at certain times for the sake of their interests, negotiated alliances with outsiders. Schmidt's view sharply differs since she believed foreign powers were encroachers in Africa, and the powers only sought their national interest. She did not highlight the contributions of nations such as the United States towards the development of some African countries like Ghana. Ghana benefited significantly from their connection to foreign powers. This project discusses how the United States, an outsider, contributed significantly to Ghana's transition to industrialization and modernization.

In contrast to Schmidt's view, some scholars have also argued that President Kennedy's aid to Africa was an act of genuine sympathy aimed at building Africa as a continent. In his book, *Cold War and Counterrevolution: The Foreign Policy of John F. Kennedy*, American political scientist Richard Walton argues that Kennedy genuinely showed empathy towards African nations. The young president accepted Africa's neutralism and sympathized with their desire for total independence. He also respected their sense of nationalism and tried to abstain from influencing Africa during the Cold War era, Walton posits. Kennedy sponsored the Volta River Project due to his empathy for Africa despite domestic resistance coupled with Nkrumah's attacks and policies towards the United States. Kennedy sought to prove to Africans that the United States did not demand political loyalty in return for economic and political aid. Walton was silent on other factors that motivated Kennedy's agenda, such as the president's

relations with Nkrumah and K.A. Gbedemah. Moreover, Walton did not emphasize how Edgar Kaiser's relations with Nkrumah influenced American support for the Ghanaian Volta project.¹⁵

Scholars such as Thomas Noer, an expert in the history of the United States foreign policy argues in his article, "The New Frontier and African Neutralism: Kennedy, Nkrumah, and the Volta River Project," that ideological grounds influenced the United States interactions with African nations during Kennedy's regime. America's interactions with Africa considered the foreign and domestic policies of all African nations. Whereas Kennedy had initially rejected the idea of supporting African nations, he later changed his policies towards Africa in a short time. Noer avers that Kennedy decided to support the Volta River Project in Ghana due to Nkrumah's acceptance of America's conditions of economics, politics, and international cooperation.¹⁶

To Noer, Nkrumah's quest to build a dam to generate hydroelectric power and process aluminum influenced his decision to seek financial support from the United States. Before seeking America's assistance, Nkrumah requested support from the British, who declined due to an excess of aluminum on the world market. Noer also asserts that Nkrumah asked the World Bank and the Aluminum Company Limited of Canada for their support. They too rejected the appeal due to the huge amount needed for the development of the project. Nkrumah then sought for help from American investors to finance the project. These investors showed some limited interest at the initial stage due to the high cost involved in the building of the project. Nkrumah's

¹⁵Richard J. Walton, *Cold War and Counterrevolution: The Foreign Policy of John F. Kennedy* (New York: Viking Press, 1972), 3-8.

¹⁶Thomas J. Noer, "The New Frontier and African Neutralism: Kennedy, Nkrumah, and the Volta River Project," *Diplomatic History* 8, no. 1 (1984): 61-62

intent to industrialize Ghana influenced him to accept an offer in which Americans' political and economic conditions were attached.¹⁷

Noer's work posits that American support to the newly independent and decolonized nations on the African continent, specifically Ghana, became the prime mover in building Ghana as a modern nation.¹⁸ Noer's study reveals that the United States' intervention in Africa during the Cold War era was guided by American interests over the interests of the African nations though American aid supported the development of the new African nations. As seen in the case of Ghana, the new nation in her desire for financial support succumbed to the desires of the United States at the expense of their neutrality and non-alignment policy. Although ideological policies shaped the interaction between the two leaders, it seems the personal relations between Nkrumah and Kennedy might have made things easy in the completion of the dam project. Noer did not emphasize the role of personal relations in American-Ghanaian relationship, which this project will address.

An African historian, Moses Awinsong in his project "The Power of the Periphery: Aid, Mutuality and Cold War U.S.-Ghana Relations, 1957-1966," argues that whereas the United States aided the new nation in building a modern nation; this took place on an interactive plane as opposed to the United States intervening to promote its version of modernity.¹⁹ The United States military, financial, and social assistance given to Ghana were not solely guided by the United States' policy to intervene in Africa. Americans weighed the benefit they could derive from assisting African nations and the contributions the United States could make towards the new nations. America benefited

¹⁷Noer, "The New Frontier and African Neutralism," 63.

¹⁸See below for the above-mentioned scholars and their views on the United States Policies towards African Nations during the Cold War Era.

¹⁹Awinsong, "The Power of the Periphery: Aid, Mutuality and Cold War U. S-Ghana Relations, 1957-1966," 1.

from African nations such as Nigeria and Ghana, while Ghana, Nigeria, and some African countries also aided the achievement of American political and economic interests in Africa. Although the United States prioritized America's interest in its policies towards Africa, the United States' assistance to the newly independent nation contributed to transforming Ghana. Awinsong's project did not explicitly examine how America contributed to transforming Ghana. Moreover, the role of the relations among the statesmen of the two countries was not highlighted.

In his book, *Ghana's Foreign Policy 1957-1966, Diplomacy, Ideology, and the New State*, Scott W. Thompson, a British professor of International politics, argues that the United States' intentions in Ghana were centered on the need to aid African nations to develop. While Kennedy's administration sought to support Ghana, only nations that shared a similar view with the United States Cold War policy were to receive foreign assistance, Scott posits.²⁰ According to Scott, before the United States intervention, Nkrumah sought help from Middle Eastern countries. However, he was turned down since these nations also perceived the cost of the Volta River Project to be too high. America's commitment to supporting Ghana was enough to convince Nkrumah that the Volta scheme could be developed, Scott avers.²¹

On July 1, 1960, during Ghana's Republic Day, Ghana received a letter from Kennedy, which stated that the United States intended to support Ghana. Nonetheless, the support was dependent on World Bank feasibility rulings. In September 1961, Kennedy began to review Ghana's request to build the Volta River Project.²² Scott avers that from early 1964, however, following Kennedy's assassination, Nkrumah's attitude toward the United States became more hostile. Kennedy's sympathetic policy was buried with him, and

²⁰Thompson W. Scott, *Ghana's Foreign Policy 1957-1966, Diplomacy, Ideology, and the New State* (Princeton: University Press, 1969), 190.

²¹Scott, *Ghana's Foreign Policy 1957-1966*, 44.

²²Scott, *Ghana's Foreign Policy 1957-1966*, 190.

the transformation became manifested in Washington and Accra. Upon Kennedy's death, newly installed president Lyndon B. Johnson who expressed a strong dislike for the uncertainty of African leaders, succeeded Kennedy.²³ Scott highlights the role of personal relations between Nkrumah and Kennedy in shaping Ghana's interaction with the United States. The transition in the United States government, which ushered in Johnson, a man who had less interest in African states since he believed they had little to offer, altered the relationship which the two nations had built. Hence, the introduction of a new leader whose relationship with Nkrumah was not perfect began to decline the relations between the two countries. Personal relations overshadowed national ideology. This study will highlight how personal relations played an instrumental role in Ghana-America relations during days when national ideology could not work. Moreover, this study will go beyond state-state interaction and discuss how private organizations and some individuals contributed to transforming Ghana.

Although a growing number of scholars have contributed to the historiography of the United States and Ghanaian relationships, they rarely addressed the interactions among the private organizations and the interactions among some Ghanaian and American individuals. Moreover, most of the existing literature fail to highlight the role of personal relationships among statesmen in shaping United States-Ghanaian interactions. Historians have generally focused on state-to-state interactions and interventions without addressing the interactions and interventions of specific private institutions and individuals. This study seeks to fill the gap in the historiography by addressing the intervention and interactional roles of the leaders of the two nations and the private organizations that had interest in Ghana during the first decade following the new nation's independence. This thesis shows that not only were U.S.-Ghanaian relations determined through state-to-state encounters, but also

²³Scott, *Ghana's Foreign Policy, 1957-1966*, 300-301.

through interactions between and among private organizations and individuals from both countries. Also, the project shows how personal relations among various statesmen at times overshadowed economics and ideology.

Chapter 1

The Volta River Project

The Volta River Project is a large hydroelectric complex industry that contributed to Ghana's key to industrial development, prosperity, and modernization. The project consists of a high dam known as the Akosombo Dam, a powerhouse that was scheduled to produce 589 MW electrical energy at the initial stage of the project, and 883 MW by the final stage. The project included a transmission system that was intended to produce electrical energy for the Tema Aluminum smelter, the mining sector, and Ghanaians in the cities and villages in Southern Ghana.¹ By 1966, the Volta scheme became Ghana's only most significant investment in social overhead capital, meant to galvanize the industrialization of Ghana.² Initially, Ghanaians recognized that such an ambitious undertaking depended on United States' support. The Tennessee Valley Authority hydroelectric project, a grass-roots development, served as a model for United States' overseas development projects, and shaped the readiness of the United States to cooperate in the development of the Volta project.³ The Congo crisis, Soviet's effort to disrupt America's interaction, opposition to the Kennedy administration, and Kennedy's assassination delayed the completion of the project. Nkrumah's attacks on the United States, since he believed the West was willing to use any means to gain power in Africa, also slowed down the development of the Volta scheme.⁴

¹Ghana Information Services Department, *Ghana Reborn* (Ghana Information Service: New York, December 1966), 58.

²Kwamina Barnes, *Economics of Volta River Project* (Legon, Ghana: University Bookshop, 1966), 2.

³David Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission: Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 14-40, 65.

⁴Letter, President Eisenhower to President Nkrumah," August 7, 1960, *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereafter FRUS), 1958-1960, vol.14, eds. Glenn W. LaFantasie and Harriet Dashiell Schwar (Washington, DC: US Gov. Print. Off, 1992), doc. 298.

Nonetheless, the development of the project succeeded because of personal relationships—rather than relationships that were driven solely by ideological or economical considerations. The Ghanaian culture of openness and the willingness to cooperate while doing things themselves shaped Ghana-American relations. Even from some Canadians’ perspective, Ghanaians value the act of greeting and their ritual of greeting is lengthier than what exists in Canada. Hand shaking is a special act in Ghana and the use of the left hand is culturally unacceptable in Ghana. Ghanaians usually ask about the well-being of families, friends, and even foreigners. Ghanaians are seen to be generally helpful and welcoming to even strangers. Over the years, Ghana has been identified as a friendly country and a region more welcoming for first time travelers in Africa.⁵ On the other hand, the American dream of helping all people to achieve a better life shaped the United States’ foreign policies during Kennedy’s administration. The relationships between Nkrumah and Kennedy, and Nkrumah and Edgar Kaiser allowed for the development of the project.

Edgar Fosburgh Kaiser Sr., born on July 29, 1908 was an American capitalist who became the head of the Kaiser Aluminum and Chemical Corporation, and contributed massively to the development of the Volta scheme. This chapter argues that Ghana's interactions with the United States during the first decade of the new nation helped in launching Ghana towards industrialization. America supported the newly independent nation's goal of industrialization. Ghana's development of the Volta River Project and its facets created employment, and scientific and technological progress. This chapter presents a historical overview of the Volta River Project, Nkrumah's vision for it, the purpose for the project, and United States-Ghanaian interactions in setting up

⁵Global Affairs Canada, “Ghana” Accessed on May 19, 2020 https://www.international.gc.ca/cil-cai/country_insights-apercus_pays/ci-ic_gh.aspx?lang=eng#cn-8.

the hydroelectric project. State-to-state interactions are examined together with the personal relations among statesmen and how they played a role in completing the Volta River scheme. Kaiser Company, an American aluminum company, is examined together with other corporations that contributed towards the completion of the project.

Historical overview of the Volta River Project

The idea of constructing the Volta River Project first came into being through the discoveries of Sir Albert Kitson, director of the Gold Coast Geological Survey, an initiative based in London. Though on a mission to discover new mineral reserves in Ghana, he discovered the site that was later used for the development of the Volta scheme. After the formation of the Gold Coast Department of Geological Surveys in 1913, Kitson journeyed to the Gold Coast as the first director of the Geological Surveys. The Gold Coast Department of Geological Surveys charged Kitson with discovering other mineral reserves in the mountains and forests of the Gold Coast, aside from the existence of gold.⁶ Kitson discovered the wealthy industrial diamond deposits at Akwatia, a region that is still a rough diamond center in present-day Ghana. He also found iron ore deposits located at Shieni, near what was to become Lake Volta.

Credit must be given to Mr. Duncan E. Rose, a private expatriate geologist, who chanced on a copy of Kitson's proposal in a public library in Johannesburg in 1938 and flew to Ghana a few months later. Rose re-assessed the proposal to build the Volta scheme. He considered the recommendations to build the Volta project after making minor changes and adding a proposal for constructing a harbor at Ada to facilitate the movement of deep ocean vessels. Unfortunately, the outbreak of the Second World War disrupted any further steps and the scientific research needed for the development of the project. In 1944, work on the project resumed when English investor Duncan Rose

⁶James Moxon, *Volta; Man's Greatest Lake* (New York: Praeger, 1969), 49.

established a company called West African Aluminum Limited and obtained the right to mine bauxite from the colonial government.⁷

Even after Ghana's independence, Britain wanted to support the development of the Volta scheme and desired to benefit from the Volta scheme's profit. Nonetheless, in 1958, the British Government rescinded its decision to support the project following an increase in the British bank rate, which made the funding needed to support the project expensive. Moreover, the low value of aluminum on the world market discouraged the colonial government from supporting the project. Hitherto, the British government had withdrawn from the Aswan dam project in Egypt. The Aswan High Dam development which began in 1960 under the leadership of Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser was also scheduled to enhance the generation of electricity, provide water to Egyptians, and reduce flooding. Britain's withdrawal from the Aswan Dam was due to the high cost involved in building the Egyptian project and the limited benefits Britain was to gain in return. In the case of Ghana, the colonial government expressed similar reluctance to support the project with huge funds and that prevented any real development of the project, thereby pushing Nkrumah to consult the United States for its assistance in developing the project. Nkrumah's desire to complete the Volta project made him use any possible means to gain support for the development of the project.⁸

Nkrumah and the Volta River Project

Following Ghana's independence in 1957 and the election of Nkrumah as the prime minister, Nkrumah became the pioneer for the project, and the project entered a new phase. During the 1951 electioneering campaign, Nkrumah had promised Ghanaians that he would complete the Volta River Project when elected to office.

⁷Barnes, *Economics of Volta River Project*, 2.

⁸Arthur M. Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House*, 1st ed (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), 571.

The colonial government was initially interested in building the project, but it was motivated more by the intent of making a profit for the British government than to industrialize the colony. Hence, it withdrew when it realized the cost involved in developing the Volta scheme was higher. The colonial government envisaged developing a scheme that would increase its foreign reserve and maximize profit. The colonial authority did not prioritize the interest of the colony to industrialize and transform as an African nation in the building of the project. The British government pulled back in 1958 when the expenses for the project increased, following the fall in aluminum price in 1956.⁹ Under the colonial authority, Ghana's economic ties with other nations were limited. Natural resources and all projects were to serve the interest of the colonial authority, not Ghana nor Ghanaians. Kwame Nkrumah's central goal for the project was to create an automated program that could transform Ghana into an industrialized and modernized nation within a short time following political independence. Nkrumah wanted to make Ghana economically independent in order to make the nation's political independence meaningful. He believed political independence would be useless without economic independence. Nkrumah believed that any form of national development was dependent on economic independence. Nkrumah sought to encourage the development of factories to aid Ghanaian businesses in the production of commodities needed for Ghanaians' consumption.¹⁰

While Nkrumah had declared policies of non-alignment and positive neutrality, he was aware the new nation could not finance the project alone. The reluctance of the British government pushed Nkrumah to rely on support from other foreign powers. The

⁹Ghana Government, "The Volta River Project: A Statement by Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah President of the Republic of Ghana to the National Assembly, February 21, 1961," Kwame Nkrumah and Information and Resource Site, Government of Ghana: Accra. Accessed January 2, 2020, <https://www.nkrumah.net/gov-pubs/gp-a1357-61-62/gen.php?index=0>, 2.

¹⁰Iain Jackson et al., "The Volta River Project: Planning, Housing and Resettlement in Ghana, 1950–1965," *The Journal of Architecture*, 24 (2019): 512.

United States was ready to support Ghana to prevent the new country from soliciting assistance from the Soviets, whose national ideology was opposite to the United States' own. Moreover, America wanted to use Ghana as the nursery for the cultivation of the United States capitalist ideology.

The greatest challenge to the creation of the project had to do with financing the project. The development of the project coincided with a period when interest rates on loans and the duration for loan repayments had become challenging. Moreover, production power temporarily outran the world's demand for aluminum.¹¹ The project was delayed due to the various difficulties until the various leaders overcame them and moved to begin the development of the Volta scheme.¹²

The Purpose of the Volta River Project

On Tuesday, February 21, 1961, Nkrumah appeared before the National Assembly and discussed the Volta River Project. He called for a debate to endorse the plan for implementation to expedite negotiations to facilitate the beginning of the project in 1961. According to Nkrumah, the industrial sector of a nation's economy depended on a high and dependable source of power, just as European nations, Canada, Russia, America, and other nations' industrialization had depended on the creation of power.¹³

Nkrumah believed the purpose of the project was to supply power and transmission systems that would relieve Ghana of one obstacle on its road to industrialization. Power would be evenly distributed for sale to every firm in Ghana. Besides, the supply of adequate and reliable sources of power was scheduled to move

¹¹Ghana Government, "The Volta River Project: A Statement by Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah President of the Republic of Ghana to the National Assembly, February 21, 1961," 2-3.

¹²Ghana Government, "The Volta River Project: A Statement by Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah President of the Republic of Ghana to the National Assembly, February 21, 1961," 2-3.

¹³Ghana Government, "The Volta River Project: A Statement by Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah President of the Republic of Ghana to the National Assembly, February 21, 1961," 1.

machinery and provide power process materials. Also, a constant supply of power would provide electric energy to operate chemical processes and to supply power for the aluminum smelter and other materials.¹⁴ The American Tennessee Valley Authority (T.V.A.) project became a popular model for development globally. The T.V.A. became a model for America's modernization of the "Third World" during the Cold War. The Tennessee project led to the development of dams and other technologies to enhance modernization. Electrification projects had been developed along rivers in the United States, Vietnam, and other places as sources of power for modernization. The T.V.A. was viewed to address the needs and help solve the problems of developing countries.¹⁵

The smelting industry, and the jobs it was to create would also provide a new industry for the Ghanaian economy. The aluminum smelter was to reduce the unemployment situation in Ghana. It would employ the services of about 1,500 people when it begins operation. Besides, foreign companies would be responsible for the payment of company taxes to the Ghanaian government. At the same time, the Volta scheme would as well pay the Volta River Authority about 2.5 million pounds per annum for electricity supply.¹⁶ Also, the development of the scheme would improve Ghana's foreign exchange rates from sales derived from the operations of the smelter. Ghana would be exporting electricity and materials provided from the operations of the smelter. The development of the smelter would introduce alumina powder that produced aluminum metal. Alumina powder would be produced through the

¹⁴Ghana Government, "The Volta River Project: A Statement by Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah President of the Republic of Ghana to the National Assembly, February 21, 1961," 6.

¹⁵David Ekbladh, "Mr. TVA': Grass-Roots Development, David Lilienthal, and the Rise and Fall of the Tennessee Valley Authority as a Symbol for US Overseas Development, 1933–1973," *Diplomatic History* 26, no. 3 (2002): 335-336.

¹⁶Ghana Government, "The Volta River Project: A Statement by Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah President of the Republic of Ghana to the National Assembly, February 21, 1961," 6.

transmission of a large amount of electricity through the powder to melt out metal. The process generates electricity.¹⁷

The Kaiser Corporation and the Volta River Project

The Kaiser corporation contributed immensely to the development of the Volta scheme. The Kaiser corporation was not just an aluminum company; the Kaiser company also built hydroelectric plants. Moreover, the Kaiser company had an interest in steel, coking coal, and fabricating steel. Additionally, it produced other essential products such as industrial chemicals, glass fiber, refractories, agricultural chemicals, zinc, lead, gypsum, and cement. As a private organization, the Kaiser group contributed immensely towards the development of the Volta River project.¹⁸

The Kaiser Corporation came onto the scene through the recommendation of the International Co-operation Administration which called for a reassessment of the Volta River project. The International Co-operation Administration recommended that an engineering company thoroughly examined the engineering requirement and presented the potential economic benefits of the project. The Kaiser corporation assessed the project and issued a Reassessment Report that recommended the construction of the Dam at Akosombo instead of Ajena. Moreover, the report recommended the development of a hydroelectric station at Bui. The government of Ghana had already entered into an agreement with the Soviets for both designing and the construction of a hydroelectric station at Bui. The initial idea of the Soviets' project sought to provide maximum electricity supply from the dam to an aluminum smelter and a small section of the Ghanaian population. The Kaiser Reassessment Report recommended the creation of a national electricity provider. The national electricity

¹⁷Ghana Government, "The Volta River Project: A Statement by Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah President of the Republic of Ghana to the National Assembly, February 21, 1961," 6.

¹⁸David Hart, *The Volta River Project: A Case Study in Politics and Technology* (Edinburgh: University Press, 1980), 46.

provider would supply a significant part of Southern Ghana-Tema via Accra, Cape Coast, Takoradi, Tarkwa, Dunkwa, Kumasi, Koforidua, and return to Akosombo.¹⁹ President Nkrumah established personal relations with Henry Kaiser, the head of the Kaiser firm, after the Kaiser company had presented the Reassessment Report. The relationship between Nkrumah and Kaiser shaped the Volta project for the next decade. Nkrumah's personality as an outspoken, robust, dynamic, ambitious, innovative, friendly, and goal-oriented leader were traits that Henry Kaiser also bore. These connections between the two leaders sustained their relationship and allowed Ghana to achieve the total support of the Kaiser Corporation, a private organization.

Following the establishment of rapport with the Kaiser corporation, Nkrumah asked the company to form an aluminum company in Ghana that would make use of the power produced by the dam project. Nkrumah's request later resulted in the creation of the Volta Aluminum Company (VALCO).²⁰

The Kaiser Cooperation had its own ambitions: maximizing of profits. This motivated the company to support the development of the Volta River Project. The Kaiser group envisaged contributing to Ghana's industrialization. Nevertheless, the company prioritized its own profit maximization. The Kaiser corporation's involvement in the project would ensure the production of low-cost hydroelectricity. It would also provide access to an ample supply of Ghana's bauxites. The electricity to be produced would be accessible to all Ghanaians at a cheaper rate. The Kaiser corporation's access to the Ghanaian bauxite would maximize the newly independent country's foreign exchange and shape Ghana towards industrialization.²¹

¹⁹Ghana Government, "The Volta River Project: A Statement by Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah President of the Republic of Ghana to the National Assembly, February 21, 1961," 4.

²⁰Kofi Adlai Boateng, "*International Development and Communication: A Case of the Origins, Objectives, and Consequences of Ghana's Volta River Project.*" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Ghana, Legon Accra, 1969), 51.

²¹Hart, *The Volta River Project*, 49.

Henry Kaiser retired at age 74 in 1956, and his son Edgar Kaiser became the leader of the Kaiser companies. Henry, however, continued to be active in the decision making of the Kaiser industries. On July 28, 1958, Nkrumah had his first meeting with Edgar Kaiser. Like his father, Edgar was a robust, innovative, and dynamic person. Nkrumah's possession of these traits helped sustain his relations with Edgar. Nkrumah's popularity inside and outside Africa due to his nationalistic activities in Africa and other "Third World" nations aided the building of trust for Nkrumah. During their initial meeting, Nkrumah and Kaiser quickly built a rapport. During the conversation between Nkrumah and Edgar Kaiser, a member of the Kaiser Corporation said that Nkrumah speaks like Edgar's father, Henry Kaiser. Nkrumah heard the comment and broke into laughter. The personal relations built between Edgar Kaiser and Nkrumah at their first meeting was influential in the development of the new country's industrialization ambitions. During this period, Halcrow, a British private firm, had begun building the Tema project, and it connected firmly with the Kaiser Cooperation. Both companies equally sought to maximize profit by associating with the industrialization process. Nkrumah inspired Kaiser with his enthusiasm, and that made Kaiser develop a keen interest in the development of the project, both to benefit his own company and to modernize Ghana. Nkrumah and Kaiser's relations galvanized the scheme after 1958 as the Kaiser corporation maximize profits while contributing to Ghana's launch towards modernization.²²

Representatives of the Kaiser Aluminum Chemical Corporation, together with the Aluminum Limited of Canada (ALCAN), Reynolds Metals, the Aluminum Company of America (ALCOA), and Olin Mathieson, met in September 1959 and

²²David Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Political Kingdom in the Third World* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), 155-156.

formed a limited liability firm which became known as the Volta Aluminum Company (VALCO) to ensure the development of the Volta scheme.²³ In December 1959, President Nkrumah and D.A. Rhodes, the then president of the Kaiser Aluminum and Chemical Corporation, on behalf of the VALCO Company, signed a "letter of intent" stating that VALCO had agreed on paper to partake in the Volta River Project. The agreement between the government of Ghana and VALCO shows some level of changes in the Ghanaian government's trade policies. The Legislative House had approved and made provision for the encouragement of private companies to invest in Ghana. Since VALCO, a private enterprise was a world-renowned aluminum company, the agreement signaled to the outside world the willingness of the Ghanaian government to partner with private institutions. The government of Ghana's contract with VALCO, a private company, helped erase the misconception of those who had doubts about such a possibility.²⁴ The VALCO company, which the Kaiser corporation founded contributed immensely to Ghana's industrialization through the production of aluminum ingots.²⁵ Although the economic interests of the Kaiser company were taken into consideration in the establishment of VALCO, Ghana's goal for modernization and industrialization materialized through the pivotal roles the Kaiser corporation, a private firm, played in Ghana.²⁶

Edgar Kaiser still supported the project despite the huge figures needed to finance the scheme. Edgar's relationship with Nkrumah made the Kaiser company support the project irrespective of the amount needed in the development of the project.

²³Boateng, *International Development and Communication: A Case of the Origins, Objectives, and Consequences of Ghana's Volta River Project*, 51.

²⁴Ghana Government, "The Volta River Project: A Statement by Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah President of the Republic of Ghana to the National Assembly, February 21, 1961," 6.

²⁵Boateng, *International Development and Communication: A Case of the Origins, Objectives, and Consequences of Ghana's Volta River Project*, 51.

²⁶Boateng, *International Development and Communication: A Case of the Origins, Objectives, and Consequences of Ghana's Volta River Project*, 51.

The Aluminum Company of America (ALCOA) and Olin Mathieson in East Alton, Illinois, had supported the project as a means of making a profit and to help Ghana's goal of becoming economically independent. However, in early 1960, both ALCOA and Olin Mathieson stepped away from their decision to support the project. These companies rescinded their decisions due to the high cost involved in funding the project. The Kaiser Aluminum Chemical Corporation, and Reynolds Metals, which still showed interest in contributing to the project, arrived at a consensus to construct and run the smelter at the cost of 90 percent and 10 percent, respectively.²⁷

Due to the need to finance the project, the World Bank entered the picture. After the World Bank had investigated the plan, it recommended that the highest amount Ghana could borrow was £190 million. Such a recommendation raised concerns due to the enormous amount needed to develop the project. Kaiser, as the head of the Kaiser company, expressed interest in supporting Nkrumah in transforming Ghana into a modernized and industrialized nation to compete with other developed countries. Nevertheless, he protected the economic interests of the Kaiser company. As a private company that sought to maximize profit, the profitability of the Volta scheme as well influenced the Kaiser corporation's support for the project while Edgar Kaiser, the leader of the Kaiser cooperation's relationship with Nkrumah also contributed towards ensuring the development of the Volta project concurrently.²⁸

The Kaiser company invested millions of dollars in the project to ensure its realization. The company hoped to receive an excellent return for the amount invested while supporting Ghana's transformation through scientific and technological innovation.²⁹ The Kaiser corporation's interest in having access to aluminum and

²⁷Boateng, *“International Development and Communication: A Case of the Origins, Objectives, and Consequences of Ghana's Volta River Project,”* 51.

²⁸Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Political Kingdom in the Third World*, 156-157.

²⁹Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Political Kingdom in the Third World*, 156-157.

Ghana's bauxite also shaped its commitment to support the project. At the same time, the company supported the launching of Ghana's electricity development program and the need for industrialization. As a public corporation, the desire for profits and the mutual relationship Nkrumah established with each of the leaders of the Kaiser organization, guided the Kaiser company's support for the Volta scheme. Even in times when the United States government wanted to back out due to Nkrumah's association with the Soviets, Kaiser continued to support the project and even advised the United States government to support the project as a fight against Soviet penetration.³⁰ Ghana's drive to industrialization, a mark of a modern nation, was spearheaded through the continued backing of the Kaiser firm, through personal relations between Nkrumah and the respective leaders of the Kaiser corporation in the first decade of the newly independent country.

The United States Government and the Volta River Project

United States government's interest in contributing to the Volta River Project in Ghana began in the mid-1950s. Although political, economic, and ideological reasons shaped the United States' intent in supporting the project, personal relations between Nkrumah and the United States' presidents over time as well guided the American assistance in Ghana's transition to industrialization. According to Sir Robert Gillman Allen Jackson, the British appointed special commissioner of the preparatory commission of the Volta project, political factors primarily motivated the United States to be involved in the Volta River Project. Ghana was the first nation in sub-Saharan Africa to gain its independence. Since the United States sought to gain political, social, and economic influence in Africa, supporting the project became paramount to such an opportunity. America's vision to gain influence in Africa grew to its zenith following

³⁰Hart, *The Volta River Project*, 49.

the Suez Canal Crisis in 1956. The Suez Crisis emerged after Britain and America rescinded their decision to finance the construction of the Aswan dam project. Gamal Abdel Nasser, the Egyptian president nationalized the Suez Canal and that generated crisis in the Middle East. Hitherto, the canal was controlled by the British and the French. The Soviets supported the creation of the Aswan dam in Egypt following the withdrawal of the British and Americans.³¹

In March 1954, a group of American businessmen under the leadership of R.V. Wood and A. Hehmeyer came to Ghana under the United States government's requests. Through the United States Point Four Technical Assistance Program and with the acceptance from the Ghanaian government, the team was charged with the responsibility of examining trade and investment possibilities in Ghana. The Ghanaian culture of hospitality and America's desire to modernize the new nation while projecting its national interests shaped cooperation between the American businessmen and Ghanaian officials.³² Specifically, the group envisaged gaining access to, and making known, the economic opportunities in Ghana to promote the creation and expansion of African business firms. The United States government's contribution to expanding Ghanaian firms would help transform the limited Ghanaian economy into an industrialized, global one. Moreover, the team also had an interest in the existence of laws related to the creation and managing of capital and sought to align trade laws with the needs and interests of the emerging private economies in Ghana. The modernization of a nation was equally dependent on the development of private economies that interwove with the mission of the American businessmen who came to Ghana to discuss

³¹Hart, *The Volta River Project: A Case Study in Politics and Technology*, 44-5.

³²Boateng, "International Development and Communication: A Case of the Origins, Objectives, and Consequences of Ghana's Volta River Project," 48-49.

the Volta scheme and other economic projects.³³ In January 1955, the team presented a report to the United States government. The best investment opportunity in Ghana, the team concluded, was the creation of hydroelectricity and aluminum production. The team believed the development of the electricity project would provide Ghanaians with electricity, hasten industrialization in Ghana as a tool for modernization, and benefit the American interests.³⁴

In 1956, a new development ushered in a new phase in the relationship between Eisenhower and Nkrumah. In October 1956, the Ghanaian Finance Minister, Komla Agbeli Gbedemah and his secretary, an African American, after attending the Commonwealth Finance Ministers' meeting in Ottawa, visited the United States. They entered one of the Howard Johnson roadside restaurants in Delaware for a glass of iced orange juice. The waitress, supported by the restaurant manager, told Gbedemah that people of color were not permitted to be served at the counter, although he could be allowed to buy something and take it outside the eating establishment. Gbedemah said to the manager, "The people here are of lower social status than I am but they can drink here, and we can't. You can keep the orange juice and the change, but this is not the last you have heard of this."³⁵

The press got hold of the story and escalated the incident. President Eisenhower and Vice-President Nixon moved to apologize for the situation, hence, they invited Mr. Gbedemah for breakfast at the White House. This unfortunate incident became pivotal in shaping Ghana's relations with the United States and contributed to the new country's road to industrialization and modernization. Eisenhower, who was interested in what

³³Boateng, "International Development and Communication: A Case of the Origins, Objectives, and Consequences of Ghana's Volta River Project," 50.

³⁴Boateng, "International Development and Communication: A Case of the Origins, Objectives, and Consequences of Ghana's Volta River Project," 50.

³⁵Thayer Watkins, "The Volta River Project in Ghana, West Africa," Accessed May 18, 2020 San Jose State University: Economics Department, <https://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/watkins/volta.htm>

he had heard about the Volta River Project, asked Gbedemah to provide further details about the project. Initially, the Eisenhower administration was reluctant to support Ghana's ambition for the development of the Volta project until Congressional Democrats criticized the Eisenhower government. Congress believed Eisenhower's administration was not interested in Africa and that would make the United States lose Africa to the Soviets. The criticisms pushed Eisenhower to build a strong relationship with Nkrumah as a preparatory stage to American support in Ghana's industrialization. While initial discussions and relations were between President Eisenhower and Gbedemah, President Nkrumah's relationship with Eisenhower was established through the orange juice incident. Nkrumah wrote to President Eisenhower some days after the incident and indicated he and his members were passionate about the Volta River Project and viewed it as the vehicle for Ghana's modernization. He also noted that his government was ready to negotiate with any company or government. Nkrumah sent President Eisenhower copies of the Preparatory Commission's Report to study.³⁶

With Ghana's Independence Day celebration scheduled for March 6, 1957, Eisenhower's relation with Nkrumah, together with America's interest in Ghana, persuaded Eisenhower to appoint Vice President Nixon to represent America. The vice president told Ghanaians during a press conference that the United States' government was interested in the Volta River Project, and that the American government desired to assist in modernizing Ghana. Nixon added that he had already discussed with President Nkrumah the proposed Volta River Project.³⁷

Nkrumah officially sought friendly assistance from the United States, beginning with discussions with President Dwight Eisenhower in October 1957.

³⁶Moxon, *Volta, Man's Greatest Lake*, 88.

³⁷Moxon, *Volta, Man's Greatest Lake*, 89.

Eisenhower showed interest in the project and asked the International Co-operation Administration to aid in making the project look attractive. The International Co-operation Administration recommended a re-examination of the project to assess the engineering part of the creation of the Volta River Project and to examine the economic benefits of the project. Eisenhower invited Nkrumah to visit Washington. Nkrumah's visit to Washington became the first time a guest from a developing country visited Washington, an act that was influenced by the cordial relations built between the two presidents.³⁸

In July 1958, Nkrumah made an official visit to the United States. Prior to Nkrumah's visit, Douglas Dillon, the then undersecretary of state for economic and agriculture affairs, asked Edgar Kaiser, and Chad Calhoun, the vice president of Kaiser Industries, to study the prospects of the project. Following a detailed study of the project, Edgar indicated that it was economically viable for the United States and private firms. Edgar told Eisenhower that the Volta scheme would benefit the American government and private industries. It would as well launch Ghana to the road of modernization through industrialization and an improvement in Ghana's foreign exchange rate.³⁹

Although aluminum was abundant at the world market, Eisenhower granted his backing to support Ghana in the development of the Volta River scheme due to relations he had established with Nkrumah and the need to forestall Soviet influence in Ghana. From the initial stage of the development of the Volta scheme, Nkrumah had established connection with Eisenhower and even asked Eisenhower to use his personal influence to persuade Henry Kaiser to found a company to support the building of the

³⁸Ghana Government, "The Volta River Project: A Statement by Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah President of the Republic of Ghana to the National Assembly, February 21, 1961," 3.

³⁹Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 571.

aluminum project.⁴⁰ Compared to colonial authority forms of support meant to benefit the colonial powers only, Eisenhower's support had been guided by Ghana's need for industrialization while protecting America's national interests. He was aware of how the clumsiness of American and British policy resulted in the Soviets having power over the Aswan Dam in Egypt.

Eisenhower wanted to subvert any Soviet penetration into Africa.⁴¹ Speaking on the Volta scheme during Nkrumah's visit in 1958, President Eisenhower restated that the United States would continue to examine the possibilities of making the development of the project work. Eisenhower added that the United States desired to help the new country in transforming into a developed country through industrialization. He assured Nkrumah he had not forgotten Ghana and the Volta scheme. Nkrumah acknowledged the United States' interest and indicated his government would be appreciative of any support it received from the United States government even as Ghana also explored the possibilities of developing the project through the support of private aluminum companies. Even if the private companies were not interested in the project, Nkrumah was optimistic about the project's economic viability, its role in Ghana's modernization, and the potential to attract aluminum companies. Besides, the scheme would provide a cheap source of power upon its completion. Eisenhower asked if there were other services the project might provide to the new country. Nkrumah answered that the project would be used for small industries and agricultural purposes, which were also steps toward modernization.⁴²

Eisenhower compared the Volta project to the Rural Electrification Administration, the project instituted by Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1936 to help reduce

⁴⁰Watkins, "The Volta River Project in Ghana, West Africa,"

⁴¹Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah*, 155-156.

⁴²Telephone Conversation Between President Eisenhower and President Nkrumah, July 24, 1958, *FRUS*, 1958-1960, vol.14, doc. 295.

unemployment through the production of electricity to remote areas. He described how the Rural Electrification Administration project, like the Volta scheme, had provided electricity to rural areas and promoted industrialization. President Eisenhower proposed the project should begin with the small dam at Abouya, which already had been discussed. Nkrumah responded that the dam at Abuoya was feasible and equally economically beneficial in transforming the new nation towards its goal of modernizing. However, Nkrumah informed Eisenhower the site for the dam at Abuoya was not close to the bauxite deposits. Nkrumah told Eisenhower he hoped the United States support Ghana in its industrial development. Nkrumah anticipated American's support to Ghana would follow the same path as the United States' support in the Philippines. The United States supported the Philippines in building the Filipino water supply system, which supplied sanitized water from its construction in 1946.⁴³

The year 1960 ushered in new troubles that affected the Volta River Project. The Congo revolution against Belgian colonial rule, which Nkrumah supported discouraged many corporations from investing in any project in Africa. Shortly after Congo had gained its independence, an insurrection broke out which marked the emergence of the Congo crisis. Lumumba appealed to both the United States and the United Nations Organization to gain support to subdue Belgian colonial authority. However, both declined to offer support to Lumumba. Lumumba then turned to the Soviets for support and this created unrest in Congo since the United States, Belgium, President Joseph Kasavubu, Congolese president, and chief of staff, Joseph-Désiré Mobutu opposed Soviets support for Lumumba. Lumumba was imprisoned and murdered. Nkrumah supported the nationalist, Patrice Lumumba and criticized the

⁴³Telephone Conversation Between President Eisenhower and President Nkrumah, July 24, 1958, FRUS, 1958-1960, vol.14, doc. 295.

West's support for the Belgians in the Congo crisis, thereby creating more problems. In July 1960, Ghana had become a republic, and that granted more power to Nkrumah as some restrictions on Nkrumah's presidential actions were removed. Nkrumah continued to attack the West for their involvement in the Congo crisis though he needed the United States support in developing the Volta scheme.⁴⁴

Amidst the Congo crisis and Nkrumah's bitterness against the West, Ghanaian-American relations did not deteriorate. On August 7, 1960, Eisenhower sent a letter to Nkrumah, indicating the United States continued to have great interest in the project and believed it was time for negotiations to take place with the aluminum companies and the World Bank. In the absence of Mr. Douglas Dillon, the United States Under Secretary of State who had proposed cooperation with the International Bank for both reconstruction and reviewing of the project, Eisenhower appointed Mr. Edwin M. Martin, the Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, to continue with the discussions on the project. Gbedemah, the finance minister who was continuously negotiating for the Volta River Project informed the United States representatives about Nkrumah's position towards the Soviets. The Secretary of State, Deputy Secretary for Political Affairs Raymond Hare, and Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Department, Grady Upton, were to discuss the development of the project with the Ghanaian finance minister, Mr. Gbedemah in the following week. Eisenhower concluded in the letter that these state officials and the American government were pleased to cooperate with Gbedemah, and they would discuss plans towards developing the project with the intent of launching Ghana as an industrialized nation with a high level of energy power for industrial activities.⁴⁵

⁴⁴Letter, President Eisenhower to President Nkrumah," August 7, 1960, *FRUS*, 1958-1960, vol. 14, doc. 298.

⁴⁵Letter, President Eisenhower to President Nkrumah," August 7, 1960, *FRUS*, 1958-1960, vol. 14, doc. 298.

Gbedemah visited Washington, and after extensive negotiations, he returned to Ghana with an amount of £1.5 million, which was below the expected target needed in developing the project. Gbedemah feared Nkrumah might be angry and grant the project to the Soviets.⁴⁶ However, on November 17, 1960, Gbedemah signed a contract with the Volta Aluminum Company after a lengthy negotiation with state officials. American support was needed for the success of the Volta River scheme. Nkrumah and his officials believed Ghana's transition to modernity and the desire to transform the young nation into an industrialized nation was dependent on support from one or the other of the superpowers. The Soviets were equally interested in supporting the project as they envisaged contributing towards Ghana's modernization while projecting their communist interests. Rumors of Soviets' interest in supporting the project did not lure Nkrumah in, as he had faith in the United States to support the project. While this had been Nkrumah's position, he was ready to accept any offer from the Soviets in building a steel mill, about which United States companies were not interested, nor did they seek to compete with the Soviets.⁴⁷

Americans became embittered when it came to the public that most of the Convention People's Party (C.P.P.) ministers had been influenced by Tawia Adamafio and the C.P.P. ministers wanted the Volta project to be given to the Soviets. Adamafio, a member of the C.P.P, was the General Secretary of the C.P.P. In 1960, Nkrumah appointed him as the Minister of Information and Broadcasting and as a Minister for Presidential Affairs concurrently. His position as a presidential affairs minister made him influential in Nkrumah's government. Adamafio and John Tettegah, the leader of the Ghanaian Trade Union Council, visited the Soviet Union in 1960. Khrushchev showed

⁴⁶Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Political Kingdom in the Third World*, 157-158.

⁴⁷Letter, President Eisenhower to President Nkrumah," August 7, 1960, *FRUS*, 1958-1960, vol. 14, doc. 298.

his readiness to build the Volta project if the West delayed. The Soviets offered long-term credit funds of 14.7 million Euros to Ghana. The Soviets' offer made Adamafo believe the East could assist the Volta development in a short time.⁴⁸

Nkrumah announced during the National Assembly debate on January 1961 that the Soviets had proposed to build the Bui Dam on the Black Volta. Clearly, Nkrumah's intent was to gain support from both the East and West, with which he saw no problem, as he continued to proclaim his ideology of neutrality and positive non-alignment.⁴⁹

A new administration under the leadership of Kennedy was ushered into office in January 1961. Kennedy's arrival on the scene transformed the Ghanaian American relations for the better. Kennedy came into office determined to usher in a new phase of United States foreign policy in Africa. Kennedy had a great interest in Africa even before his presidential campaign. During the Algerian war of revolution against France, Kennedy gave a speech detailing how Algeria must be freed from French imperialism. He had declared a fresh tolerance of neutralism. Kennedy's administration perceived American's aid to modernize Ghana as a test for the new dynamism of American policy towards Africa. Kennedy was determined to make the United States contribute to industrializing Ghana. He aimed at rectifying the damage he believed the Eisenhower administration had caused in Congo due to how Eisenhower handled the Congo crisis. Nkrumah had established a personal relationship with Kennedy even before Kennedy was voted into power as a president. Nkrumah had initially written to Senator Kennedy asking for support in the launch of Ghana towards industrialization. He wrote again

⁴⁸Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Political Kingdom in the Third World*, 160-62.

⁴⁹Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Political Kingdom in the Third World*, 158-159.

after the Democrat had won the election. Nkrumah declared that Africans had hope in the new administration.⁵⁰

The murder of Lumumba on January 17, 1961 derailed Kennedy's vision. In Africa, it was confirmed the Central Intelligence Agency had spearheaded the murder of Lumumba. American C.I.A. supported Joseph Kasavubu and his subordinate, Colonel Joseph Mobutu, with weapons and this contributed to the overthrow of Lumumba.⁵¹ Lumumba's death worsened American relations in Africa. The Congo crisis commanded the most significant attention of President Kennedy. Kennedy worked along with the United Nations and Nkrumah and they established a constitutional government and established Congo as a nation. Once the Congo Crisis eased, Kennedy's attention shifted back to the Volta project. Nevertheless, Nkrumah was not happy about losing his close friend, Patrice Emery Lumumba. Kennedy's relations with Nkrumah made them put aside the Congo crisis and continue with the goal of modernizing Ghana through the Volta scheme.⁵²

Kennedy was determined to win Africans over by supporting the Volta River Project. He anticipated that America's support for Ghana's Volta scheme would attract Africans to American policies. President Kennedy believed that one of the ways to gain the trust of the "Third World" was to establish personal relations with their leaders. He formed friendly relations with the likes of Sekou Toure, the Guinean president, and Kwame Nkrumah. Kennedy's relations with Nkrumah shaped Ghana's modernization goal for the next decade.⁵³ Kennedy believed that moral diplomacy was a tool to enhance positive foreign relations. Barbara Ward, the wife of Sir Robert Jackson, was

⁵⁰Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 560-5.

⁵¹Letter, President Eisenhower to President Nkrumah," August 7, 1960, *FRUS*, 1958-1960, vol. 14, doc. 298.

⁵²Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 574-578.

⁵³Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 506-507.

the brain behind Kennedy's intent to support Ghana. Ward was a Carnegie Fellow at Harvard who had access to the Kennedy power base situated in Boston. Moreover, she had met Nkrumah as a friend, and her relations with the leader made her develop trust towards Nkrumah and encouraged Kennedy to sponsor the project. Kaiser also advised Kennedy's administration regarding the Cold War in Africa. Kaiser believed that the United States' support for the Volta River Project as a tool to launch the newly independent nation to industrialization would leave an indelible mark on the continent.⁵⁴

On the other hand, Francis H. Russell, the American ambassador in Accra, offered up a discouraging report about perceptions of the United States in Ghana. He described an anti-American campaign carried on by the Ghanaian press and Ghana's shift towards the Soviets. Russell believed the United States' support for the Volta River Project would mean a reward for Ghana's anti-American attitude. Due to the Ghanaian press attacks, Russell believed America should not support Ghana in the modernization process. Moreover, Russell urged the United States not to underrate Nkrumah's anger over the Congo crisis. He added that Ghanaian conservatives had expressed hatred for Nkrumah. However, he cautioned that the United States' withdrawal from the Volta River Project would drive Ghana towards the Soviets' bloc. Russell believed Ghana's strong desire for modernization would push Nkrumah to the Soviets' side if America decided not to support the Volta project.⁵⁵

The end of February 1961 witnessed significant events in Ghana. Chad Calhoun, Kaiser company's vice president and Sir Robert Gillman Allen Jackson, a United Nations administrator made a trip to Ghana to discuss the Volta River Project

⁵⁴Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Political Kingdom in the Third World*, 159.

⁵⁵Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Political Kingdom in the Third World*, 159-160.

with Nkrumah. The Soviets' penetration and involvement in Africa were heightened when Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev visited Ghana in early 1961 to discuss Eastern bloc policies toward Africa with Nkrumah. Brezhnev's visit and the banquet in his honor coincided with Calhoun and Jackson's visit to Ghana and their interview with Nkrumah. The banquet signaled Soviets' interest in contributing to Ghana's modernization. During the banquet, Nkrumah declared that Lumumba's death had made him understand how determined the West was in achieving its agenda in Africa.⁵⁶

Brezhnev's visit to Ghana alarmed the West and prompted the United States to develop policies to subvert Soviets' penetration. Doing so required the United States to contribute towards launching Ghana to industrialization by supporting the Volta Project.⁵⁷ Ward and Calhoun, in a memorandum to Kennedy, advised the president to win Nkrumah's heart from the Soviets when Nkrumah comes for his scheduled visit to Washington. Meanwhile, Nkrumah had explicitly stated that Africans no longer trusted the West because Africans believed the Western powers were bringing forth a new form of colonialism. Nkrumah cited the incident in Katanga in which the Belgian government and the Union Minière had supported Moïse Tshombe, the Congolese politician. Nkrumah realized the West was determined to establish control over Africa. Such a perception from Nkrumah meant the United States was not going to take it easy in winning his heart. Nevertheless, Nkrumah believed there must be cooperation between the West and Africa. While he had expressed distrust in America, his vision for modernizing Ghana sustained his interactions with Kennedy.⁵⁸

Americans became more concerned when Ghana entered into an economic agreement with Yugoslavia when Josip Broz Tito, president of the Socialist Federal

⁵⁶Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Political Kingdom in the Third World*, 160-62.

⁵⁷Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Political Kingdom in the Third World*, 160-61.

⁵⁸Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 574-578.

Republic of Yugoslavia, on March 1, 1961, visited Ghana. Gbedemah on the other hand, had been attacked by Adamafio's group and was at the point of clashing with Nkrumah. During his stay in Washington as he prepared for Nkrumah's visit, Gbedemah informed Walt Rostow, the American National Security adviser, of his fear of Ghana's shift towards the Soviets. He suggested Kennedy and Nkrumah alone should meet, barring Nkrumah's advisers from the meeting. Gbedemah thought due to Nkrumah's relations with Kennedy and the United States president's desire to contribute towards Ghanaian modernization, a discussion between the two presidents would be smooth compared to having discussions in the presence of other influencers of Nkrumah's government. Gbedemah believed Geoffrey Bing, Nkrumah's constitutional advisor, whom Russell had described as the most pro-communist among Nkrumah's advisers, would come along with Nkrumah in Washington. He alarmed Rostow by telling him of the growing influence of the Soviets in Ghana through Bing and the influential Russian ambassador, Aleksey Alekseevich Rodionov.⁵⁹

In March 1961, President Nkrumah visited the United States en route to the United Nations General Assembly meeting. He met President Kennedy on March 8, 1961, and the two presidents had a detailed discussion about the Volta River Project at the White House.⁶⁰ Before their encounter, Barbara Ward sent a note to warn Kennedy that Nkrumah was temperamental and susceptible to changes in the Cold War era. Ward asserted that though Nkrumah had recognized the importance of the United States in transforming Ghana as an industrialized country, he would never compromise his non-alignment position and neutrality for America's support for the project. Kennedy

⁵⁹Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Political Kingdom in the Third World*, 160-62.

⁶⁰Boateng, "International Development and Communication: A Case of the Origins, Objectives, and Consequences of Ghana's Volta River Project," 50-51.

listened to Ward's advice, and Nkrumah visited the White House in March without any of his ministers.⁶¹

Nkrumah did not hide his personality. He gave a blurred presentation of his opinions during his interaction with Kennedy. Kennedy shifted to Nkrumah's pro-Soviet attitude and anti-western campaigns and how that had hindered the United States' financial support for the Volta River Project. Nkrumah responded that he was not a communist; instead, he noted, it was just easier to gain assistance from the East to industrialize Ghana compared to the West. Kennedy also believed it was easier for a "Third World" country to gain support from the East to industrialize than gaining assistance from the West, yet he wanted the Volta Project to be developed through American assistance. The relationship between the two leaders eased their discussions though each had reservations about the other's reaction. President Kennedy was ready to assist Nkrumah's Ghana to develop the project as an instrument for industrialization. Kennedy assured Nkrumah the amount of \$30 million, which had been frozen under Eisenhower's administration, would be unfrozen. At the same time, all other hurdles would be resolved. Kennedy made a financial commitment to launch Ghana to the path of modernization without solely prioritizing America's economic interest.⁶²

Kennedy extended his relationship with Nkrumah to include the first family. Upon ending the meeting, Kennedy went along with Nkrumah to meet the first lady and daughter, Caroline. Nkrumah was powerfully overwhelmed with the reception given to him and spoke enthusiastically about a new era of Afro-American relationships. The warm reception received signaled to the world America's commitment to helping the new nation to transform from a colonial society into a modernized nation. The meeting

⁶¹Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 571.

⁶²Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Political Kingdom in the Third World*, 162.

of the two presidents brought hope in the development of the Volta River Project, yet there were some difficulties to overcome. The State Department and the Treasury thought the Kaiser company had been given preferential treatment, though they were inspired by Gbedemah's careful negotiations with the World Bank and the United States. Gbedemah feared the Soviets' involvement in the project, yet he completed his negotiations in Washington. While all things seemed to be going well, Nkrumah caused another problem when he refused to accept the terms the World Bank laid down following advice from Lord Kaldor. Nkrumah's action reignited intense criticism and doubts. Here again, Ward took a firm stand and, in a famous memo, questioned: "Must we have two Aswans?" The United States feared they might as well lose the Volta scheme to the Soviets. Politically, the United States had hoped not to repeat another Aswan incident and grant the Soviets control over Ghana. On the other hand, Nkrumah's relations with Kennedy and the desire of both countries to achieve their aim calmed waters, which allowed the development of the project to begin. The Americans decided to use various means to connect with Nkrumah. Nkrumah continued negotiations concerning the development of the project with Kennedy.⁶³

Kennedy sent a letter to Nkrumah on June 29, 1961. He informed Nkrumah of how pleased he was since it seemed all the obstacles had been addressed. He believed the way have been cleared for the construction of the Volta scheme, which, when completed, would signal to the other African countries America's desire to willingly promote their national interest and modernize newly independent nations in Africa.⁶⁴ Nkrumah received Kennedy's letter before departing with sixty delegates for two-month tour of China, the Soviet Unions, and the Eastern bloc. During the tour, Nkrumah

⁶³Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Political Kingdom in the Third World*, 162.

⁶⁴Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Political Kingdom in the Third World*, 162.

openly flattered leaders of the communist bloc. Nkrumah's comment about the communists reignited more tension in Washington and created debates in Congress. Senator Albert Gore, chair of the Senate Committee on Africa, believed Nkrumah's policies favored the communist bloc. Kennedy questioned America's intent to support the Volta scheme with a considerable amount of money since Ghana was neither proclaiming neutrality or liberalism. Congress remained unhappy with Nkrumah.⁶⁵ Kennedy sent Franklin Williams, a delegate who later became an American ambassador to Ghana, to study the situation in Ghana and provide a report. A group of three delegates under the leadership of Senator Gore followed up in October 1961. While Kennedy was ready to recognize Ghana's attempt to industrialize, circumstances in Ghana made him question America's support for the project.⁶⁶

Kaiser, Chad Calhoun, and Ward, who had the opportunity to meet Nkrumah during Nkrumah's Eastern bloc tour, were optimistic the Volta project should continue. In October 1961, Senator Gore visited Ghana and had the opportunity to interview Nkrumah about the rumors concerning his movement towards the Eastern bloc. In response to the rumors, Nkrumah asserted the western press had misinterpreted his visit to the Eastern Bloc. He reported that his intent for the tour was to observe what the East had achieved. Nkrumah's response did not convince Gore, who concluded that Western colonialism continued to haunt the Ghanaian leader, and Soviet colonialism had blinded him. After meeting with Nkrumah, Gore advised Kennedy that the United States should put an end to supporting the project due to Nkrumah's pro-communist attitude and his attacks toward the West. For Gore, the Volta River Project was not economically beneficial for the United States and unlikely to benefit the VALCO group. Senator Gore

⁶⁵Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 572.

⁶⁶Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Political Kingdom in the Third World*, 163.

believed funding the project would solely advance Ghana's move to modernization while the political and economic interests of the United States would not be achieved.⁶⁷

The C.I.A. also issued a negative report about Nkrumah and the project. It referenced Nkrumah's removal of moderate Ghanaian officials, the promotion of the more radical-minded Adamafo, together with his imprisonment of his critics. The report recommended that the United States pull out completely. The C.I.A. perceived Nkrumah as an egoistic and selfish leader who wanted to use the Eastern bloc to achieve his needs for industrializing while not committing entirely to communism. The C.I.A. anticipated Nkrumah's ambivalent attitude would increase, and he would eventually shift towards the communists. Moreover, the C.I.A. believed Nkrumah would also interfere in the affairs of other African countries and encourage their support for the Eastern Bloc continued suspicion of American and British motives. The C.I.A. believed funding the project would empower Nkrumah's Ghana to compete with world powers as an industrialized and modernized nation.⁶⁸

Kennedy received a more astute and realistic report from Barbara Ward's husband, Sir Robert Gillman Allen Jackson, a United Nations administrator, and an Australian naval officer who had specialized in logistic and technical assistance to the developing world. Jackson believed that during Nkrumah's trip to the East, Boateng and Adamafo had advised Nkrumah to eliminate all his expatriate colleagues such as Erica Powell, General Alexander, and Jackson himself. Jackson also affirmed that Adamafo's group limited access to Nkrumah, and no one with moderate leanings could get in touch with him. Adamafo's group sought to achieve a socialist economy by eliminating all forms of private enterprises.⁶⁹ President Kennedy believed that

⁶⁷Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Political Kingdom in the Third World*, 164.

⁶⁸Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Political Kingdom in the Third World*, 164.

⁶⁹Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Political Kingdom in the Third World*, 165.

canceling America's support for the Volta scheme would affect policy goals towards Africa. In contrast, his support for Ghana would create a new opening for American aid to non-aligned nations in Africa. Kennedy hoped American aid to modernize and industrialize Ghana would ensure a more positive American presence in Ghana. At the same time, Nkrumah's non-alignment and positive neutrality philosophy would prevent him from leaning completely towards the Eastern bloc.⁷⁰

After thoughtful deliberations, Kennedy decided to support the Volta River Project. Although Congress and most officials did not want America to support the project, Kennedy rejected their views. He declared support for the project as he intended to assist Nkrumah in industrializing Ghana. Kennedy believed the final beneficiaries of the project would be the people of Ghana and not Nkrumah's government, hence the urgency to launch Ghana towards modernization. When the National Security Council received news about Kennedy's decision, Kennedy declared, referring to his own brother's reservations about the project: "The Attorney General has not yet spoken, but I can feel the hot breath of his disapproval on the back of my neck." The opposition in the United States never changed Kennedy's mind. On January 22, 1962, Edgar Kaiser and Nkrumah signed an official agreement in Accra. Edgar Kaiser, the leader of the private firm, represented the United States in signing the contract. In total, America was to sponsor Ghana's modernization project with an amount of over \$40 million.⁷¹

Nkrumah became the leader of the new Volta River Authority. He took full responsibility for the project. He anticipated using the Volta scheme to transform the new country through the United States and World Bank's funds. The developers had hoped the Akosombo Dam would be launched by July 1964. The various parties

⁷⁰Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 573.

⁷¹Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 573-4.

planned for electricity to start flowing in September 1965, the same period when the loan repayments were also expected to start. The work began ahead of time on May 19, 1964. Nkrumah officially announced the ceremony, which brought down the steel and concrete gates, closed the tunnel and began satiating the great Volta Lake. The lake was to cover an estimated one-ninth of Ghana, of which the Volta River Project was part of the social and economic benefits of the scheme. The plan was to provide maximum benefit to the Ghanaian population and government. These outputs together would help increase industrial activities through the production of electricity and would ensure industrialization and modernization.⁷²

The death of President Kennedy introduced a new setback for America's support for the project. Kennedy, who had supported the idea of America financing the project, was assassinated in Dallas on November 22, 1963. While Congress had not supported financing the project, Kennedy's relations with Nkrumah had been influential in shaping America's desire to launch Ghana towards modernization. According to William Mahoney, the American ambassador to Accra, the death of Kennedy diminished the eagerness of the American government to finance the Volta River Project. The removal of administrative support created new problems as new avenues were created for negotiations for the smelter. The great supporter of the project, Kennedy, was no more. Nevertheless, Nkrumah was determined to modernize Ghana and would do everything possible even if he had to shift towards the Soviets.⁷³

The increasing intensity of Nkrumah's anti-American attitude presented another hurdle towards America's support for the Volta scheme. Secretary of State Dean Rusk had declared it was evident that Nkrumah and his government were behind the anti-

⁷²Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Political Kingdom in the Third World*, 165.

⁷³Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Political Kingdom in the Third World*, 166.

American tension in Ghana. Rusk suggested America should review the aid towards the program due to Nkrumah's attitude. After discussions with Rusk, William H. Brubeck of the National Council Staff to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, reviewed the development of the Volta scheme with Assistant Secretary of State Averell Harriman.⁷⁴ During the conversation, Brubeck informed both Harriman and Rusk that Edgar Kaiser was to dine with him that evening, February 6, 1964. Brubeck hoped then to discuss the project. Edgar Kaiser had become a close friend of Nkrumah, state department officials believed Kaiser could act as a liaison to connect the new administration with Nkrumah. The establishment of rapport with Nkrumah would enhance the United States' presence in Africa. It would as well help Nkrumah's ambition of promoting industrialization in Ghana through relations with America.⁷⁵

The increasingly anti-American atmosphere in Ghana had made some Americans demand America's withdrawal from the Ghana project as a way of retaliating. Most Americans believed America's support for the Volta project would only benefit Ghana industrialization and modernization without promoting America's economic and political interest. Richard L. Philips, chief State Department press officer, incited the United States press to step up their roles against anti-American campaigns from Ghanaians. No one could answer why other foreign powers were not vehemently attacked, and the United States alone had to suffer in Accra. The American embassy protested to the Ghanaian government over the Ghanaian press' abusive statement that

⁷⁴Letter, Director of the Office of West African Affairs (Trimble) to the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs (Williams), February 11, 1964, *Africa, Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereafter FRUS), 1964/68, vol. 24, eds. Nina Davis Howland and David S. Patterson, (Washington, DC: US Gov. Print. Off, 1999), doc. 237.

⁷⁵Memorandum for the Record on Discussions with the Secretary Rusk, February 12, 1964, *FRUS*, 1964-1968, *Africa*, vol. 24, doc. 238.

Americans had killed people in Korea, Panama, Cuba, and Congo. Americans demanded Congress use any means to punish Ghana.⁷⁶

Politically, America's idea of pulling back would create a vacuum for communist influence in Ghana, which the United States hoped to prevent by supporting Nkrumah's desire to transform Ghana. The United States demanded that Nkrumah stop the press and Ghanaian politicians' attacks. Harriman warned that there was the possibility of the United States government aborting the support for the project in either March or April if the situation in Ghana does not change. The United States recommended that the British prime minister should send a letter to warn Nkrumah about the consequences of his attitude for the development of the project. At the same time, Nkrumah was to ensure a cordial relationship with America based on the agreement he had with President Kennedy. Even after the death of Kennedy, Nkrumah's relations with Kennedy were used as a point of reference to strengthen Ghanaian-American relations.⁷⁷

Moreover, state officials had recommended that Edgar Kaiser, who had established personal relations with Nkrumah, should immediately visit Nkrumah. Kaiser was to emphasize the difficulties Nkrumah's words had presented to both the United States government and Kaiser. Besides, Nkrumah had to send a letter to Washington, indicating the favorable conditions in Ghana for the success of the project. Nkrumah, who was determined to transform his country, wanted to use every available means to gain America's full support in industrializing Ghana through the development of the Volta scheme.⁷⁸

⁷⁶Eric Quaidoo, "The United States and the overthrow of Kwame Nkrumah" (M.A. Thesis, University of Ghana, Legon, 2010), 47-53.

⁷⁷Letter, Secretary of State Rusk to President Johnson on the Volta Problem, February 13, 1964, *FRUS*, 1964-1968, *Africa*, vol. 24, doc. 239.

⁷⁸Letter, Secretary of State Rusk to President Johnson on the Volta Problem, February 13, 1964, *FRUS*, 1964-1968, *Africa*, vol. 24, doc. 239.

With the plan in possible jeopardy, Kaiser and Harriman visited Ghana to review the entire project again with Nkrumah. Kaiser continued to support the development of the project. However, some American critics asserted that the Kaiser Cooperation had made an excellent bargain, one from which the American government was not guaranteed a profit. Some Americans believed once the Ghanaian bauxite failed to be used, the new smelter would be forced to depend on bauxite that the Kaiser's ships imported. Some Americans believed that the Kaiser industry would benefit the most from the high profit. However, Kaiser Corporation proclaimed its intent to assist Nkrumah in modernizing Ghana. Although the Kaiser corporation had prioritized the maximization of profit, Kaiser's cordial relations with Nkrumah, together with his desire to support the newly independent nation in the transition towards industrialization, continued to influence Edgar Kaiser's desire to support the development of the project. Nkrumah continued to search for capital investment as he wanted Ghana to run the smelter using its bauxite. Nkrumah's success would position Ghana in a better economic situation through Ghana's relations with the United States. Nkrumah, Harriman, Kaiser, and Jackson had a long series of meetings, after which they finally agreed that the smelter was to begin using Ghana's mined bauxite for its operation. Although Ghana's bauxite was to be used, the development of the smelter would be successful only with America's support through financing the development of the project.⁷⁹

In June 1964, Nkrumah and Kaiser officially launched the smelter project. The two friends had maintained their relationships throughout the development of the project with the hope of modernizing Ghana. On an opening day, Kaiser gave a speech in which he emphasized hope, that a new colonial system would not be replaced with a

⁷⁹Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Political Kingdom in the Third World*, 166-7.

new tyrannical system. Instead, Ghana would promote its freedom and project its modernization through American support while maintaining neutrality.⁸⁰

Despite the tense political situation in Ghana, the development of the smelter, Tema harbor, and Akosombo Dam continued. By September 1965, the entire scheme had been completed and the first electricity produced. President Nkrumah switched on the electricity which flowed into the 500-mile grid linking Akosombo with Accra, Kumasi, Takoradi, and the mining centers at both Tarkwa and Obuasi. The fact that electricity was produced indicated the entire project was complete. Hence, the development that took place after September 1965 was a preparation for the formal opening of the completed project.⁸¹

The official opening took place on January 22, 1966, following the arrival of President Nkrumah and his wife, Fathia Nkrumah. Earlier in the day, all movements shifted towards southern Ghana as people traveled to Akosombo. Taxis, private cars, cyclists, tro-tros (light buses), mammy lorries, coaches, and pedestrians held towards 'Electri-City' the name given to Akosombo on that day. Nana Kwafo Akoto, the Omanhene of Akwamu, chaired the occasion as purification and libation took place as people called upon the ancestral spirits to bless the completed project. Two young steers were sacrificed to the gods along with an offering of libation with Ghanaian gin.⁸²

Dr. Lodigiani, the director of Impregilo, was the first to speak at the event. He commented on the cooperation between public and private firms, which he believed created an opportunity for cooperation between private businesses and public businesses in Africa. He applauded Ghanaian workers for their efforts towards the creation of the project. Edgar Kaiser followed with his speech. Before delivering his

⁸⁰Memorandum of Meeting with the President of Ghana, February 26, 1964, *FRUS, 1964-1968*, Africa, vol. 24, doc. 242.

⁸¹Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Political Kingdom in the Third World*, 167.

⁸²Moxon, *Volta, Man's Greatest Lake*, 227.

speech, Kaiser opened a telegram that his father had addressed to Nkrumah. His father expressed his regret for not making it for the occasion to partake in the great accomplishment. Kaiser's theme centered on the quality of faith and personal relations among statesmen and nations:

I am confident we are all aware that world conditions economically and politically-demand increasing cooperation and understanding among the world's nations. I believe deeply that men of different nations-representing different viewpoints and interests-can work together successfully. The requirement is a bond of mutual trust-mutual, respect, and mutual self-interest in accomplishing the specific task. These kinds of human bondage are the priceless ingredients that bring a sense of understanding, which we know can be achieved between peoples. Mr. President-today, you are dedicating still another steppingstone in the direction of peace and understanding. And from steppingstones such as these, a watching world can experience a resurgence of faith. Faith never fails. It is a miracle worker. Our faith knows because it sees what we cannot see. It sees resources, powers, potencies, which our doubts and fears veil from us. Faith is assured, is never afraid, because it sees the way outsees the solution of its problem. It has dipped in the realms of our finer life-our higher and diviner kingdom. All things are possible to him who has faith-because faith sees-and recognizes the power that means accomplishment. It looks beyond all boundaries-

transcends all limitations, penetrates all obstacles, and sees the goal.⁸³

He told Ghanaians how grateful the Kaiser Corporation was to help in building a better Ghana for both the current and future generations during his address to Ghanaians.⁸⁴ Kaiser confirmed the completion of the project had ushered Ghana into a bright new era with power that would grow and support a diversified economy. He continued that Nkrumah's hope of achieving a better life for Ghana through industrialization had been realized through the completion of the project.⁸⁵

Nkrumah gave the main speech in the presence of Ghanaians, Americans, Italians, and other individuals gathered, who had participated in the development of the scheme. Nkrumah began by acknowledging the effort of all those who had played distinctive roles in making the development of the project a success. Nkrumah affirmed the goal of the project, which was to modernized Ghana, had been achieved through the willingness of the United States government, the World Bank, and other private institutions. He acknowledged the role of the Kaisers—father and son—who had committed wholeheartedly towards supporting the project. He specifically cited the role Edgar Kaiser played. Without his best friend, Edgar Kaiser, the Ghanaian leader stressed, the project would not have been successful. He also acknowledged the commitment of Calhoun, Eisenhower, and Kennedy. Nkrumah recalled an instance with Eisenhower when the president said simply, "Then why don't you get on with the damned thing?" Nkrumah also welcomed the Papal Nuncio and all other guests of the

⁸³The State Publishing Corporation, "Inauguration of Volta Power: Address by Osagyefo the President and other speeches and messages delivered at the inauguration of the Volta River," Saturday, January 22, 1966, SPC/A10063/5, 000/1/66. Accra-Tema: Publicity Secretariat, 9-12. Accessed March 10, 2020. <http://www.vra.com/kmportal/learning/nontech/Inauguration%20of%20Volta%20River%20Authority.pdf>

⁸⁴The State Publishing Corporation, "Inauguration of Volta Power," 9-12.

⁸⁵The State Publishing Corporation, "Inauguration of Volta Power," 9-12.

various nationals. He expressed a warm heart towards Kennedy and regretted Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy was not present at the occasion. Mrs. Kennedy had wanted to honor the invitation to unveil the plaque in honor of the service both her husband, President Kennedy, and Eisenhower played in the project. Nevertheless, she could not attend the occasion, but wrote to Nkrumah and promised to visit Ghana shortly with her children.⁸⁶

Nkrumah avoided his usual attacks on colonialism when he indicated a small and dynamic country like Ghana sought only to establish absolute control over its political, social, and economic institutions and envisaged transforming all forms of colonial legacies. After Nkrumah had delivered his speech, he opened the powerhouse plaque that signified the official inauguration of the Volta River Power Project. Per the special request of the widow of President Kennedy, Madam Fathia Nkrumah unveiled the second bronze plaque that signified the roles both Eisenhower and Kennedy played towards the development of the Volta scheme. The place was filled with darkness, then Nkrumah switched on the lights to showcase to attendees the amazing light. The event continued with celebrations and fireworks throughout the night. With all these done, the Volta River Project was completed.⁸⁷

The Volta River Project on Ghana's Economy and Industries

On a limited level, the Volta River Project contributed to the Ghanaian economy. In 1967, the first aluminum was exported, and later, aluminum began to contribute about 5 to 6 percent of Ghana's exports. Nonetheless, there were no significant changes in Ghana's export earnings. In total, the annual aluminum exports between the years 1968-1973 amounted to 46 million cedis. Conversely, the cost of imported alumina amounted to 23 million cedis. The total cost spent on imported

⁸⁶The State Publishing Corporation, "Inauguration of Volta Power," 1-2.

⁸⁷The State Publishing Corporation, "Inauguration of Volta Power," 1-4.

cryolite, pitch, coke, and other chemicals that were needed for aluminum production amounted to 9 million cedis per annum. Ghana's estimated maximum profit per annum amounted to 14,196,000 cedis per year, of which Ghana ran at a loss when the amount spent on imported machinery and other items were taken into consideration. The huge amount spent as expenditure on the production of aluminum did not allow Ghana to realize its profit expectation.⁸⁸

While the project had been projected to reduce the unemployment rate, there was limited changes in the unemployment rate. The rate of unemployment in Ghana in the year 1970 stood the same as the rate in 1960; thus, 6 percent of the labor force was unemployed. It must be emphasized that the rate in Ghana was not comparable to the rate in many developed countries. Since the rate stood the same, it is unlikely the development of the Volta River Project played the expected contributing role in the employment situation in Ghana. A total of 2000 people were employed in the VALCO smelter, a sector which was not intended to be for a labor-intensive. Seven thousand (7000) people worked for the Volta River Project and Electricity Corporation of Ghana (E.C.G.). Hence, the workers who were directly employed were small, with most of them working on a casual basis.⁸⁹

Due to the development of the Volta River Project, Ghana joined the aluminum production countries though in an unsatisfactory manner. Ghana exported bauxite and primary aluminum, while it imported alumina and rolled aluminum to be transformed into aluminum products. The continuous transportation of heavy materials did not benefit Ghana. The development of the project did not affect Ghana's trade-in useful resources. About 250,000 and 300,000 tons of alumina were imported each year to

⁸⁸Hart, *The Volta River Project*, 57.

⁸⁹Hart, *The Volta River Project*, 58.

satisfy the VALCO smelter. The Kaiser company produced the alumina from the bauxite it mined in Jamaica.⁹⁰

The Volta River Authority's dam produced the most significant amount of electricity used in Ghana. The Electricity Company of Ghana (E.C.G.) supplied the other half of the Ghanaian population with electricity through the production of electricity from a diesel generating plant. The Volta River Authority sold some power to the Electricity Company of Ghana each year and the company distributed electric power to the Ghanaian public. The Volta River Authority also sold electricity to large companies such as VALCO, Communaute Electrique du Benin, Akosombo Textiles Limited, the Akosombo township, and other mining firms. Although the Volta River Authority produced a considerable amount of electricity each year, electricity had been a minor component in Ghana's energy supply. In 1969, the last year that had extensive data on energy supplies available, a total of 2,700 million kWh electricity was generated from both public and private sources. In the same year, a total of about 35,000 tons of imported coal was consumed. About 615,000 cubic meters of imported petroleum products were utilized as fuel. Since 1969, the electricity generated from the project had shot up by 50 percent; hence oil and hydroelectricity can be said to be comparable in necessity. Nonetheless, VALCO took a large percentage while the Ghanaian population used a small proportion.⁹¹

What might have happened?

The development of the Volta project depended on both personal relations and economic interest together with national ideology. In an instance when American economic interest might have aborted the United States support for the Volta scheme,

⁹⁰Hart, *The Volta River Project*, 59-60.

⁹¹Hart, *The Volta River Project*, 68-69.

personal relations among statesmen ensured the Volta project kept running. Nkrumah might have gained maximum support from the United States in the development of the project and easily industrialize Ghana. However, Lee Harvey Oswald's assassination of President Kennedy slowed down progress. Even when the Congo crisis had made the development of the project questionable, Kennedy continued to discuss the development of the project with Nkrumah. Moreover, despite the huge amount involved in the project, together with criticism from Congress and state department officials, Kennedy supported the new nation with the hope of industrializing Ghana while America was to use the aid to attract other African countries. Unfortunately, the death of Kennedy affected Nkrumah's ambition of industrializing Ghana within a space of time. The new administration under the leadership of Jackson did not invest heavily in the Volta scheme as Kennedy had done during his days. The new administration perceived the project to be too expensive. Jackson had less interest in Africa and shifted back and forth on American support for Ghana. While Edgar Kaiser had consistently supported the project, his efforts alone could not easily influence Congress and state officials.⁹²

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the Volta River Project and how America contributed towards its development. The project began from the initial works of Sir Kitson, whom the British government appointed to study the existence of available minerals in the Gold Coast aside from gold. Of all the parties that were involved, the United States government and the Kaiser Corporation fully materialized their aims. The United States government primarily desired to gain political influence in the newly independent nation. At the same time, America also envisaged benefiting economically

⁹²Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 570-4

from the Volta River Project.⁹³ The United States also envisaged contributing towards modernizing the new nation. Relations among the leaders of the two countries shaped the relationship between Ghana and America. The Kaiser Corporation also had a share from the project and maximized its profits as a private company.⁹⁴

Describing the project as a success when measured against the expectations of Nkrumah, Kaiser, and Kennedy is a subject for debate. The project did not provide Ghana with the healthy development that the Nkrumah government, President Kennedy, and the people of Ghana expected. However, the project contributed economically to the Ghanaian economy. Even if one defines the idea of development by industrialization, the success of the project was open to questions. If we are to limit ourselves merely to monetary gains, the success of the scheme is open to criticism. Moreover, when one defines the development of the project in line with the political autonomy of the new country, the project becomes awkward and too complicated for description.⁹⁵

If Nkrumah were alive today, he would have been extremely disappointed. Today, the provision of electricity in Ghana remains unstable. Over the years, Ghana experienced a continuous power shortage popularly known as *dumsor*. The irrigation and lake transport part of the project seems not to provide the expected profit the partners had anticipated.

⁹³Hart, *The Volta River Project*, 102.

⁹⁴Hart, *The Volta River Project*, 103.

⁹⁵Hart, *The Volta River Project*, 1.

Chapter 2

Into the World We Go, The Peace Corps Program as A Facet of America-Ghana Relations.

"Certainly, I owe this gift to the boy Peace Corps Larry Grobel, who helped me to discover an attribute that would later give me my livelihood from 1982 after I had lost my job at the Ghana News Agency as an editor. May God bless the boy wherever he may be and all those who fostered the Peace Corps concept. Without their vision, I would be selling chains in the streets in Accra."¹

After Ghana had attained its independence in 1957, Nkrumah's most significant domestic challenge became the transformation of the Ghanaian educational system. He believed in restructuring education as a tool for modernizing his newly independent country. Since Ghana spent many years under colonial rule, the country had a five percent literacy rate in 1957 when Ghana attained its independence. The colonial government had given little attention to the Ghanaian educational system.² Upon assuming power, Nkrumah developed a five-year plan which sought to ensure self-sufficiency in Ghana through universal education, a basic requirement for a modernized nation.³ Ghanaian leaders sought to revise the educational system to remove incorrect information spread under colonialism as they sought to achieve modernization.⁴

Nkrumah envisaged making elementary education free to allow all Ghanaians to have access since mass education was seen as the primary tool for modernization.

¹Julius A. Amin, "The Perils of Missionary Diplomacy: The United States Peace Corps Volunteers in the Republic of Ghana, The University of Dayton," *Western Journal of Black Studies* 23, no. 1 (1999): 45-46.

²Ghana, Information Services Department, *Ghana Reborn*, (New York: Information Service Department, 1966), 64.

³Neil Boyle, Robert Blohm, and Charles Helfer, *Peace Corps/Ghana Country Program Evaluation: Action Evaluation*, (Washington D.C., Action, 1976), 22.

⁴Archie S. Long to Ambassador, "Conference of Independent African States: Final Resolutions," April 23 1958, box 1, Ghana, General Records, 1956-1958, RG 84, Foreign Service Posts of State Department, National Archives and Record Administration, College Park, MD [hereafter RG84, NARA].

Built on the British system of education, Ghana's pre-tertiary system of education consisted of primary and secondary school.⁵ Ironically, Nkrumah's program for self-sufficiency and independence required dependence on other postcolonial powers—creating outside relationships, especially with the Americans, whom Nkrumah did not particularly trust. However, the Ghanaian leader was willing to bend his ideals. The United States' establishment of the Peace Corps program coincided with Ghana's need for more teachers following Nkrumah's declaration of free universal primary education in 1961.⁶

Nkrumah frequently expressed his reservations about American foreign policy, especially in Africa, despite his hope that America could assist in Ghana's aim of achieving modernization. Aware of the Central Intelligence Agency (C.I.A.) and how it operated in fighting against some "Third World" leaders, Nkrumah became skeptical because he suspected the Peace Corps volunteers were C.I.A. agents.⁷ Suspicion was mutual. Even in Washington, Nkrumah had been identified as a communist associate. A *New York Times* editorial on July 16, 1961 published Senator Thomas Dodd's statement characterizing Ghana as the "First Soviet Satellite in Africa."⁸ Despite Nkrumah's suspicion about the Peace Corps program, he later accepted it, advising Ghanaians to embrace the program, and requested volunteer teachers by the commencement of the school term in September 1961. Nkrumah's desire to modernize Ghana sustained his relations with America despite his skepticism about the United States.⁹

⁵Amin, "The Perils of Missionary Diplomacy," 40.

⁶Amin, "The Perils of Missionary Diplomacy," 40.

⁷Ofori E. Bekoe, "The United State Peace Corps as a Facet of United States- Ghana Relations," *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 4, no. 10 (January 2012): 231.

⁸Secretary of State, Washington D.C. to Congress, "The Peace Corps," July 17, 1963, box 5, General Records, 1956-1958, RG 84, NARA.

⁹Amin, "The Perils of Missionary Diplomacy," 35.

Along the line, the Peace Corps program and its volunteer teachers faced a rigid teaching environment because of the structure of the Ghanaian "fidelity approach" in implementing the curriculum, which was new to American teachers. Before independence, Ghana stuck to the fidelity approach of curriculum implementation. Modeled on the British Education System, this centralized curriculum gave teachers minimal room for changes. Volunteer teachers were required to strictly comply with how the government structured the syllabus. Volunteers had envisioned upgrading the Ghanaian education system to make the syllabus match the needs and interests of both learners and Ghanaian officials by restructuring the content and pedagogy. Since some headmasters resisted innovations, tension between volunteers and headmasters resulted.¹⁰

Despite challenges the program faced, the development of the project became successful through personal relationships between Nkrumah and John F Kennedy rather than relationships driven solely by ideology or necessarily economics. President Kennedy was committed to supporting Ghana in modernizing its educational system despite Congress' criticisms of Nkrumah's ideology as a communist. The American ideal of helping all people to achieve a better life informed choice in Washington. On the other hand, the Ghanaian culture of hospitality and the willingness to cooperate while working to improve their social, political, and economic system made American-Ghanaian relations smooth.

The United States Peace Corps program contributed immensely to modernizing Ghana's education system despite the suspicion that surrounded America-Ghana foreign policy. This chapter examines the contributions of the United States in

¹⁰Secretary of State, Washington D.C. to Accra Embassy, "Briefing Memorandum: Utilization of Peace Corps Volunteers in Ghana," n.d., box 4, General Records, 1956-1958, RG 84, NARA.

developing the Ghanaian education system. The chapter will also discuss the challenges the United States and its volunteers faced in their support towards transforming the Ghanaian education system as a tool towards modernizing the new nation. It provides an understanding of the contributions of the Peace Corps program and Cornell University's educational roles as a facet of United States-Ghana relations in building up the newly independent nation through the development of Ghana's education.

Colonial System of Education in Ghana

Unlike other regions in Africa where missionaries established the first European form of schools, sizable European trading companies established the first Western form of schools that existed in Ghana. Before 1951, Ghana had achieved a minimum level of internal self-government, but Britain controlled the educational system of the country. Schools were not evenly distributed within the nation since the educational system was at the minimum level, with about 3,000 schools catering for about 312,000 pupils.¹¹ Although educational activities expanded from the beginning of the twentieth century, the general policies that guided educational development remained static.¹² From 1940, the educational sector experienced rapid growth. The demand for primary education in the southern region of Ghana led to the establishment of many primary schools in the South by the local communities, which lacked government funding as well as equipment. Local communities established these primary schools, most of which lacked equipment. Besides, these schools had untrained teachers as staff.¹³ By 1945, the number of unaided schools had increased to 2,000 with an enrollment of about 105,000 pupils outnumbering the government's assisted schools and pupils in the government's assisted schools. The Educational Department's reports

¹¹Grace Stein B. George, *Education in Ghana*. (Washington: U.S. Department. of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, 1976), 23.

¹²George, *Education in Ghana*, 23.

¹³George, *Education in Ghana*, 26.

in 1951 and 1952 indicated the Colony and Ashanti areas had high numbers in terms of the number of schools and pupils enrolled in the primary, middle, secondary, teacher training, and technical schools compared to the Northern Territories.¹⁴

The colonial education curriculum in Ghana sought to satisfy the European administrators who wanted to train personnel for their economic and administrative gains. The colonial educational system was not structured to benefit Ghanaians. The Colonial authority prioritized its interest against Ghanaian interests as it implemented an educational system meant to indoctrinate Ghanaians against modernizing Ghana. During the colonial days, formal education segregated boys and girls and minimized the idea of universal education. Girls were family keepers and mainly focused on family and home care related subjects, while boys were prepared to take up white collar jobs. Also, the "fidelity form of curriculum," instituted during the colonial days hindered educational innovations and modernization. Teachers were limited to the colonial government curriculum without modification. Teaching and learning in Ghana did not cater for the needs, interests, and aspirations of Ghana and Ghanaians. The colonial authorities prohibited the teaching of content that supported Ghanaian interests, nationalism, and modernization.¹⁵

Educational System in the Days of Nkrumah

From 1951, the achievement of internal self-governance in Ghana led to the emergence of a new African government in the British colony. The new government increased the number of Ghanaians in the legislative and executive council. The new government, under the leadership of Nkrumah, considered education as its greatest domestic challenge.¹⁶ Nkrumah moved to upend the colonial system of education; he

¹⁴George, *Education in Ghana*, 32-33.

¹⁵C. K. Graham, *The History of Education in Ghana from the Earliest Times to the Declaration of Independence* (London: F. Cass, 1971), 182.

¹⁶Amin, "The Perils of Missionary Diplomacy," 40.

insisted that every individual must be entitled to an education that would jointly bring holistic changes to the nation. Nkrumah envisioned Africanizing and removing colonial practices and expanding the educational system to all regions to allow all Ghanaians of school-going age to be enrolled.¹⁷

President Nkrumah admired the American educational system; he earned both his bachelors and master's degrees in that system. As a nationalist leader and an individual interested in continental leadership and nationalist activities, he preferred the American to the British system as an academic model. He believed the United States' educational system developed people holistically to promote national interest. Nkrumah felt the problem of subsistence could be made more manageable, and both the rich and poor could have access to education. Moreover, the United States had rebelled against Britain in the 1770s and established a quality educational system that he envisaged Ghana could model. Moreover, great Africans, such as Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria, who had arisen as great nationalists, had also gone through the American educational system.¹⁸ Despite his reservations, the American system maintained a strong allure for the Ghanaian leader.

Nkrumah's educational aim for Ghana began to manifest during his days at the University of Pennsylvania in the 1930s. He believed every educational system should be tailored to match the life of the people. This vision became his long-term educational policy to shape the newly independent country between 1957-1966 as he sought to modernize the new country.¹⁹ For Nkrumah, the Ghanaian education system should mold Ghanaians and create the highest and most beneficial relationship with Ghanaian

¹⁷Archie S. Long to Ambassador, "Conference of Independent African States: Final Resolutions," April 23, 1958, box 1, Ghana, General Records, 1956-1958, RG 84, NARA.

¹⁸Kiven P. Tunteng, "Kwame Nkrumah and the African Revolution," *Civilisations, Institut de Sociologie de l'Université de Bruxelles*, 23/24, no. 3/4 (1973/1974) : 234

¹⁹University of Pennsylvania, "Challenges to Education War and Post-War," *Thirtieth 184 Annual Schoolmen's Week Proceedings*. (University of Pennsylvania: Philadelphia, 1943), 89.

culture. He wanted to modernize the Ghanaian education system and provide universal education to all Ghanaians by making education accessible and free for all school-going children. The objective of making education accessible to all prompted Nkrumah to implement the 1961 Act (Act 87) to ensure free universal primary education in Ghana. He asserted that circumstances in Ghana had made the mere acquisition of knowledge not valuable in contributing to Ghana's development. Instead, the application of the knowledge to obtain practical and positive outputs for the benefit of the nation made knowledge more valuable both for the individual and for the nation. Nkrumah exalted the role of science as he prioritized the acquisition and application of knowledge for the benefit of all. Nkrumah envisaged developing the educational system that would nurture Ghanaians to impact society and their lives. Nkrumah believed the development of university education was important not only in producing engineers, architects, town planners, and builders, but it also played a pivotal role in contributing to the development of Ghana. Nkrumah's ideal was one of empowering and developing Ghanaians, and all Africans, with the needed skills and necessary information to manage their affairs. Nkrumah believed education was the foundation for the creation of Pan-Africanism.²⁰

During the 1954 Legislative Assembly election campaign, Nkrumah promised Ghanaians that he would expand educational opportunities and school facilities in Ghana. Nkrumah envisioned change and development in Ghana. He believed that education could be the primary means to achieve that goal.²¹ The education sector had a role to play in making Ghana accomplish self-sufficiency despite the significant challenges facing the educational system in the new country.²² Nkrumah desired an

²⁰Mjiba Adeze' Frehiwot "Education and Pan-Africanism: A Case Study of Ghana, 1957-1966" (PhD diss., Howard University, 2011), 41-44.

²¹George, *Education in Ghana*, 36.

²²Boyle, Blohm, and Helfer, *Peace Corps/Ghana Country Program Evaluation: Action Evaluation*, 22.

educational system that would produce scientifically literate people in Ghana, increase productivity rate, and provide knowledge to enhance improvement in the Ghanaian economy.²³ In August 1951, the new government under Nkrumah implemented the Accelerated Development Plan. The Accelerated Development Plan sought to ensure rapid expansion of the public education system to provide education for all school-going children in Ghana.²⁴ Unlike the colonial system of education, the Accelerated Development Plan made it possible for the government to sponsor all schools that won its approval.²⁵ On July 4, 1961, Nkrumah declared to Parliament that universal education would be the sole means to ensure the development of the latent abilities and intelligence of Ghanaians.²⁶

The major challenge that hindered Nkrumah's vision proved to be the lack of qualified teachers to execute the teaching project. The number of schools and pupils that existed in the Ghanaian education system outnumbered the number of trained teachers in Ghana. The Ministry of Education turned to the Peace Corps program, together with the recruitment from overseas, to provide enough graduates to promote the expansion of education. There remained grave doubts, however, about recruiting foreigners to teach Ghanaian children.²⁷

Overview of the Peace Corps Project

The Peace Corps Project began during John Fitzgerald Kennedy's campaign as an American presidential candidate on October 14, 1960. He addressed a group of 10,000 students and asked how many Americans were willing to spend some years in

²³Kwame Akyeampong, "Educational Expansion and Access in Ghana: A Review of 50 Years of Challenge and Progress," *Research Monograph* 33 (April 2010), 14.

²⁴George, *Education in Ghana*, 36.

²⁵George, *Education in Ghana*, 38-39.

²⁶Peace Corps (U.S.), *The Peace Corps*. (Washington, D.C.: Peace Corps, 1962), 2.

²⁷George, *Education in Ghana*, 51.

developing countries to work for America as doctors, engineers, or technicians.²⁸ This speech inspired the students who took a step in organizing the "American Committed to World Responsibility" drive and petitioned for the establishment of a program in which students could assist people in developing countries.²⁹

On January 21, 1961, Kennedy appointed Robert Sargent Shriver Jr, former president of the Chicago Board of Education and his brother-in-law, as the head of the task force. Shriver's initial task centered on studying the possibility of the Peace Corps project.³⁰ Upon studying the feasibility of a voluntary overseas project and making positive recommendations, Kennedy issued an Executive Order #10924 on March 1, 1961, to establish the Peace Corps.³¹ The president appointed Shriver as the first director three days after the executive order.³² Distinctively, the Peace Corps program sought to provide a maximum trained workforce to contribute towards the developmental needs of developing countries. The other programs the United States had organized before the Peace Corps program provided military aid, capital assistance, and technical assistance to other nations.³³ The United States Congress defined three essential goals of the Peace Corps program. First, the program would help the people of interested countries and areas in meeting their needs for a trained workforce. Second, the Peace Corps would provide a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served. Third, the Corps would promote a better understanding of other peoples

²⁸Gerard T. Rice, *Twenty Years of Peace Corps* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1981), 1.

²⁹Gift in honor of the 50th Anniversary of the Peace Corps, *At Home in the World: The Peace Corps Story*. (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1996), 137.

³⁰Peace Corps (U.S.). *Peace Corps*, 3.

³¹United States Congress. House, Select Committee on Hunger, *The Peace Corps: 25 Years of Alleviating Hunger* (Washington: U.S. G.P.O., 1986), 1.

³²Gift in honor of the 50th Anniversary of the Peace Corps, *At Home in the World*, 137.

³³Peace Corps (U.S.), *Peace Corps*, 4.

on the part of Americans.³⁴ Volunteers were to assist in raising the standards of living and improving the educational systems of developing countries.³⁵

Over the years, there has been a debate as to whether Kennedy had a moral justification for the institutionalization of the Peace Corps or whether the program was designed as a tool of American Cold War policy. Some scholars have described the program as an ideological tool meant to preach about the American idea of democracy, liberty, and equality to developing countries at the height of the Cold War. Kennedy said during his inaugural speech that America intended to support people in misery, those in the "Third World." Some scholars think the Peace Corps was an instrument for supporting and spreading American interests and ideology during the Cold War, hence America's intervention in the "Third World." Indeed, the program was to counter the spread of Soviets communism by showing American friendship towards developing countries. At the same time, the program assisted "Third World" countries in developing their education and economic systems.³⁶ Other people believe the Peace Corps program sought to promote the Central Intelligence Agency's vision of providing tactical and strategic importance for America.³⁷ These issues bothered Nkrumah. Nonetheless, Nkrumah's continuous relations with Kennedy helped in developing trust to ensure acceptance of the Peace Corps program. Nkrumah believed Kennedy genuinely wanted to assist in transforming Africa. The Peace Corps program contributed immensely to transforming the Ghanaian education system despite the skepticism Ghanaian officials expressed.

³⁴Rice, *Twenty Years of Peace Corps*, 3.

³⁵Peace Corps (U.S.), *Peace Corps*, 4.

³⁶John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, "The Cold War and the Peace Corps." J.F.K. in History Accessed January 8, 2020, <https://www.jfklibrary.org/learn/about-jfk/jfk-in-history/peace-corps>

³⁷Bekoe, "The United States Peace Corps as a Facet of United States-Ghana Relations," 230.

The Peace Corps in Ghana

Ghana became the first country to receive the first group of Peace Corps volunteers. Before his appointment to run the agency, Shriver had toured Ghana and other countries in Africa.³⁸ Ghana's significance as the first Sub-Saharan African country to gain its independence on March 6, 1957, made Shriver choose Ghana as the first site for the Peace Corps program. Moreover, Nkrumah had been a popular figure in the anti-colonial movement in Africa. Besides, Nkrumah, who had studied in the United States and served as a teacher, prioritized the educational goals of the new country. Nkrumah regarded the Peace Corps as a means to build the Ghanaian educational system, which needed more teachers.³⁹ Nkrumah believed universal education served as the means to develop the ability and intelligence of Ghanaians as he moved to transform Ghana into a developed, modern country. Kennedy and Nkrumah's relations played a role in Shriver's choice. Kennedy envisaged supporting the vision of his close friend, Nkrumah. Moreover, Nkrumah and Kennedy built trust, and that made the corps program welcome in Ghana. Even if other "Third World" leaders would reject the peace corps volunteers, Nkrumah, Kennedy's friend, would be the testing tool and accept the peace corps volunteers into Ghana. These motivational factors inspired Shriver in his choice of Ghana as the first beneficiary of the Peace Corps initiative.⁴⁰

On August 30, 1961, the first Peace Corps volunteers from America stepped down from a plane in Accra. Ghanaians welcomed the Peace Corps volunteers. Kennedy remained optimistic and believed Nkrumah would welcome the volunteers.

³⁸Peace Corps (U.S.), *Peace Corps Annual Operations Report*. (Washington, D.C.: Peace Corps, 1962), 7.

³⁹Mary E. Montgomery, "The Eyes of the World Were Watching: Ghana, Great Britain, and The United States, 1957-1966," (Ph.D. Diss, University of Maryland, 2004), 184.

⁴⁰Peace Corps (U.S.), *Peace Corps Annual Operations Report*, 2.

The first fifty volunteers came attired in summer suits and light cotton dresses when they first touch the land of Ghana.⁴¹ The Peace Corps volunteers began to sing the Ghanaian new national anthem "*Yen Ara Asaasa Ni*" (This Is Our Homeland) in Twi. The group studied Twi, the Akan dominant local language, before coming to Ghana. The ability of the volunteers to sing in the local dialect of the Ghanaians signified to the world and the Ghanaian population the friendship and understanding at the core of the Peace Corps' mission to serve Ghana.⁴² Kenneth Baer presented a speech in Twi after the volunteers finished singing. He indicated the Peace Corps volunteers had come to both learn and teach. Tom Livingston from Woodale, Illinois, became the first volunteer to take up a position as an English teacher at *Dodowa* Secondary School in Ghana on September 12, 1961. Afterward, other volunteers began to work as teachers.⁴³

Contributions of the Peace Corps Program Towards Ghana's Education

Before the arrival of the Peace Corps volunteers, Ghanaians believed the volunteers would contribute to the development of Ghana's education as a step towards modernization.⁴⁴ Given Nkrumah's apparent skepticism of the corps, the very fact that he did not deport the volunteers, suggests its success in Ghana in transforming the newly independent nation. Kennedy's connection with Nkrumah allowed Ghana to receive more volunteers over time.⁴⁵ Moreover, the fact that the United States later expanded the Peace Corps program in Africa and invested more money suggests that the results of the program satisfied the United States.⁴⁶

⁴¹Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman, *All You Need Is Love: The Peace Corps and the Spirit of the 1960s* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998), 157.

⁴²Hoffman, *All You Need Is Love: The Peace Corps and the Spirit of the 1960s*, 158.

⁴³Rice, *Twenty Years of Peace Corps*, 15.

⁴⁴Secretary of State, Washington D.C. to Accra Embassy, "Briefing Memorandum: Utilization of Peace Corps Volunteers in Ghana," n.d., box 4, General Records, 1956-1958, RG 84, NARA.

⁴⁵Hoffman, *All You Need Is Love: The Peace Corps and the Spirit of the 1960s*, 159.

⁴⁶Secretary of State, Washington D.C. to Accra Embassy, "The Peace Corps," December 15, 1962, box 5, General Records, 1956-1958, RG 84, NARA.

Education has always been the Peace Corps' major contribution to modernizing Ghana. Although Nkrumah understood universal education as the mark of a modernized nation, he recognized such a vision could materialize only through support from a superpower like the United States. Nkrumah built a strong relationship with Kennedy as a measure to attain Ghana's educational needs. The Peace Corps contributed to Nkrumah's ambition of ensuring free education for all desiring Ghanaians up to the secondary level. The program saved the Ghanaian Ministry of Education from huge expenditures. The Ghanaian government would have spent huge sums on teachers' salaries, development costs, and indirect expenses. An examination of the number of volunteer teachers by 1966 brings to light the amount the country saved. Ghana was relieved of the amount spent on training teachers, paying teachers' salaries, and developing institutions. Moreover, the Peace Corps program mitigated against the indirect costs that would have drained a considerable percentage of Ghana's budget. Training one teacher for five years costs about \$15,000. With the first batch of volunteer teachers sent in 1961, the Ministry of Education was relieved of the stress of training and employing more Ghanaian teachers. The ministry's need for more teachers would have burdened the country's limited resources. Moreover, there were a limited number of trained teachers in Ghana to enhance the expansion of the Ghanaian education system. Kennedy planned to help Nkrumah materialized. American support through the provision of teachers released Ghana from financial burden. At the same time, the available resources were channeled towards various other sectors in the transformation of the country.⁴⁷

The expansion of the educational system in Ghana became successful through the Peace Corps. Kennedy contributed towards the expansion of the Ghanaian

⁴⁷Boyle, Blohm, and Helfer, *Peace Corps/Ghana Country Program Evaluation*, 26.

educational system as Nkrumah, his friend had envisioned. Without the corps, only the major cities would have enjoyed universal education. The rural regions would have continued to suffer. While Ghanaian teachers had avoided posting to the "bush" schools since the rural areas lacked amenities, the volunteer teachers welcomed working in the rural centers and newly established schools. Volunteer teachers preferred teaching in rural and newly established schools compared to the urban centers. The volunteers felt the rural schools and newly established schools needed their service. Through support from American volunteers, each region of Ghana tasted an expansion of the free education system. Teachers handled classes in both the rural and urban centers. Also, the introduction of the Peace Corps program increased the number of graduates from the teacher training colleges. Volunteer teachers occupied positions in teacher training colleges, which allowed for an increase in the teacher training college enrollment. With enrollment increased, the graduation rate also increased over the years. These graduates contributed towards the national interests and goal of modernization.⁴⁸

Peace Corps volunteers served as math and science teachers in the various institutions in Ghana: universities, teacher education programs, and secondary schools. In the secondary schools, the success of Ghanaian science teaching depended on the Peace Corps volunteer teachers. Over the years, the Ghanaian Ministry of Education assigned teachers to teach in the various secondary schools and teacher training colleges. Some also taught in Ghana's three major universities in the biological and physical sciences.⁴⁹ The Peace Corps program became the means to produce white-collar workers. Ghanaians who achieved white-collar status between 1961-66 invariably had, at one point in time, encountered a Peace Corps teacher.⁵⁰ Former

⁴⁸Boyle, Blohm, and Helfer, *Peace Corps/Ghana Country Program Evaluation*, 26-28.

⁴⁹Boyle, Blohm, and Helfer, *Peace Corps/Ghana Country Program Evaluation*, 12.

⁵⁰Hoffman, *All You Need Is Love: The Peace Corps and the Spirit of the 1960s*, 179-180.

students of the Peace Corps program testified to the impact they received from the volunteer teachers. For example, Ansah Barnor, a former student of the Peace Corps program, appreciated how the program shaped his professional life. Barnor believed the program moved him from a life on the streets to the middle class. He believed the program placed him in a white-collar job. In the absence of the Peace Corps, the unemployment rate in Ghana would have increased vehemently. Ghanaian American relations provided Ghanaians with the prerequisites needed to function in various workplaces. Kennedy, Nkrumah's close friend, contributed to assist the expansion of the Ghanaian education through instituting the Peace Corps program.⁵¹

The Peace Corps program also played a role in increasing enrollment in schools and raised the number of new schools between 1960 and 1965. Primary school enrollment rose from 444,117 to 1,137,495. Moreover, secondary schools had increased from 59 to 105 between 1960 to 1965, with enrollment jumping from 16,577 to 42,111.⁵² In 1957, Ghana's enrollment stood at 571,580 pupils in both primary and middle schools. By 1963-64, the number increased to over 1.3 million. There were 38 secondary schools with 9,860 pupils in 1957, and this figure shot to 89 schools with an enrollment of 32,000 in 1963-64. Teacher-training institutions also increased more than four times from 1957 to 1963-64.⁵³ Peace Corps volunteers contributed immensely towards this expansion. Volunteers taught at various educational levels. The coordination between the two countries played a significant role in making the program successful, hence the increment in enrollment. Moreover, the relations between President Kennedy and Nkrumah shaped the program amidst some challenges.

⁵¹Amin, "The Perils of Missionary Diplomacy," 45.

⁵²John Kennedy, *Ghana: Overseas Evaluation* (National Archives: Washington D.C., 1962), 5.

⁵³Ghana, Information Services Department, *Ghana Reborn*, 64.

Eighty-five percent of the volunteers taught in the Ghanaian educational cycle and prepared students for the General Certificate of Examination Level. Most of the teachers taught chemistry, physics, zoology, and general science to prepare students for their final exams.⁵⁴ For instance, Lee Carlson, as a volunteer, taught engineering at the Accra technical institute. Also, Donald Graff, a network volunteer, taught physics and chemistry to prepare students for their final examination.⁵⁵ American relations with Ghana contributed to the development of science education in the new country. Every part of Ghana felt the volunteers' impact, which brought a significant transformation. Regions that had been behind in terms of educational development felt the presence of the volunteers.

Most of the volunteers also engaged in secondary activities such as organizing drama and clubs, building athletic teams, organizing sporting activities, serving as role models to Ghanaians, and providing an enthusiastic spirit for Ghanaians.⁵⁶ Volunteer teachers engaged in institutional development in some rural and newly established schools. They assisted headmasters to construct science labs and libraries and provided materials.⁵⁷ These volunteers contributed to increasing Ghanaian citizens' level of numeracy and creativity. Peace Corps volunteers served in other capacities besides education, with twenty-five (25) volunteer geologists sent to help in the development of Ghana's mineral reserves.⁵⁸

The Peace Corps program also contributed towards restructuring the Ghanaian system of education by introducing new math and learning styles that emphasized reasoning and problem solving over rote learning. Some of the volunteers created an

⁵⁴Amin, "The Perils of Missionary Diplomacy," 42.

⁵⁵Amin, "The Perils of Missionary Diplomacy," 43.

⁵⁶Boyle, Blohm, and Helfer, *Peace Corps/Ghana Country Program Evaluation*, 28.

⁵⁷Boyle, Blohm, and Helfer, *Peace Corps/Ghana Country Program Evaluation*, 29.

⁵⁸William Mahoney, "Peace Corps" *Saturday Evening Post* (February 12, 1966): 4.

enhanced mathematics syllabus to improve the teaching of mathematics in Ghanaian schools.⁵⁹ With the growth of the Peace Corps project, community development became the other agenda aside from teaching. Volunteers contributed to the building of community libraries, sports centers, water projects, and others.⁶⁰

The Ghanaian National Service Scheme in Ghana emerged from the Peace Corps project. Some years after the introduction of the Peace Corps, Ghana began a mandatory version of youth service meant to address the educational, technological, and agricultural needs of the nation modeled on the Peace Corps program. The fact that Ghanaians sought to replicate the Peace Corps in their national volunteer organization presents a strong affirmation of the American endeavor.⁶¹ However, the Peace Corps' story had its challenges that the program encountered overtime.

Peace Corps Challenges

Even before the commencement of the Peace Corps Program, challenges had begun unfolding in the United States. The civil rights movement hit its peak in the 1960s and America's racism and foreign policy overshadowed volunteer training from the start.

In Africa, the Peace Corps program's reputation became controversial due to the scandalous behavior of Margery Michelmores Heffron in Nigeria.⁶² Heffron, having graduated *magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa* from Smith College, joined the first batch of the Peace Corps program. Although she did not resemble an individual who could set off an international incident, she created a scene on October 14, 1961, that threatened the success of the Peace Corps program in Africa. During her training at the

⁵⁹Heidi G Frontani and Lauren C Taylor, "Development through Civic Service: The Peace Corps and National Service Program in Ghana," *Progress in Development Studies* 9, no. 2 (2009): 91.

⁶⁰Frontani and Taylor, "The Peace Corps and National Service Program in Ghana," 94.

⁶¹Frontani and Taylor, "The Peace Corps and National Service Program in Ghana," 94.

⁶²Secretary of State, Washington D.C. to Accra Embassy, "The Peace Corps," 15 December 1962, box 5, General Records, 1956-1958, RG 84, NARA.

University of Ibadan, Nigeria, Michelmores sent a postcard to her boyfriend that derided Nigeria's "Squalor and primitive living conditions." Before the postcard was mailed, a Nigerian student who was offended by the description of the country got hold of the letter and distributed copies to all over the campus. This led to mass riots, and Nigerians, who perceived their country to be better than "primitive" as described in the content of the letter, gathered to torment Michelmores. The press picked up the issue and published it on the front page of the newspapers. The tension that arose forced Michelmores to flee Nigeria to Washington, D.C.⁶³ The uproar over Michelmores reached Ghana in short order. Peace Corp volunteers worried it would upend the carefully laid plans of both Americans and Ghanaians. Volunteers believed the Peace Corps program would close as Nigerians would sack volunteers. Ghanaians would follow suit by throwing out the Peace Corps officials.⁶⁴ Instead of apologizing to Nigeria, United States officials justified the racist comments of Michelmores. Moreover, one would have expected Kennedy to apologize to Africans for the racist comments. Rather, President Kennedy sent a personal letter expressing his deepest sympathy to the "poor girl;" the president, in turn, faced American anti-racists demonstrations for defending perpetrators of racism.⁶⁵

While the volunteers envisaged a transformation of the Ghanaian education system through their service, they were not necessarily up to the challenge. Most of the Peace Corps volunteers were not qualified to teach. In its official request of American teachers, the Ghanaian Ministry of Education asked that only those personnel with a

⁶³Christina Barber-Just, "I Thought I Might Have Wrecked the Peace Corps," Smith College Alumnae Relations, accessed February 5, 2020, <https://alumnae.smith.edu/spotlight/%E2%80%98i-thought-i-might-have-wrecked-the-peace-corps%E2%80%99/>.

⁶⁴Peace Corps Worldwide, "Our Most Famous & Infamous RPCV: Marjorie Michalmores (Nigeria)" *Occasional Essays about the History of the Peace Corps*, Accessed March 23, 2020, <https://peacecorpsworldwide.org/our-most-famous-infamous-rpcv-marjorie-michalmores-nigeria/>.

⁶⁵Secretary of State, Washington D.C. to Accra Embassy, "The Peace Corps," 15 December 1962, box 5, General Records, 1956-1958, RG 84, NARA.

master's degree from an American institution could qualify as teachers for Ghanaian secondary schools. The Ministry of Education considered the American master's degree to be equivalent to the British bachelor's degree. However, the massive demand for teachers to match the increased enrollment in education facilities eliminated the qualification demand.⁶⁶ Out of the numerous volunteers, most were not educators nor specialists who had majored in the area of specialization they were assigned to teach. Only sixteen volunteers out of the entire group dispatched to Ghana in 1961 had teaching experience.⁶⁷ The experienced teachers were sent to first-class secondary schools since the government of Ghana wanted to maintain a higher standard for the best students in the bid to modernize the new country.⁶⁸ For most of the volunteer teachers, their first year of teaching in the various schools was trial-and-error experiences. Nonetheless, since the standard of the Ghanaian secondary school system was below that of the United States, the volunteers were better qualified than the local teachers despite not being education majors.⁶⁹ Still, volunteer teachers who taught courses in which they had little training during college became vulnerable. Many also performed numerous teaching and co-curricular activities that made it difficult for them to adequately prepare for class. For instance, Peace Corps volunteer Howard Ballwanz, taught English, history, geography, and religion at Swedru Secondary School while doubling as the dormitory supervisor.⁷⁰

The Ghanaian political environment also created a fierce challenge for Peace Corps volunteers. The Peace Corps suffered from editorial comments from Ghanaian

⁶⁶Secretary of State, Washington D.C. to Accra Embassy, "Briefing Memorandum: Utilization of Peace Corps Volunteers in Ghana," n.d., box 4, General Records, 1956-1958, RG 84, NARA.

⁶⁷Amin. "The Perils of Missionary Diplomacy," 41.

⁶⁸Boyle, Blohm, and Helfer, *Peace Corps/Ghana Country Program Evaluation*, 28.

⁶⁹Hoffman, *All You Need Is Love: The Peace Corps and the Spirit of the 1960s*, 158.

⁷⁰Amin, "The Perils of Missionary Diplomacy," 43.

newspapers, which often described the program as a new form of imperialism.⁷¹ Nkrumah also began to chastise the volunteers. He had initially called for the service of the Peace Corps volunteers with the hope of restructuring the Ghanaian education system. Nevertheless, Nkrumah posed perhaps the greatest challenge to the program from 1963. His skepticism about the Peace Corps program never fully subsided. The demise of Kennedy, Nkrumah's close friend, might have altered Nkrumah's perception of the Peace Corps program. After an attempted coup to overthrow Nkrumah failed on January 22, 1964, he began to implement steps to counter the volunteers' influence. He believed the C.I.A. and the Peace Corps volunteers had joined to mastermind the attempted *coup d' état*. Nkrumah banned Peace Corps volunteers from the teaching of English and history because he believed the volunteers would use such courses to indoctrinate students against his government.⁷² According to George Ayi-Bonte, the Associate Director of the Peace Corps program in Ghana, American volunteers had used George Orwell's *Animal Farm* in their English classes to shed light on the Ghanaian system of government. Nkrumah became furious, for he believed students might later rebel against his government. This Orwellian restriction never extended to Canadian and Soviets volunteers.⁷³

In 1963, Nkrumah went a step further to invite some young volunteers from Russia. Furthermore, Nkrumah allowed other Western volunteers into Ghana, and that brought competition between American volunteers and European volunteers. Nkrumah might have lost trust in solely depending on America's support to transform Ghana. One American volunteer reported Nkrumah wanted to neutralize the Peace Corps teachers. On the other hand, he wanted to limit the influence of the American

⁷¹Secretary of State, Washington D.C. to Accra Embassy, "Briefing Memorandum: Utilization of Peace Corps Volunteers in Ghana," n.d., box 4, General Records, 1956-1958, RG 84, NARA.

⁷²Bekoe, "The United State Peace Corps as a Facet of the United States- Ghana Relations," 231.

⁷³Hoffman, *All You Need Is Love: The Peace Corps and the Spirit of the 1960s*, 160.

teachers as well despite believing the United States had much to contribute towards Ghana's modernization. Nkrumah's invitation to the Russians created tension and competition between the two blocs. Both Americans and Russians were striving for influence in Ghana.⁷⁴ On the part of Nkrumah, he saw nothing wrong with the invitation of Russian teachers since he desired to use every possible means to modernize the newly independent country through support from the superpowers.

Cornell-Ghana Project: Facet of Ghana-U.S. Relations in Education

Beyond state-to-state ties such as those between the Ghanaian government and the U.S. Peace Corps, other private organizations from the United States also contributed towards the development of the Ghanaian education system. The creation of home economics and agriculture studies as part of the Ghanaian school curriculum can be attributed to Ghana's relations in the early 1960s with USAID and with the U.S. land grant college system. These interactions between Ghana and the United States ushered in Cornell University's contributions to restructuring the education system as a mark of launching Ghana towards modernization.⁷⁵

From 1961, Cornell university assisted in building the Ghanaian education system through the development of the Cornell-Ghana Project at Winneba Teacher Training College. In 1961, Ghana's Ministry of Education officially requested assistance from Cornell's Home Economics faculty in developing a post-secondary level curriculum for teachers. The project brought many Cornell faculty to Ghana to conduct an assessment for planning and staffing between 1962-1967. The Winneba Teacher Training College became the site for the project.⁷⁶

⁷⁴Hoffman, *All You Need Is Love: The Peace Corps and the Spirit of the 1960s*, 162.

⁷⁵Richard Glotzer and Lila T. Engberg. "Cornell, Guelph, and the Ghana Project: Education, Families, and Social Change," *Education Research and Perspectives* 27, no. 1, (2000): 112.

⁷⁶Glotzer and Engberg. "Cornell, Guelph, and the Ghana Project: Education, Families, and Social Change," 112.

The Cornell-Winneba Project envisioned developing a 4-year home economics curriculum at the college level at Winneba Training College. The project also aimed to establish a Home Economics Department at the University of Ghana, Legon. The curriculum had the Ghanaian family unit as its central focus—the project trained teachers as leaders who could guide family members in raising their standard of living.⁷⁷ Understanding the family system in Ghana would serve as a medium for women to adjust to Ghanaian society, which had experienced dramatic changes and was undergoing rapid agricultural and industrial expansion. The project, the combined work of the Winneba Training College, the New York State College of Home Economics, the University of Ghana, and the Ghanaian Ministry of Education materialized due to the interaction between the United States and Ghana. Financing the Cornell program became the major problem the project had to face at the initial stage. Although the United States made contributions to support the program, the amount provided was below the figure needed to facilitate the operation of the project. Funds from Cornell University, together with contributions from the Ghanaian government, made the program successful.⁷⁸

In 1962, a plan for the project was drafted in Ghana and refined at Cornell. Cornell faculty visited Ghana to help set the project in motion. Professor Kathleen Rhodes and Harold Feldman made a short visit to Ghana. Rhodes had the quality to contribute towards expanding the Ghanaian education system. Born in Britain and having earned her doctoral degree at Cornell, she bore a clear understanding of both British and American education systems. Feldman from Cornell's Department of Child Family Studies led the development of contemporary studies of family practices. Based

⁷⁷New York State College of Home Economics, *Annual Report*, (Ithaca, N.Y.: State College, 1969), 10.

⁷⁸New York State College of Home Economics, *Annual Report*, 10.

on an earlier visit to Ghana in 1963, Feldman became convinced the country needed research centers at various places. He set out to construct the centers.⁷⁹ The Peace Corps program made a significant impact. Most of the students developed an appreciation for the practicality of the skills they were learning in the classroom. Many of the students who enrolled in the home economics course had previous experience as teachers in the lower forms. Therefore, they were able to spread what they learned. In 1963, Feldman recommended that subjects in social sciences theory, marriage, and family be added to the Ghanaian curriculum. With these needed skills, students could contribute to the development of the new nation.⁸⁰

Through the United States financial support, together with constant contact with various organizations in the United States, Ghanaians began to realize that the concepts of post-secondary education could be broadened to include more public service, extension education, and applied research.⁸¹ At the center of the new teacher training curriculum for home science at Winneba laid a deeper understanding of the Ghanaian family system. The introduction of a home science course foresaw training teachers who, through research and demonstration, would bring to their nation new practices in home management and children's development. Cornell University embraced the task of training teachers and preparing the research center for such a goal.⁸² Cornell University supported the transformation of the Ghanaian education system through the inclusion of home economics and agriculture studies as courses that prepared the Ghanaians mindset about the family system and planning together with agricultural

⁷⁹Glotzer and Engberg, "Cornell, Guelph, and the Ghana Project: Education, Families, and Social Change," 114.

⁸⁰Glotzer and Engberg, "Cornell, Guelph, and the Ghana Project: Education, Families, and Social Change," 112.

⁸¹Glotzer and Engberg, "Cornell, Guelph, and the Ghana Project: Education, Families, and Social Change," 112.

⁸²Glotzer and Engberg, "Cornell, Guelph, and the Ghana Project: Education, Families, and Social Change," 114.

practices. The development of home management and rural life, which are tools for a modernized nation, materialized through the support of the United States university in launching Ghana towards modernization.

The Status-Quo of Ghana's Education at the End of Nkrumah's Reign

By 1966 when the coup d' état overthrew Nkrumah, major transformations had taken place in the Ghanaian Public educational system through the United States' support. Many schools were built while the government had formerly absorbed most private schools. Compared to 1951, when the Educational Report recorded lesser than 1,700 schools with about 226,000 pupils, the number increased to about 11,000 schools and 1.5 million pupils by 1966.⁸³ The enrollment and number of schools figures in 1951 when Nkrumah took over increased substantially, with each educational level experiencing expansion. Between 1965-1966, university enrollment increased 20 times, while secondary school enrollment saw growth of 14 times the figures recorded in 1951. Primary and middle schools recorded seven- and four-times enrollment increments, respectively.⁸⁴

Moreover, education had become tuition-free in all public education system, and the government provided free textbooks for all children schooled in the primary, middle, and secondary schools.⁸⁵ Untrained teachers consisted of 65 percent of the total teachers at the elementary level by 1965, while expatriate and Peace Corps volunteers heavily dominated secondary schools in Ghana. University education as well expanded though partly due to the failure of the secondary schools to transform qualified graduates in science into the needed workforce for the country.⁸⁶

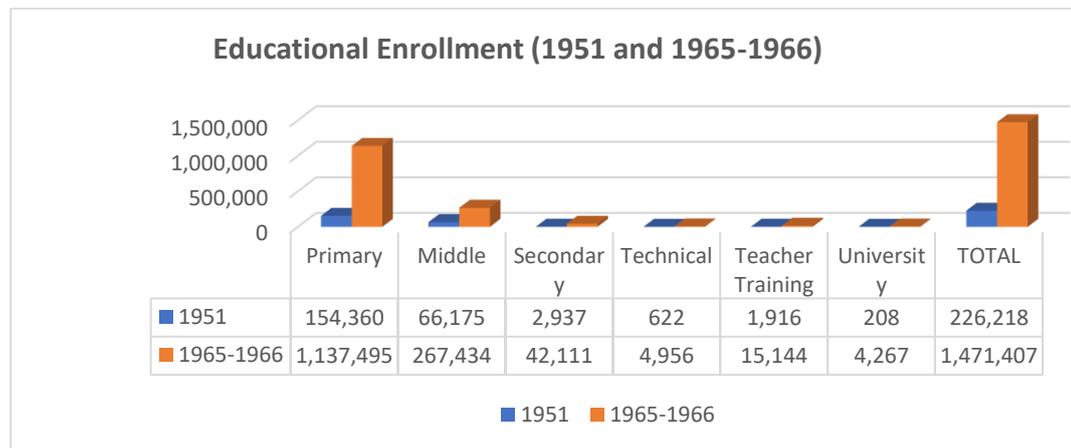
⁸³George, *Education in Ghana*, 51.

⁸⁴George, *Education in Ghana*, 52.

⁸⁵George, *Education in Ghana*, 52.

⁸⁶George, *Education in Ghana*, 52.

Ghana paid a heavy price for its educational success since the central government took the sole responsibility of sponsoring education and implementing policies to make the educational system work. By 1965, a total of 67 million cedis, which was 14 times that of 1951, was invested in the educational sector. The United States' support towards the launching of Ghana toward modernization contributed massively towards the expansion of the Ghanaian educational facilities, school enrollment, and the provision of teachers. The American Peace Corps program, together with the pivotal roles of Cornell University, transformed the Ghanaian education to the road of quality education by 1966.⁸⁷



The figure above represents the transition in enrollment status from 1951 to 1965-66.

figure 1: Source: (Washington: U.S. Dept. of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, 1976),51.

Conclusion

The Peace Corps' successes and challenges, together with the roles of Cornell University (U.S.A.), were examined in this chapter. The Peace Corps achieved its first stated goal: to serve the need of other countries. While it had not changed the entire globe by 1966, Ghana benefited immensely from the United States' contributions. The

⁸⁷George, *Education in Ghana*, 52.

United States support for Ghana ensured the success of the free education policy, increased enrollment, expanded the Ghanaian education system, increased the number of teacher training graduates, and increased the number of educational and non-educational facilities. Moreover, through the efforts of Cornell University, Ghanaians were introduced to Home Economics as a course of study which restructured Ghanaians view about family structure and planning.

Nonetheless, the instituted program faced significant setbacks due to the rigid nature of the Ghanaian education system, the political environment in Ghana, volunteers' lack of teaching experience, and a low standard of living. Volunteers' commitment to contribute towards Ghana's educational system helped in transforming Ghana despite the series of challenges the United States-Ghanaian relations encountered.⁸⁸ Ghana expanded and diversified the Peace Corps program to include other non-educational sectors to ensure economic and social developments in Ghana.⁸⁹

⁸⁸Hoffman, *All You Need Is Love: The Peace Corps and the Spirit of the 1960s*, 181-182.

⁸⁹United States. General Accounting Office, *United States Programs in Ghana: Report to the Congress* (Washington: U.S. General Accounting Office, 1974), 31.

Chapter 3

Ghanaian Trade Relations with The United States

Ghana and the United States of America have maintained very peaceful trade relations over the years. The United States is the largest importer of Ghana cocoa. We, for our part, have, for a long time, obtained from the United States our principal imports of machinery, transport, equipment, fuel, and chemicals. These trade relations with the United States are significant to the U.S. I am sure that this exhibition will lead to the opening of further sources of trade and commerce between the two nations.¹

-President Kwame Nkrumah, November 27, 1961, at the opening of
the U.S. Trade Fair in Accra.

Ghana's trade relations with the outside world date from the pre-colonial era when the colony was under British hegemony. In pre-colonial times, Ghanaians traded in various goods with North Africa through the Sahara Desert. They also traded with their immediate neighbors. Moreover, Ghanaians had been heavily involved in the trans-Atlantic slave trade from its beginnings in the sixteenth century to the nineteenth century. Ghanaians traded in several commodities, including gold, salt, ivory, slaves, and kola nuts. They transported large quantities of gold from their shores to England, Holland, America, France, Portugal, and later imported other products during the colonial days. Ashanti, a region rich in kola trees, emerged as a robust commercial power due to the massive demand for kola nuts.²

Nkrumah's emergence as the president of Ghana was a turning point in Ghana's relation with the outside world, particularly the United States. Nkrumah hoped to industrialize the new country, and this required new initiatives since Ghana had low

¹John D. Leonard, "Nkrumah Seeks to Industrialize Ghana and Diversify the Country's Economy," *Foreign Commerce Weekly*, December 25, 1961, 7.

²O Anasensor, "Ghana's Trade Relations with the United States of America: A Case Study of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA)," (PhD diss., University of Ghana, 2016), 41-42.

foreign investments and local capital. The new Ghanaian government worked at transforming the newly independent nation into a thriving center for industrial and agricultural activities. The government established business relations with both the free world and Sino-Soviet bloc countries as it worked to achieve its economic vision. Also, the new government's strategy in transforming the Ghanaian economy and trade relations had been to welcome foreign investors. Nkrumah hoped to maintain Ghanaian sovereignty while gaining support from both the East and West. In fact, Nkrumah swung back and forth between the West and East. He later became interested in establishing trade relations with the United States with the hope of using Ghana-America trade relations to transform Ghana. Ghana depended heavily on the United States for most of its imports. Key American capitalists identified Ghana as a fertile region for business.³

Nkrumah admired the United States' stated ideology of allowing newly independent states to manage their own affairs. Such an approach aligned with Nkrumah's positive neutrality and non-alignment philosophy. The United States allowed citizens of developing countries to work on their own while Americans provided guidance. Nkrumah hoped Americans would offer guidance to Ghanaians as the former allows the latter to work on their own.⁴ He believed his vision of modernizing Ghana through trade in products and other trade relations could materialize primarily through the support of the United States.⁵

³Leonard, "Nkrumah seeks to Industrialize Ghana and Diversify the Country's Economy," 7.

⁴American Embassy Accra to The Department of State, Washington, November 30, 1961, "Speech by Osagyefo at the Opening of the United States Exhibition," in *Confidential U.S. State Department Central Files. Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs* (henceforth *IAFA*), "Ghana 1960-January 1963," [microform], eds. Lester, Robert. Lewis, Daniel (Bethesda, MD: University Publications of America, 2002)," reel P-859.

⁵John H. Johnson, "U.S. Trade Fair in Ghana: America holds First Exhibition in West Africa," *Ebony*, Nov 1961, 36.

Hitherto, the Ghanaian economy depended on agriculture, which employed more than half of the population and contributed towards small industries. Ghana's total dependence on agriculture contributed to the collapse of the economy and trade, following the fall in prices of cocoa and other agriculture products.⁶

Ghana had access to the American market and increased her exports by millions of dollars per annum through trade with the United States. Both Americans and Europeans viewed Ghana's entry to the open market as a milestone towards becoming a modernized country. Ghanaians worked at increasing production as their exports to the outside world increased through contact with America. Ghana prepared to modernize by partnering with a more prosperous country. Ghana's strong dependence on America, however, contributed to the fall in the Ghanaian trading system since America later lost hope in the economy and decided not to invest much in Ghana from the 1960s.

Trade created growth, and growth increased income, Nkrumah believed. Ghana would export cocoa, gold, timber, and diamond to the United States while America would, in return, export capital goods, consumer goods, and intermediate goods to Ghana. The growth of income through an increase in exports would assist the nation's transformation to modernization. The increment in exportation would help Ghana's economic growth and position the country to modernize. As various American firms traded with Ghana, trading activities increased, and the growth in trade helped in the modernization of Ghana's market system. Both small and large businesses grew, and the growth of businesses created economic opportunities for Ghanaians and prepared the country for modernization and a prosperous future.⁷

⁶LaVerle Bennette Berry, *Ghana: A Country Study*, (Washington, D.C.: Federal Research Division, 1994), 158.

⁷Berry, *Ghana: A Country Study*, xxiii.

Though America sought to assist Ghana in its bid of modernization through trade, the United States also wanted to promote its own economic and political interests. Despite Nkrumah's tough attitude of not easily giving in to American trade policies and requests, the United States' trade relations with Ghana contributed massively towards the modernization of Ghana. In October 1959, the American embassy in Accra reported, "Our trade relations with Ghana, including access to raw materials produced in Ghana, are good. Our political relations with Ghana are friendly and fruitful."⁸ Unfortunately, the economy built through trade relations with the United States did not survive for many years. From the 1960s, there arose adverse changes in the economy which included the fall in cocoa prices and America's unwillingness to invest heavily in Ghana. The economic changes caused the Ghanaian economy to fall apart. The heavy debt Ghana incurred due to Nkrumah's investment in other African nations negatively affected Ghana's economy.⁹

This chapter examines the Ghana-America trade relations by focusing on trade in products between the two nations and the American Trade Fair of 1961. The chapter discusses the United States Trade Fair in Ghana, an economic activity that strengthened trade in Ghana, and between the two nations. The study reveals the contributions America made towards Ghana in the field of businesses as a facet in transforming the newly independent country. Also, the study discusses the economic problems which Ghana faced from the 1960s following an increment in Ghana's debt and the fall in cocoa products.

⁸Ebere Nwaubani, *The United States and Decolonization in West Africa, 1950-1960* (Rochester, N.Y.: University of Rochester Press, 2001), 143.

⁹R.W. Apple Jr, "Ghana Struggles Under Burden of Nkrumah's Debt," *New York Times*, May 6, 1969, 3.

Ghana's Foreign Trade Relations under Nkrumah's Regime

Ghana had all the necessary commodities for economic and international trade success by 1957 when it attained independence. The country had become the producer of about two-fifths of the world's cocoa, a status that she maintained for years. Ghana's position in the global production of cocoa made her the country with the highest per capita income in tropical Africa for about a decade before 1957. It chiefly depended on cocoa production to sustain its economy; hence the fall in cocoa prices from the 1960s negatively affected the Ghanaian economy. Ghana became self-sufficient in food and exported surplus due to its stable population of about 7 million and its vast fertile lands. The country also became abundant in tropical timber and a variety of minerals, including gold, diamond, bauxite, and manganese. For instance, the Ashanti Corporation's Gold Mine, located in Ghana, had become the richest Gold Mine corporation in the world by 1957.¹⁰

Nkrumah indicated that it was only after independence when Ghanaians began to fully control trading activities and had the power to negotiate, hence, he believed Ghanaians could not be blamed for the low trade output during the colonial era. His government aimed to diversify the Ghanaian economy beyond the reliance on cocoa to include the production and exportation of palm kernel, spices, coffee, rubber, and tobacco. Nkrumah foresaw the need to diversify since total dependence on a single product would collapse the economy once prices fall. Nkrumah announced that agricultural products, when produced, would be used to increase production in Ghanaian industries as the country worked to industrialize and modernize. Moreover, he explained to Ghanaians that the production of goods would increase the exportation

¹⁰David Williams, "The Ghana Economy," *The World Today* 22, (1966): 475-81.

to foreign countries like the United States. He further promoted Ghana's ability to export some agricultural products that have never been exported.¹¹

Ghana's importation of consumer goods also increased during Nkrumah's regime from \$106 million in 1958 to \$150 million in 1960. Producer products increased from \$58 to \$118 million, with the total imports reaching about \$400 million.¹² These figures contradicted Nkrumah's ideology of non-alignment and positive neutrality. Nkrumah believed that political independence meant economic independence. Therefore, Nkrumah envisaged developing the doctrine of non-alignment in his trade relations, even as he grew closer to the West.¹³ At independence, Ghana's economy had proven to be better than any black African country, and Ghana's economy grew steadily over time. American investment in Ghana grew faster until the 1960s when America began to stop investing in Ghana due to the fall in the Ghanaian economy.¹⁴

Nkrumah's government adopted policies geared towards bringing in foreign private capital, and that strategy generated competition between foreign investors and domestic investors. New businesses that the Nkrumah government established had to compete with already existing banking, insurance, shipping, timber, construction, and manufacturing firms. Nkrumah's administration granted preferential treatment to government-owned industries. Nevertheless, Nkrumah did not impose restrictions on the operations of foreign investors. The freedom he granted to foreign companies allowed international firms to continue to dominate the industrial sector. The

¹¹Kwame Nkrumah *Africa Must Unite*. (New York: F.A. Praeger, 1963), 109-110.

¹²Steel F. William, *Import Substitution and Excess Capacity in Ghana*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1972), 6, cited in Anasensor "Ghana's Trade Relations with the United States of America: A Case Study of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA)," 43.

¹³William, "The Ghana Economy," 476.

¹⁴Johnson, "U.S. Trade Fair in Ghana: America holds First Exhibition in West Africa," 28-9.

government only nationalized the sales of timber and the private transactions of cocoa, Ghana's primary export product.¹⁵

Nkrumah, being desperate to modernize Ghana through trade, decided to open up to the Soviets and the United States concurrently. When Clarence Randall, formerly of the Council on Foreign Economic Policy, learned of Nkrumah's action, he questioned Nkrumah's new trade partnership with the Soviets and he argued that Nkrumah did not understand the implications of Ghana's trading relationship with the Soviets. Nkrumah replied in a press release citing his discussions with Khrushchev and asserting he was not ready to compromise Ghana's neutrality with any country. Nkrumah announced he would demonstrate Ghana's neutrality if the West would give him a chance.¹⁶

Nkrumah's Major Challenges

Ghana's economic relations and trade operations faced three major setbacks after independence. Ghana suffered due to lack of skilled workforce meant to replace foreign investors with local enterprises. Nkrumah wanted to ensure Ghanaians would take over trade operations. Nonetheless, this project came to naught due to the lack of competent personnel in Ghana.¹⁷ Secondly, the country faced a challenge from the limited capacity of Ghanaian private and public firms to create industrial investments. Direct investment from foreign private enterprises became the sole external source for industrial capital in Ghana between 1957-1960. Nkrumah and his advisers hoped dependence on foreign investors would reduce overtime. Meanwhile, they depended on foreign investors to build a new economy. Nkrumah believed that restricting foreign

¹⁵John D. Esseks, "Political Independence and Economic Decolonization: The Case of Ghana under Nkrumah," *Western Political Quarterly* 24 (1971): 59-64.

¹⁶Montgomery, "The Eyes of the World Were Watching: Ghana, Great Britain, and The United States, 1957-1966," 168.

¹⁷Esseks, "Political independence and economic decolonization: the case of Ghana under Nkrumah," 60.

investors would make it difficult for the Ghanaian system to attract foreign companies. By the 1960s, Ghana continued to depend on foreign investors and the Ghanaian economy collapsed when foreign investors began to lose interest in investing heavily in Ghana.¹⁸

Thirdly, Nkrumah's administration also suffered from the division between Nkrumah's ideology and that of the majority party. Nkrumah and the majority party debated over whether corporate or private firms should be the main benefactors in the new nation. Nkrumah preferred a socialist state as he envisaged state control over the economic sector of the new country. Besides, he feared the rise of an efficient capitalist industry would hamper his political agenda. Nkrumah once told a Cabinet Minister, Kojo Botsio, that if any Ghanaian possessed a significant amount of money, the person would have much influence. Nkrumah believed influential Ghanaians would be dangerous to his political career. Nkrumah thought that foreign investors who had no background in Ghana posed no threat to him since such people could not gain political influence. Perhaps, if Ghana had built a capitalist economy, private firms would have saved the country from the disastrous economy it faced from the 1960s.¹⁹

Potential Trade relations between Ghana-America

Nkrumah visited the United States in 1958 for trade discussions aimed at winning America's support to help build the Ghanaian trade system. He toured New York for the first time since his time as a student in America 23 years before. Nkrumah delivered a speech regarding Ghana's economic prospects to business groups and various organizations. He emphasized that Ghana's relations with America would contribute to the diversification of the Ghanaian economy from dependence on the

¹⁸Esseks, "Political independence and economic decolonization: the case of Ghana under Nkrumah," 60.

¹⁹Esseks, "Political independence and economic decolonization: the case of Ghana under Nkrumah," 61.

cocoa beans. Nkrumah's goal of diversifying the Ghanaian economy did not happen. During his speech, Nkrumah informed the National Foreign Trade Council about Ghana's willingness to establish an investment agreement with America to protect its investors. He went ahead and discussed Ghana's commerce, and his intention to partner with the United States for trade in products and industrialization. Nkrumah jokingly told Americans, "You are not drinking enough cocoa in this country." He emphasized Ghana's intent to send more cocoa and other agricultural products to the United States as Ghana partners with America in trade. He indicated that Ghana would expand its cocoa production with the hope that the country would gain market shares from American trade. Nkrumah stated that the total amount of cocoa planted, harvested, and exported by Ghanaian farmers would be dependent on the United States' level of foreign exchange in Ghana.²⁰

Henry Kearns, the United States Assistant Secretary of Commerce for International Affairs, reported that the United States hoped American business with Ghana would grow. American trade with Ghana showed the readiness of the United States to support Ghana. American traders developed an interest in trading with Ghana as American capitalists sought a new region for investment. American capitalists decided to deposit their surplus capital and products in Ghana. The United States' foreign policy attempted to help Ghana launch towards modernization. Americans believed that modernized nations would be less susceptible to communist influence.²¹

United States Trade Fair in Accra, Ghana

The United States Government Scholarship program sponsored the Trade Fair organized in Accra, Ghana, from November 24 to December 24, 1961. The fair sought

²⁰ Montgomery, "The Eyes of the World Were Watching: Ghana, Great Britain, and The United States, 1957-1966," 88.

²¹Michael E. Latham, *Modernization as Ideology: American Social Science and "Nation Building" in the Kennedy Era*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 83,157.

to demonstrate potential trade relations between the two countries. The fair also aimed at strengthening the bond between the two nations for trade in products, techniques, and equipment exchange. Americans who worked in the fashion industry and unions used the Trade Fair as an opportunity to market American products.²² On January 30, 1961, Representative Charles Coles Diggs Jr., an African American and United States congressman, sent a letter to C. Yaughn Ferguson, Jr., Assistant Secretary on West African Affairs. Diggs requested further information on the international Fair expected to take place in Ghana in November 1961. Specifically, Diggs asked for information about the United States participation in the event, the personnel needed for the American exhibitions, and the method to use in selecting staff for the American exhibition. Congress collaborated with Ghana even at the preparatory stage, with the hope of maximizing profit from the contact with Ghana while supporting the newly independent nation towards its transformation.²³

The site and the date of the occasion became the next subject for discussion. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the U.S. Embassy concluded that the Trade Fair would take place in November right after the Queen of England's visit to Ghana. State officials had concluded that the Queen would visit Ghana in 1961, though the exact date remained unknown. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs would confirm the date for the Trade Fair provided the chosen site would be available for the event on the scheduled date. The Ghana Educational Trust owned the amphitheater site, the field selected for the Trade Fair. The Ministry of Education financed the Ghana Educational

²²Maida Springer to Mr. Julius Hechman, Vice President International Ladies Garment Workers Union, "Trade Fair in Ghana, Accra," August 29, 1961, AFL-CIO International Affairs Department Country Files (hereafter AFL-CIO IADCF), 1945-1971, Box 10, University of Maryland Libraries Special Collections and Archives.

²³American Embassy Accra to The Department of State, Washington, November 30, 1961 "Address of Welcome by Congressman Charles C. Diggs Jr. at the Opening Ceremony of the United States Exhibition," *IAFA*, reel P- 858.

Trust, a semi-governmental institution. The government indicated its readiness to use any recommended site for the event because of the importance of the Trade Fair as a steppingstone towards America's support to Ghana through trade interactions.²⁴

The United States organized the Trade Fair to promote trade and tighten the trade connections between Ghana and the United States. The program organizers added exhibitions that benefited Ghana's commercial, economic, and industrial development. Moreover, the exhibitions created an avenue to advertise the significance of small industries and businesses in the American economy. Trade Fair exhibitions showcased the pivotal roles of the United States' small industries. The fair's slogan was, "Small industries are big business." The idea of promoting small businesses in Ghana and emphasizing their roles in boosting the economy became the driving force behind the fair. Small businesses in America had contributed massively towards the national economy. Smaller firms in America amounted to less than 50 percent of all United States' industries. However, the smaller firms produced one-third of all manufactured goods in America. Smaller firms also accounted for one-half of all wholesale products in America. The Trade Fair highlighted the roles of smaller firms in boosting the American economy. The fair inspired Ghanaians to believe smaller firms had a role to play in modernizing Ghana through trade.

The American Embassy in Accra partnered with the Ghanaian press and printed the Trade Fair program for circulation. The printed program detailed how the United States controlled its economy, income distribution, and growth of businesses. The printed paper also explained the division of share ownership in American institutions by low and middle-income people. These ideas would help Ghanaians and the

²⁴American Embassy Accra to The Department of State, Washington, May 22, 1961, "Ghana Solo Exhibit: Survey of OITF Designer," *IAFA*, reel P- 748.

government in the transformation of the new country's economy through trade. Ghanaians gained insight into how America had sustained its economy over the years. Ghanaians then translated the ideas into practice, boosted their trading system, and moved closer until the economy deteriorated in the late 1960s.²⁵

Thomas P. Rock, a 38-years old African American, born in Brooklyn, became the designer for the American trade exhibition. His close relations with Ghana contributed towards the success of the fair. Rock's connection to his African ancestry might have contributed to his commitment and dedication to an African country. He had studied industrial design at Pratt Institute in New York. Rock, a man of attractive personality, received the offer to design the Trade Fair with pride and puzzlement. The Office of International Trade Fairs' spokesperson believed Rock got the offer because of his ability not because he was a person of color. In March 1961, Charles Clarke, the deputy chief of design and construction of the Office of International Trade Fairs, called Rock and discussed the design contract with him. Clarke offered Rock the opportunity to design the Trade Fair in Accra, Ghana. Rock showed interest in the offer. Hitherto, the Creative Playthings Incorporation in New Jersey had employed Rock as a designer and production supervisor. Mr. Rock received an offer letter from Clarke two days after they discussed the contract. Clarke detailed the needs and purposes of the Trade Fair in the contract letter. After a few weeks, Rock traveled to Washington and discussed the Trade Fair with State Department officials. Already, Rock had gained experience by designing American sponsored Trade Fairs in Poland, Greece, Russia, and Sweden.²⁶

The American government's invitation of Rock to plan the Ghana Trade Fair created the path for the formation of the new industrial enterprise of Tysinger/Rock

²⁵American Embassy Accra to The Department of State, Washington, November 30, 1961, "President Nkrumah Opens United States Trade Fair," *IAFA*, reel P- 855.

²⁶Johnson, "U.S. Trade Fair in Ghana: America holds First Exhibition in West Africa," 29-30.

Associates Incorporation. Burton Tysinger, an architect, and industrial planner from North Carolina became Rock's cooperator. When Rock landed in Ghana, he observed a modern warehouse building. Rock described Ghana as not only undeveloped but backward as well. Yet he commended Ghanaians for their intelligence and asserted that Ghana's economic development had been rapid towards progress. He believed Ghanaians' intelligence would accelerate Ghana's modernization through trade. Rock assisted the new country in transforming its economy into a modernized one. His nationality did not influence his attraction to Ghana nor his desire towards the industrialization of the country. The Ghanaian habit of hospitality and energy attracted Rock. His desire to contribute towards modernizing Ghana through trade relations increased in a short time. Rock recommended the types of exhibits he thought would be useful in Ghana, mainly exhibits on light planes, computers, and motorboats.

Rock contributed immensely towards the Trade Fair after thoroughly studying the Ghanaian social-economic system. The Trade Fair strengthened trade between Ghana and America and taught Ghanaians new techniques and technology to build their economy through trade. Moreover, the fair that Rock designed highlighted the role of small businesses in a country's economy. Francis H. Russell, the American Ambassador in Accra, during his speech at the Trade Fair opening, reported that the food and fiber showcased at the fair were products from the private and cooperative businesses in the United States while the various machines were from the small firms in America.²⁷ The fair promoted the operation of private firms and smaller businesses in Ghana.²⁸

²⁷American Embassy Accra to The Department of State, Washington, November 16, 1961, "President's Office desires text Statement by U.S. Rep Occasion Official Opening Trade Fair to Facilitate Drafting Appropriate Response," *IAFA*, reel P- 840.

²⁸Johnson, "U.S. Trade Fair in Ghana: America holds First Exhibition in West Africa," 34.

Ghanaians showed great interest in the fair because they believed America supported the launch of Ghana as a developed nation through trade assistance.²⁹

The Ghana Educational Trust chairman optimistically forecasted that the United States Trade Fair would be the most significant fair ever to be organized in Ghana. America's desire to support Ghana signaled through the attention given to the preparation of the Trade Fair. Concurrently, the Republic of China envisaged organizing a rival trade show in Ghana in either the month of August or September 1961. China hoped to demonstrate industrial development under a communist regime. An official of the Ghanaian Trade Ministry wanted the United States' Trade Fair to surpass that of Chinese. Therefore, he gave an American embassy officer a draft of the Chicom fair proposal to alert the United States about the strength of the Chinese intended show. The Ghanaian trade official's action indicates Ghana's preference for American-style modernization. Ghanaians showed this preference despite the intense growth of nationalistic activities and the growth of the Soviets' influence.³⁰

Americans perceived the Trade Fair as the most significant attempt to showcase America to Ghanaians. The Trade Fair also became the medium to counter the Soviet's economic and cultural influence in Ghana. The show needed to be successful in improving the United States' position in Ghana. The Trade Fair became the stage for America to prove itself to Ghanaians since both the Soviets and America rallied behind building the Ghanaian trade system. Ghanaian officials and the United States Embassy wanted the Trade Fair exhibit to include cocoa processing exhibits. Americans consumed enormous amounts of cocoa products, and Ghana was the largest producer of cocoa beans. America's purchase of Ghanaian cocoa contributed

²⁹American Embassy Accra to The Department of State, Washington, May 22, 1961, "Ghana Solo Exhibit: Survey of OITF Designer," *IAFA*, reel P- 748.

³⁰American Embassy Accra to The Department of State, Washington, May 22, 1961, "Ghana Solo Exhibit: Survey of OITF Designer," *IAFA*, reel P-748.

significantly towards building the Ghanaian trade system, of which cocoa had been the primary product. Moreover, the Embassy believed there must be an exhibition to showcase the growth of the United States in the housing field.³¹

Richard Erstein, director of the United States Information Service, counseled that Americans should promote the Trade Fair in a proper perspective. The Trade Fair should help Ghanaians to understand the trading system and capitalize on it to build their trade system. He also advised that Americans should not use a film of President Kennedy's inauguration because it presents people of color as inferior. The film showed segregated audiences and relegated people of color as inferior beings to white. Erstein recommended instead, exhibits should showcase racial cooperation in the United States and high living standards for people of color in America. Americans believed any traits of racism would tarnish their image in Ghana. America desired to use every possible means to showcase itself as a country to win the heart of Ghanaians while supporting them in building up its trade system.³²

It had been the utmost desire of the American government to ensure stronger trade relations between Ghana and the United States. Russell announced that the fair would serve as a tool to strengthen the bond between the United States and Ghana. Firms in the United States represented at the Trade Fair included the International Division of United States Industries, Rocks International Corporation, Great Northern Overseas Cooperative, Reese Associates Incorporation, and Miller Sewer Rod Company. American firms that attended the fair produced the latest sewage, sinks, handy lavatory tools, lawn mowers, cars, electronic manufactured products, plants, and machinery. Enterprises that attended the fair also produced Frick sawmills and

³¹American Embassy Accra to The Department of State, Washington, May 22, 1961, "Ghana Solo Exhibit: Survey of OITF Designer," *IAFA*, reel P-748.

³²American Embassy Accra to The Department of State, Washington, May 30, 1961, "List of U.S. Firms Being Represented," *IAFA*, reel P-779.

equipment, summer bandsaws, and equipment, Dorsey's low-beds trailers, cattle vans, refrigeration vans, Unistrut metal frames, and partitions. These companies traded in Ghana with the hope of maximizing profits while building the Ghanaian trading system to boost the economy.³³

President Nkrumah Officially Opens the United States Trade Fair in Ghana

On November 27, 1961, President Nkrumah formally launched the United States Trade Fair in the presence of about 1,000 members of diplomatic corps, industry, agriculture, trade, and the Ghanaian government. Tawia Adamafio, Minister of information and broadcasting, Kwaku Boateng, Minister of Interior, L. R. Abavana, and F.K.D Goka, Minister of Trade and Finance, all attended the launching of the Fair. About 18,609 people attended on November 28, while about 20,320 attended on November 29. Many Ghanaians had to climb the fence to have a taste of the exhibitions. The total attendance of 38,929 reported for the first two days outnumbered the entire population of Accra, Ghana's capital, where the event took place. The total number of people who attended the Fair for the first two days indicates Ghanaians' eagerness to learn new techniques and transform their economy. Nkrumah generally avoided attending such events in the preceding years. He turned down many invitations to participate in the opening ceremonies of Trade Fairs that the Soviets funded in Accra before the United States Trade Fair. However, Nkrumah conspicuously attended the United States Trade Fair. The priority he gave to the United States in his bid to modernize Ghana influenced his decision to attend the launch of the American Fair.

³³American Embassy Accra to The Department of State, Washington, November 16, 1961, "President's Office desires text Statement by U.S. Rep Occasion Official Opening Trade Fair to Facilitate Drafting Appropriate Response," *IAFA*, reel P- 840.

Nkrumah had been optimistic about the United States' support in building the country's trade system; hence he prioritized the American Trade Fair.³⁴

During his speech, President Nkrumah announced that Ghana was “Against any form of discrimination in economic matters” due to Ghana’s policy of non-alignment and positive neutrality.³⁵ Nkrumah told attendees at the Trade Fair that “We make no apology for the steps we have taken recently to strengthen our trade and economic relations with the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and China.” He reported to Ghanaians and the outside world that Ghana sought to use diverse means to achieve rapid industrialization and mechanization of Ghana’s agriculture and to transform the Ghanaian economy.³⁶

Nkrumah actively engaged in the opening ceremonies for the fair. He spent two hours with his senior ministers touring 33 exhibit centers during the United States Trade Fair. During his tour, he exclaimed, "This is the first time that I have spent such a long time at a Trade Fair." The presence of Nkrumah made the United States Trade Fair distinctive.³⁷ Nkrumah expressed his excitement as he observed the exhibitions in Ghana. He informed the American ambassador, a Kaiser representative, Department of Commerce Officials, and other individuals that he would come back for another visit. As he toured the exhibit centers, he inquired about the background of the Ghanaian demonstrators with the hope of knowing how long they had undergone training for the exhibition. Nkrumah became overwhelmed with two demonstrators who had not

³⁴American Embassy Accra to The Department of State, Washington, November 30, 1961, “President Nkrumah Opens United States Trade Fair,” *IAFA*, reel P- 854.

³⁵American Embassy Accra to The Department of State, Washington, November 30, 1961, “President Nkrumah Opens United States Trade Fair,” *IAFA*, reel P- 855.

³⁶American Embassy Accra to The Department of State, Washington, November 30, 1961, “President Nkrumah Opens United States Trade Fair,” *IAFA*, reel P- 855.

³⁷American Embassy Accra to The Department of State, Washington, November 30, 1961, “President Nkrumah Opens United States Trade Fair,” *IAFA*, reel P- 854.

received any prior training except the four days of teaching. The fact that Ghanaians developed the capability to operate the exhibits after only a few days of training showed their potential to build the Ghanaian economy through trading activities. Ghanaians needed American support to build the trading system. Nkrumah perceived Ghanaians demonstration of the exhibitions as a mark of Ghana's road to modernizing its trade industry through the support of the United States. He became optimistic that Ghanaians who receive few days of training from Americans would contribute towards modernization. Ghanaians' enthusiasm and ability to demonstrate what Americans had taught them meant that with limited guidance, Ghanaians would be on track to modernize their nation. At a point during his tour, Nkrumah told Tawia Adamafio, minister of Information and Broadcasting, that the government could establish a training institution in Ghana using the techniques and tools demonstrators utilized. For Nkrumah, the exhibition showed real potential for trade and commerce between Ghana and the United States, which would contribute to transforming Ghana.³⁸

Various firms manufactured houseware items during the exhibition. The Trade Fair included cocoa industries exhibits. The cocoa exhibits taught Ghanaians how Americans used cocoa, their number one export product in producing chocolate and cocoa butter. Ghanaians developed insights into processing the cocoa beans in Ghana into a finish product, and that boosted the Ghanaian economy. Unfortunately, Ghana's dependence on cocoa led to a decline of the Ghanaian economy when cocoa prices fell. The fall in cocoa prices affected cocoa products thereby leading to the fall of Ghana's economy in the 1960s.³⁹

³⁸American Embassy Accra to The Department of State, Washington, November 30, 1961, "President Nkrumah Opens United States Trade Fair," *IAFA*, reel P- 855.

³⁹Johnson, "U.S. Trade Fair in Ghana: America holds First Exhibition in West Africa," 34.

At the fair, Ghanaians encountered new products, purchased various items, established networking with private enterprises, and learned from the exhibitions. The presence of the various private firms at the Trade Fair showed the role of private organizations in Ghana-America relations. The American private firms contributed to shaping the Ghanaian trading system as they produced goods and sent them to Ghana for sale. Moreover, the United States private companies trained Ghanaians for the exhibition exercise with the hope that Ghanaians would use the techniques to build their industries. Besides, the presence of the various private firms made Nkrumah reconsider his view of private companies. He now believed private firms had a pivotal role to play in his vision of modernizing Ghana. Therefore, he began to prioritize such private firms in national affairs.⁴⁰

The Trade Fair marked a moment of showcasing the attraction of new and significant American investments in Ghana. Over 31 countries attended the exhibition, and their presence advertised available opportunities in Ghana to the outside world. The exhibition showed the interest the American government and business people had in trading with the new African country. The Trade Fair increased the imagination of Ghanaians and stirred up the economic relationship between America and Ghana. The exhibition established a practical, do-it-yourself spirit, which demonstrated the American style of helping new countries that seek to achieve economic progress. The Trade Fair education exhibition became the most practical to the Ghanaian industrial context. The training taught Ghanaians many industrial skills meant to equip them in building their new nation. About 130 students, mostly young individuals, attended the

⁴⁰American Embassy Accra to The Department of State, Washington, November 30, 1961, "President Nkrumah Opens United States Trade Fair," *IAFA*, reel P- 855.

fair to learn from many courses, including electronic courses.⁴¹ For years after independence, America contributed towards Ghana's modernization agenda.⁴²

Trade Relations and Investment in Ghana at the end of Nkrumah's Reign

Nkrumah's government began to fall apart five years preceding his overthrow. His grand economic plans for Ghana and Africa, in general, landed Ghana in debt. Nkrumah failed to use the funds generated from Ghana's trade revenue to focus on the new country's modernization. Ghana became overburdened with debt due to Nkrumah's numerous activities in different parts of Africa. He expanded his vision to assist other African countries, including Congo. He wanted to use Ghana's income to support his Pan-African vision of creating the United States of Africa and modernizing the entire African continent. These high hopes fatally burdened his vision of transforming Ghana through trade. Nkrumah's high trade expectations never materialize in Ghana. The refusal of the C.P.P. government to increase the minimum wage of workers lowered the standard of living and sparked mass demonstrations in Kumasi, Accra, and Sekondi-Takoradi. Between 1960-1965, average wage levels fell by twenty percent in the private sector while the public sector decreased by forty percent.⁴³

Ghana paid a heavy price as she strived to achieve economic independence. The economical price the new country paid for modernization contributed significantly to the collapse of Nkrumah's government in early 1966. The country struggled with a high external economic debt in state-owned industries and the debt accumulated through cargo ships that Western nations and Communist blocs financed. The debt outstripped the Ghanaian economy, and Nkrumah's government negotiated with foreign creditors

⁴¹American Embassy Accra to The Department of State, Washington, December 7, 1961, "Businessmen's Day at the U.S. Trade Fair," *IAFA*, reel P-867.

⁴²Johnson, "U.S. Trade Fair in Ghana: America holds First Exhibition in West Africa," 27.

⁴³Naaborko Sackeyfio-Lenoch, "The Ghana Trades Union Congress and the Politics of International Labor Alliances, 1957-1971," *International Review of Social History*, 62 (2017): 191-213.

to reschedule payments by December 1965. Nkrumah initially envisaged a reduction of foreign influence in the manufacturing and shipping of products. However, his government ended up opening the entire economy to more considerable international control. Foreign creditors began demanding economic policies that would favor the rescheduling of their credit payments. Ghana could no longer have absolute control over trading activities in Ghana.⁴⁴

The total debt the Nkrumah government left became challenging since Ghana depended strongly on the agriculture economy. While cocoa exports to the United States and other places could have improved the economic situation, cocoa began to lose its share value on the market, though Ghana continued to be the largest producer of cocoa. Some Ghanaians attributed the decline in cocoa value to lousy weather conditions. Cocoa farmers' morale fell because of the economic situation in Ghana. Besides, farmers lacked the money to afford replanting, new technology, or insecticides. Ghana's economic dependence on cocoa and the fall in cocoa price severely burdened the Ghanaian economy. After Nkrumah was overthrown, the United States still maintained trade relations with Ghana with the hope of contributing to Ghana's economy, but the Ghanaian trade system declined.⁴⁵

Conclusion

This chapter examined the United States' trade relations with Ghana and how the trade relations contributed towards modernizing Ghana. America-Ghana relations granted the United States access to Ghana's cocoa, gold, diamond, timber, cotton, coal, petroleum products, fats and oils, and others. Ghana also imported American finished goods. Nkrumah remained reluctant to ally more with the United States in Ghana's trade

⁴⁴Esseks, "Political independence and economic decolonization: the case of Ghana under Nkrumah," 59-64.

⁴⁵Apple, "Ghana Struggles Under Burden of Nkrumah's Debt," 3.

relations due to the continuing concerns that the American C.I.A. had created in some developing countries. Nevertheless, he allowed the United States to trade with Ghana, and America organized the largest Trade Fair ever in Ghana. The Trade Fair granted Americans an opportunity to sell their products. At the same time, Ghanaians had the privilege to learn new skills through various exhibitions. American groups and individual traders visited Ghana frequently during the nation's first decade. Unfortunately, the poor economic conditions in Ghana that emerged at the end of Nkrumah's reign began to deteriorate America-Ghana trade relations. After Nkrumah was overthrown, America's interest in promoting trading activities in Ghana drastically declined, and no measure could quickly recuperate American investment. Today, America and Ghana have good trade relations, with each supporting the other to develop its economy.

Chapter 4

Conclusion

Ghana became the first country to gain independence in Sub-Saharan Africa. As a nation that sought to achieve modernization, Ghana swung back and forth in its relations with the West and East. The newly independent government envisaged positive neutrality and non-alignment, but it still related to both the East and West. Ghanaians believed independence meant to be free from all forms of foreign dominations. However, Ghanaians thought modernization depended on support from foreign powers. Hence, Ghana's alliance with the United States ensured the development of industrialization, educational expansion, and trade expansion. As a baby in the woods, Ghana depended on the United States' support in launching itself towards the vision of modernization.

Ghana experienced significant challenges and development in its transformation from a colonial state, to an independent state, and to a Republic. The newly independent nation transformed from total dependence on Great Britain into an interactive relationship with the United States. Kwame Nkrumah, the first prime minister and president of Ghana, played an instrumental role in the United States' relations with Ghana. He initially showed skepticism toward the United States relations. Nevertheless, Nkrumah came to believe his vision of modernizing Ghana could only materialize through American support. Ghana's position as the first country to gain independence in Sub-Saharan Africa, coupled with Nkrumah's charismatic personality, spurred the desire of both Europeans and Americans to establish a relationship with Ghana. His experience as a student in both London and the United States prepared

Nkrumah to work with America. Nkrumah's political connections in London made America believe that Nkrumah understood the Western system and could work efficiently with the United States.¹

Ghana plunged into a series of difficulties as the leader of the independence movement in Africa. Immediately after independence, tribal rivalries began weakening the unity of the new nation that had stood and fought consistently against the common enemy, Britain. The demise of the common enemy now created territorial rivalries among the various tribes, especially those in northern Ghana. Externally, Ghana faced the challenge of international relations with the United States. Ghana had proclaimed non-alignment and positive neutrality from day one of its post-independence eras. However, the vision of modernization made Ghana swung back and forth with both the East and West.²

The United States' relationship with Ghana emerged out of Ghana's pursuit of America's support. United States-Ghanaian relations became heavily influenced by personal relationships between statesmen as opposed to a relationship wholly centered on national ideology or economic interest. The bond began from the 1950s with the United States' desire to pursue its Cold War agenda in Ghana. American-Soviets' competition elevated the importance of Ghana as the newest prize since both powers sought to penetrate Africa. Soviets communist's interest in Africa prompted the United States' earlier relations with Ghana. President Eisenhower encouraged American-Ghanaian relations by sending Vice President Nixon to Ghana's Independence Day ceremony in 1957. Later, Eisenhower invited President Nkrumah to the White House. However, due to continued tensions and conflicts in the Middle East and Southeast

¹Montgomery, "The Eyes of the World Were Watching: Ghana, Great Britain, and The United States, 1957-1966," 223.

²Montgomery, "The Eyes of the World Were Watching: Ghana, Great Britain, and The United States, 1957-1966," 224.

Asia, Eisenhower's administration gave little attention to Africa.³ Nkrumah's policy of non-alignment displayed Ghana's strength. The new nation demonstrated the ability to manage its affairs as it simultaneously worked to avoid participation in international conflict.⁴

Nkrumah focused on building the Ghanaian economy, which depended on its relations with the United States. Nkrumah's ability to ensure a stable government prompted the United States to provide Ghana with the needed support. America supported the Volta River scheme, provided volunteers for the Peace Corps program, and developed trade relations with Ghana. Ghana required America's support to construct the hydroelectric project. Kennedy's assumption to power galvanized Ghana towards modernization. Kennedy was interested in Africa; hence, he established a strong personal relationship with Nkrumah over time. The Volta River Project became a means which Nkrumah sought to industrialize the new nation towards the path to its economic growth. Most Americans had no problem with his non-alignment policy once Nkrumah maintained a stable government. American statesmen had declared non-alignment an acceptable ideology for newly independent states. Nkrumah completed the project before his overthrow in 1966. He gained financial support from America through his relations with Kennedy though the Volta scheme faced numerous challenges on its road to completion.

Moreover, Nkrumah's vision of building the Ghanaian education system to launch Ghana towards modernization materialized with the assistance of the Peace Corps program during Kennedy's administration. Besides, through the effort of Cornell University in New York, the Ghanaian education system and family life transformed.

³Montgomery, "The Eyes of the World Were Watching: Ghana, Great Britain, and The United States, 1957-1966," 226-7.

⁴Montgomery, "The Eyes of the World Were Watching: Ghana, Great Britain, and The United States, 1957-1966," 227.

By 1966, enrollment and educational facilities had increased compared to 1951. United States' Peace Corps volunteers and Cornell University faculty posted to Ghana deserve credit. Volunteers contributed to the expansion of the Ghanaian education system through their service as teachers and in other extra-curricular activities.

Ghana and the United States also continued to have trade relations over the years. The two countries exchange goods and services as each sought to improve economic ties. America depended on Ghana for resources such as cocoa and gold whereas Ghana also depended on America for finished products. The United States organized the biggest Trade Fair in Ghanaians' history, where exhibitions successfully showcased the potential for trade between the two nations. Ghanaians received a few days of training for operating the demonstrations, even so, they easily operated equipment. Private firms contributed to the exhibitions meant to transform the Ghanaian trade system during the Trade Fair. Americans taught Ghanaians how to process cocoa, Ghana's main exported product into the finished product. The exhibitions demonstrated new skills for Ghanaians. Moreover, the fair pinpointed the role of smaller businesses in the American economy and encouraged positive Ghanaian sentiments towards small enterprises. It is noteworthy that Ghana-America relations went beyond state-to-state ties to individuals and organizations interacting with Ghana. The personal relationship between the various statesmen played a pivotal role in enhancing a smooth relationship amidst multiple challenges.⁵

Over the years, tensions in both Ghana and the United States challenged the United States' relations with Ghana. In Ghana, an anti-American campaign emerged in the 1960s as riots broke out in Accra, spurred by Ghanaians who thought Americans

⁵Montgomery, "The Eyes of the World Were Watching: Ghana, Great Britain, and The United States, 1957-1966," 227-228.

had monopolized their nation's social, economic, and political systems. Also, the Ghanaian press attacked America and its statesmen for their policies in Africa during the Cold War. Nkrumah, who had sought United States support, presented a deeper hurdle as he swung back and forth in his non-alignment policy. Nkrumah and his close associates became embittered following Lumumba's death in early 1961 and blamed the West for its role in the Congo crisis and the assassination of Lumumba.

Nkrumah's alignment with the East evened the United States Congress. Besides, the Ghanaian press attacks on America had drawn the attention of the U.S. Congress, which moved to withdraw America's support from Ghana. The United States continued to respond by threatening to withdraw its support from the Volta River scheme. Congress' aware of Nkrumah's desire to complete the project, hoped that threatening to withdraw America's funds would make Nkrumah and Ghanaians rescind their position towards the East.⁶ President Eisenhower's administration introduced the Cold War to Ghana, while Kennedy increased its significance. Under President Johnson, the Cold War overshadowed all diplomatic policies.⁷

Nkrumah became one of the most successful leaders in Africa, although his concept of the African Union never materialized. He received aid from both the West and East for Ghana. Nkrumah's connection with Kennedy granted Ghana favorable support from America. Kennedy became determined to help the "Third World" break the shackles of poverty and wanted to use Ghana as a model for the other African countries. Kennedy hoped Nkrumah would use Ghana's resources to create an industrialized nation. Nkrumah contributed massively to the building of a new Ghana even though an appraisal of his activities in Ghana and Africa could contain some

⁶Montgomery, "The Eyes of the World Were Watching: Ghana, Great Britain, and The United States, 1957-1966," 228-9.

⁷Montgomery, "The Eyes of the World Were Watching: Ghana, Great Britain, and The United States, 1957-1966," 230.

criticisms. Nkrumah wanted to create a political system centered on African socialism that could obtain support from both the West and East without shifting totally to one side. He wanted a system that would benefit Ghanaians by transforming the new nation into a modernized country. Nkrumah sought the assistance of Kennedy and Khrushchev, leaders of capitalism and communism, respectively, to help Africans. He came close to achieving this dream. Nkrumah's most significant weakness had been that most of his visions had little reality. Nkrumah had bigger ambitions, especially about the amalgamation of the African states into one state⁸

Ghanaians sought to use the vacuum the Cold War created to develop the new country. However, America and the East had sought to use the Cold War to expand their influence. Both state-to-state and private organizations interacted with individuals and companies moving to Ghana to support the modernizing of the newly independent nation. Today, Ghanaians celebrate Nkrumah for his achievements and relations with the outside world. Ghanaians recognized September 21, the birthday of Nkrumah as a national holiday and commemorate each year with numerous activities. The whole of Africa celebrates Nkrumah's vision and achievements. Africans remember his effort towards the creation of a United Africa, though that vision could not work.

The Ghanaian American relation, as the study has set out to show, had its ups and downs. This study focused on the Cold War era, a moment when Ghana had prioritized its independence and declared positive neutrality and non-alignment. The Soviets' relations with Ghana needs attention due to their interactions with Ghana during the Cold War. The Ghanaian-American connection today is still a topic deserving of more research. Issues such as military relations, other economic policies, and political relations need maximum details. Another detailed study could uncover the

⁸Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Political Kingdom in the Third World*, 267-268.

United States relations with other regions in Africa. Besides, the United States relations with Ghana in the post-Nkrumah era should also be studied.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Africa, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, vol.14, eds. Glenn W. LaFantasie and Harriet Dashiell Schwar. Washington, DC: U.S. Gov. Print. Office, 1992.

Africa, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964/68, vol. 24, eds. Nina Davis Howland and David S. Patterson. Washington, DC: U.S. Gov. Print. Office, 1999.

Ghana Government, "The Volta River Project: A Statement by Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah President of the Republic of Ghana to the National Assembly, February 21, 1961," Kwame Nkrumah Information and Resource Site, Government of Ghana: Accra. <https://www.nkrumah.net/gov-pubs/gp-a1357-61-62/gen.php?index=0>.

Ghana, Information Services Department. *Ghana Reborn*. Ghana Information Service: New York, December 1966.

International Affairs Department Country Files, 1945-1971, University of Maryland Libraries Special Collections and Archives.

Johnson, John H. "U.S. Trade Fair in Ghana: America holds First Exhibition in West Africa," *Ebony* Nov 1961, 27-37.

Kennedy, John F. Presidential Library and Museum. "The Cold War and the Peace Corps." *J.F.K. in History* Accessed January 8, 2020, <https://www.jfklibrary.org/learn/about-jfk/jfk-in-history/peace-corps>.

Kennedy, John. *Ghana: Overseas Evaluation*. Washington, D.C: National Archives, 1962.

"Kwame Nkrumah Independence Speech in Ghana on March 6, 1957," *African Heritage*, Accessed February 19, 2019,
<https://afrolegends.com/2012/10/04/kwame-nkrumahs-independence-speech-on-6-march-1957/>.

National Archives and Record Administration (NARA), General Records, Record Group 84.

Newspapers

New York Times

Saturday Evening Post

New York State College of Home Economics. *Annual Report*. Ithaca, N.Y.: State College, 1969.

Office of the United States Trade Representative, "Ghana" Executive Office of the President. <https://ustr.gov/countries-regions/africa/west-africa/ghana>

Peace Corps (U.S.). *Peace Corps Annual Operations Report*. Washington, D.C.: Peace Corps, 1962.

Public Records Archival Administration Department (PRAAD), Accra, Ghana.
Record Group 17/1/472

State Publishing Corporation, "Inauguration of Volta Power: Address by Osagyefo the President and other speeches and messages delivered at the inauguration of the Volta River." Saturday, January 22, 1966, SPC/A10063/5,000/1/66. Accra-Tema: Publicity Secretariat.

U.S. State Department Central Files. Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, eds. Robert Lester and Daniel Lewis. Bethesda, MD: University Publications of America, 2002.

United States Congress House. Select Committee on Hunger, *The Peace Corps: 25 Years of Alleviating Hunger*. Washington: U.S. G.P.O., 1986.

United States General Accounting Office. *United States Programs in Ghana: Report to the Congress*. Washington: U.S. General Accounting Office, 1974.

University of Pennsylvania. "Challenges to Education War and Post-War," Thirtieth 184 Annual Schoolmen's Week Proceedings. University of Pennsylvania: Philadelphia, 1943.

Secondary Sources

Adeze, Mjiba Frehiwot. "Education and Pan-Africanism: A Case Study of Ghana, 1957-1966." Ph.D. diss., Howard University, 2011.

Akyeampong, Kwame. "Educational Expansion and Access in Ghana: A Review of 50 Years of Challenge and Progress," *Research Monograph* 33 (April 2010).

Allor, Moses Awinsong. "The Power of the Periphery: Aid, Mutuality, and Cold War U. S- Ghana Relations, 1957-1966" M.A. Thesis, Eastern Illinois University, 2017.

Amin, Julius. A. "The Perils of Missionary Diplomacy: The United States Peace Corps Volunteers in the Republic of Ghana, The University of Dayton," *Western Journal of Black Studies* 23 no.1 (1999): 35-48.

Anasensor, O. "Ghana's Trade Relations with the United States of America: A Case Study of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA)." Ph.D. diss., University of Ghana, 2016.

Barber-Just, Christina. "I Thought I Might Have Wrecked the Peace Corps," Smith College Alumnae Relations,

<https://alumnae.smith.edu/spotlight/%E2%80%98i-thought-might-have-wrecked-the-peace-corps%E2%80%99/>

- Barnes, Kwamina. *Economics of Volta River Project*. Accra: University Bookshop, 1966.
- Barnhisel, Greg "Perspective U.S.A and the Cultural Cold War: Modernism in Service of the State," *Modernism/modernity* 14 no. 4 (2007): 729-754.
<http://doi.org/10.1353/mod.2007.0080>
- Bekoe, Ofori E. "The United States Peace Corps as a Facet of United States- Ghana Relations," *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 4, no. 10 (2012): 231-44.
- Berry, Bennette LaVerle. *Ghana: A Country Study*. Washington D.C: Federal Research Division, 1994.
- Boateng, Kofi Adlai. "International Development and Communication: A Case of the Origins, Objectives, and Consequences of Ghana's Volta River Project." Ph.D. diss., University of Ghana, Legon Accra, 1969.
- Boyle, Neil. Blohm, Robert. and Helfer, Charles. *Peace Corps/Ghana Country Program Evaluation*. Washington, D.C., Office of Policy and Planning Evaluation Division, 1976.
- Ekbladh, David. "Mr. T.V.A.: Grass-Roots Development, David Lilienthal, and the Rise and Fall of the Tennessee Valley Authority as a Symbol for U.S. Overseas Development, 1933–1973," *Diplomatic History* 26, no. 3 (2002): 335-374.
- Esseks, John D. "Political Independence and Economic Decolonization: The Case of Ghana under Nkrumah," *Western Political Quarterly* 24, no. 1 (1971): 59-64.
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 1st ed. New York: Pantheon Books, 1977.

- Frontani, Heidi G. and Taylor, Lauren C. "Development through Civic Service: The Peace Corps and National Service Program in Ghana," *Progress in Development Studies* 9, no. 2 (2009): 87-99.
- Gaines, Kevin. *American Africans in Ghana Black Expatriates and the Civil Rights Era*: Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006.
- Gift in honor of the 50th Anniversary of the Peace Corps, *At Home in the World: The Peace Corps Story*. Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1996.
- Global Affairs Canada, "Ghana" https://www.international.gc.ca/cil-cai/country_insights-apercus_pays/ci-ic_gh.aspx?lang=eng#cn-8, Accessed [on May 19, 2020](#).
- Glotzer, Richard. and Engberg, Lila T. "Cornell, Guelph, and the Ghana Project: Education, Families and Social Change." *Education Research and Perspectives* 27, no. 1, (2000): 109-124.
- Graham, C. K. *The History of Education in Ghana from the Earliest Times to the Declaration of Independence*. London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd, 1971.
- Hart, David. *The Volta River Project: A Case Study in Politics and Technology*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1980.
- Hoffman, Elizabeth C. *All You Need Is Love: The Peace Corps and the Spirit of the 1960s*. Harvard: University Press, 1998.
- Jackson, Iain. et al. "The Volta River Project: Planning, Housing, and Resettlement in Ghana, 1950–1965," *The Journal of Architecture*, 24 no. 4 (2019): 512-532.
- Kaplan, Irving. et al., *Area Handbook for Ghana*. Washington D.C. Foreign Studies Office, 1971.
- Jalloh, Alusine. and Falola, Toyin. *The United States and West Africa: Interactions and*

- Relations*: Rochester: University Rochester Press, 2008.
- Latham, Michael E. *Modernization as Ideology: American Social Science and "Nation Building" in the Kennedy Era*: Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000.
- Leonard, John D. "Nkrumah Seeks to Industrialize Ghana and Diversify the Country's Economy," *Foreign Commerce Weekly* 61 (1961).
- Montgomery, Mary E. "The Eyes of the World Were Watching: Ghana, Great Britain, and The United States, 1957-1966." Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 2004.
- Moxon, James. *Volta; Man's Greatest Lake*: New York: Praeger, 1969.
- Naaboroko, Sackeyfio-Lenoch. "The Ghana Trades Union Congress and the Politics of International Labor Alliances, 1957-1971" *International Review of Social History*, 62 no. 2, (2017): 191-213.
- New Africa. "The Volta River Project: How Nkrumah's Dream to Industrialize Ghana as a Model for the Whole of Africa." *Current Affairs*, —February 8, 2018.
- Noer, Thomas J. "The New Frontier and African Neutralism: Kennedy, Nkrumah, and the Volta River Project," *Diplomatic History* 8, no.1 (1984): 61-80.
- Nwaubani, Ebere. *The United States and Decolonization in West Africa, 1950-1960*. Rochester, New York: University of Rochester Press, 2001.
- Peace Corps Worldwide. "Our Most Famous & Infamous RPCV: Marjorie Michalmore (Nigeria)." *Occasional Essays about the History of the Peace Corps*. Accessed March 23, 2020, <https://peacecorpsworldwide.org/our-most-famous-infamous-rpcv-Marjorie-Michalmore-Nigeria/>
- Quaidoo, Eric. "The United States and the overthrow of Kwame Nkrumah." M.A. Thesis, University of Ghana, Legon, 2010.

- Rice, Gerard T. *Twenty Years of Peace Corps*: Washington, D.C: Government Printing Office, 1981.
- Rooney, David. *Kwame Nkrumah: The Political Kingdom in the Third World*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988.
- Schlesinger, Arthur T. *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House*, 1st ed Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965.
- Schmidt, Elizabeth. *Foreign Intervention in Africa: From the Cold War to the War on Terror*: Cambridge: University Press, 2013.
- Stein, Grace B. *Education in Ghana*: Washington: U.S. Department. of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, 1976.
- Stoner, John C. "We Will Follow a Nationalist Policy, But We Will Be Neutral: American Labor and Neutralism in Cold War Africa, 1957-1962" In *American Labor's Global Ambassador: The International History of the AFL-CIO During the Cold War*, edited by Robert Anthony Waters, and Geert Van Geothem, 237-251. New York: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2013.
- Thompson, Scott W. *Ghana's Foreign Policy 1957-1966, Diplomacy, Ideology, and the New State*: Princeton: University Press, 1969.
- Tunteng, Kiven P. "Kwame Nkrumah and the African Revolution." *Civilizations, Institut de Sociologie de l'Université de Bruxelles*, 23/24, no. 3/4 , (1973/1974) : 233-247.
- USHistory.org, "American Political Attitudes and Participation." *American Political Culture: American Government Online Textbook*, Accessed February 29, 2020, <https://www.ushistory.org/gov/4a.asp>
- Walton, Richard J. *Cold War and Counterrevolution: The Foreign Policy of John F. Kennedy*. New York: Viking Press, 1972.

Watkins, Thayer "The Volta River Project in Ghana, West Africa," San Jose State University:EconomicsDepartment,<https://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/watkins/volta.htm>

William, Steel F. *Import Substitution and Excess Capacity in Ghana*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972.

Williams, David. "The Ghana Economy, " *The World Today* 22 no. 11 (1966): 475-481.