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Pan-Africanism, Neo-colonialism and Non-Alignment

Similarities and differences in the political
thoughts of Kwame Nkrumah and Thomas
Sankara

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MAP OF AFRICA

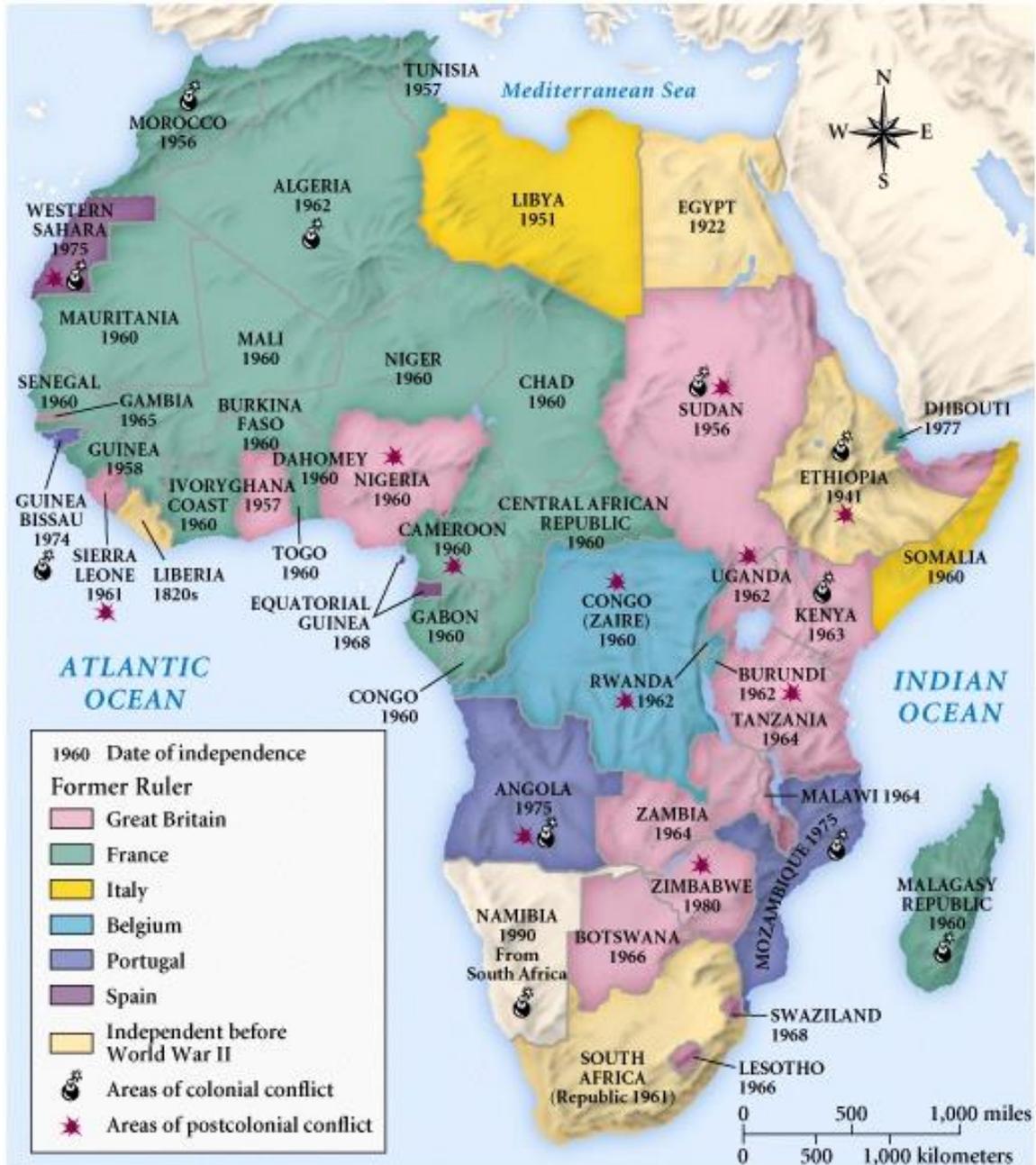


Figure 1. **Map of African decolonization.** Source: <http://selfstudyhistory.com/2015/01/25/decolonisation-of-africa/>

ABSTRACT

L'obiettivo di questa tesi è di analizzare le analogie e le differenze nel pensiero politico di Thomas Sankara rispetto a Kwame Nkrumah in riferimento a tre tematiche specifiche: Neo-Colonialismo, Pan-Africanismo e Non-Allineamento. Sankara, presidente del Burkina Faso, un Paese che lui stesso descrive come un concentrato delle disgrazie del mondo, salì al potere il 4 Agosto 1983; ventitré anni dopo l'indipendenza del paese dalla madrepatria francese. Nkrumah, invece, fu presidente del primo paese sub-sahariano ad aver acquisito l'indipendenza, nel 1957, la Costa d'Oro. David Birmingham sostiene che Nkrumah sia il padre teorico del nazionalismo africano; Intendendo per nazionalismo africano la lotta contro la colonizzazione europea del continente Africano che ha condotto alla formazione di nuovi stati.¹ Da altri viene definito un abile pensatore, organizzatore, oratore, nonché liberatore.

Dal 1957 al 1990 tutti gli stati Africani ottennero la loro indipendenza formale. Nel periodo che segue le prime indipendenze alcune tematiche emersero da subito. Una di queste fu l'unione dell'Africa. Negli anni 60 i leader dei nuovi stati africani si divisero tra coloro che promuovevano la formazione di una federazione dei paesi africani, e coloro che a questo piano sostituivano una mera cooperazione economica. La statua di Kwame Nkrumah davanti alla sede dell'Organizzazione dell'Unità Africana spiega in parte il ruolo che ha avuto quest'uomo nella costruzione intellettuale e pratica dell'unità africana negli anni 60. In questi anni Nkrumah si fece promotore del Panafricanismo² continentale, ritenendo che questo potesse essere una soluzione all'emergente

¹ The Father of African Nationalism, David Birmingham, Ohio University Press, 1998

² Pan Africa=tutta Africa

instabilità politica, economica e sociale dell'Africa di quei anni. La causa di questa instabilità egli lo attribuiva al continuo sfruttamento del continente da parte degli ex-colonizzatori anche dopo l'indipendenza formale. Infatti, attraverso le nuove élites formati in questi paesi, i paesi occidentali riescono ancora a mantenere la loro influenza -economica, politica e ideologica- sull'Africa anche in seguito alla fine del colonialismo. Nkrumah conia il nuovo termine Neo-colonialismo per descrivere questo nuovo fenomeno. Il termine in sé implica una nuova forma di colonialismo, il colonialismo che adotta nuovi metodi, nuovi meccanismi di controllo. I tre concetti chiave nella politica estera di Kwame Nkrumah furono la lotta contro il neo-colonialismo, il contributo alla formazione dell'unità africana e l'aderenza ad una politica di non-allineamento nel contesto della guerra fredda. Nkrumah contribuì ampiamente a questi tre argomenti nei suoi scritti oltre che attivamente egli anni 50 e 60. La sua voce non mancò di farsi sentire nelle varie assemblee generali dell'ONU, dovè sollecitò tutti gli stati presenti a perseguire una politica di pace e di non interferenza negli affari interni degli altri stati. Fu uno dei padri fondatori del Movimento dei Non-allineati, nato a Belgrado nel 1961 nel contesto della guerra fredda. Nkrumah fu promotore degli ideali del movimento, quali la neutralità rispetto ai due blocchi creatisi nel contesto della guerra fredda, il principio della coesistenza pacifica, la lotta per la liberazione dei paesi ancora sotto il giogo del colonialismo, il disarmo e la non-proliferazione delle armi.

Il presidente ghaniano si fece promotore dell'unità Africana, argomento approfonditamente discusso nel suo libro *"Africa must unite"*, scritto nel 1963; lo stesso anno in cui insieme ad altri leader africani organizzò ad Addis Abeba la conferenza pan-africana da cui originò l'Organizzazione dell'Unità Africana.

Durante gli anni 80 Sankara prenderà su di sé queste tematiche. Prendendo spunto dagli argomenti mossi da Nkrumah, Sankara adatterà questi temi al suo contesto specifico, quello del Burkina Faso; alla diversa epoca, in quanto Sankara matura queste idee anche in relazione agli eventi succedutisi tra gli anni 60 e gli anni 80. Nei quattro anni in cui governò in Burkina Faso Sankara seguì un programma di sviluppo economico, che aveva come scopo di far raggiungere al Burkina Faso un'economia autosufficiente. Lo scopo di questo piano è quello di migliorare le condizioni del popolo, che fino ad allora era stato sfruttato non solo dai colonizzatori direttamente, ma adesso era sfruttato anche dalla nuova classe emergente, che Sankara appella con il termine Bourgeoisie, la quale pur di rimanere al potere governa il paese soddisfacendo unicamente gli interessi della ex-madrepatria. La politica estera di Sankara invece è marcata dal suo esasperato anti-imperialismo, non-allineamento rispetto ai due blocchi formatisi nel periodo della guerra fredda, e la solidarietà verso i popoli in lotta contro l'imperialismo.

INTRODUCTION

Until 1945 European powers were colonial masters over all Africa with the exception of Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia, and South Africa. Over the next three decades, struggles against colonial domination swept Africa of its colonial rulers. By 1990, all African countries had attained their independence, in the sense that they were all self-governing countries.

African people welcomed self-government with great expectations, and hoped for a brighter future. Many believed that these countries, lightened from the heavy burden of colonialism, would develop rapidly and fully participate in the international community. Poverty would be eliminated and diseases reduced. African new leaders, hailed in their countries as heroes, were believed to have faced the hardest task, that is to rid the country of the imperialists; all they had to do now was to control the political destinies of their countries and everything would go on the right direction.

However, all those who lived to see post-colonial Africa realized that all these were illusions. In the decades following independence political and economic instability became constant elements to all these countries. Authoritarian governments spread through the continent, coup d'état and civil wars started to increase numerically. Many economies and infrastructures, that the Europeans had left, degenerated; many countries fell into poverty and development became a dream that was never achieved. Finally, Africans realized that colonialism had

ended, but had not completely disappeared. Far from that, colonialism had sharpened its methods and appropriated of new instruments that would still enable it to control and exploit the continent. Western countries still exercised their influence on Africa, especially through some emergent pro-Western African heads of states, who served the interests of their former rulers. In exchange, they could secure their governmental posts and monopolize the government affairs.

This situation, however, excited the ire of the less conformist African intellectuals and leaders who disapproved the interference and the influence that former imperialists wanted to exercise on Africa. They advocated for the economic, ideological, social and cultural independence of Africa from Western countries.

A prominent figure among these was Kwame Nkrumah, president of the first independent Sub-Saharan country, Ghana. His foreign policy was characterized by three basic aims: to fight against neo-colonialism, work toward the unification of Africa and the maintenance of world peace through a policy of non-alignment. In his book *Neo-colonialism: the last stage of imperialism*, he describes neo-colonialism as a more subtle form of imperialism, an economic and cultural exploitation of former colonies by imperial powers. He condemned the works that Western powers were perpetuating in Africa and incited African countries to fight again neo-colonialism by uniting under a federal government on the example of the United States. Divided, none of these countries was strong enough to contrast neo-colonialism; united, they could win back Africa.

Twenty years later in Burkina Faso, Thomas Sankara resumed Nkrumah's battle against neo-colonialism. He felt that after years of independence the presence of

the imperialists was still cumbersome in Africa. On 4 August 1983, after seizing power, he led Upper Volta through a revolutionary path that aimed at achieving self-sufficiency in the country. His first act was to baptize the country from Upper Volta to Burkina Faso- land of the upright men; and started following the path of Kwame Nkrumah, who had also baptized his country from Cold Coast to Ghana. Thomas Sankara is deemed by many to be one of the greatest African leaders. He was not the head of a state rich in oil or diamonds like Libya and South Africa, but only the small, poor and desert Burkina Faso. Despite this, Sankara proved with facts that the *greatness of a man is not proportional to the size of the place in which he lives*. In the four years he governed Burkina Faso great changes were made in the country. In terms of domestic politics, the main objective of Sankara's revolution was, on the one hand, to increase the quality of life of the population, on the other hand to reduce the economic dependence of Burkina Faso on foreign aid, and to fight against the corruption of the political class. In terms of foreign policy, Sankara strongly condemned imperialism, a word that he interchanged with Nkrumah's neo-colonialism. He followed a policy of non-alignment deeming to be free to choose all his "friends". Famous is his speech at the summit of the Organization of African Union on 29 July 1987, on this occasion Sankara firmly declared that he was not ready to pay Burkina Faso's foreign debt to the Western countries. He incited African leaders to join him, to form a common front against the debt. This day marked the last speech at the OAU, as after only three months he was assassinated.

The aim of this work is to analyze how, Sankara sought to take upon himself, in whole or in part, Nkrumah's legacy on Pan-Africanism, Neo-colonialism and Non-Alignment; and how he adapted these issues to his specific conditions, different era, different country and a different international context. Thus, the core question is what are the arguments that Nkrumah moved in favor of Pan-Africanism, Non-Alignment, and against Neo-colonialism; and how were these arguments resumed by Sankara.

This study will be done through the analysis of the main works Kwame Nkrumah wrote on the themes above and a selection of his speeches. The main books consulted are "*Africa must unite*", written in 1963, and "*Neo-colonialism, the last stage of imperialism*", written in 1965. Other primary or secondary sources will be integrated. Then to Nkrumah's ideas Sankara's will be compared. A study of Sankara's speeches and interviews, integrated with secondary sources, will be useful to understand his thoughts. A comprehensive collection of Sankara's speeches is *Thomas Sankara Speaks* published by Pathfinder in 2007. Some other speeches may be found on the website -<http://www.thomassankara.net>- dedicated to him by a famous biographer of this great leader, Bruno Jaffré.

This thesis is divided in five chapters. The first two chapters aim to give the reader an introduction of the two figures subjects of this thesis. The first chapter, a biography of Kwame Nkrumah, reveals the background of this great leader defined by many Africans as the father of Africa; and hailed by Ghanaians as the Osagyefo (the redeemer) as he lead the country to independence in 1957.

Kwame Nkrumah, first president of Ghana, was born in this country and started his early education in his father's village.

Peculiar years of his life, According to Biney, were those he spent abroad. It was during the in the United States that his political consciousness began to form. According to Howard in 1935 when Nkrumah left Ghana, he did not have any strong anti-colonial views. He did not see the evils of colonialism until he left the colony to attend school in the US. It was during while attending Lincoln University in (città) that Nkrumah wrote "*Towards colonial freedom*". In 1945, he jointly organized the Fifth Pan-African congress together with George Padmore, a Caribbean Pan-Africanist. This congress that brought together over 200 delegates from all over Africa and the Diaspora, was the occasion in which it was decided to accelerate the liberation of the African continent from colonialism and the means to achieve it. Kwame Nkrumah came back to Ghana in 1947, invited by the UGCC to help the party to lead Gold Coast towards independence. In 1957, after splitting from the UGCC, Krumah led Ghana to independence forming his own party, the CPP. Nkrumah became the Prime minister of the newly independent state; and its president in 1960 with the adoption of a new constitution. He governed the country until 1966, year in which he was deposed by a coup d'état while he was on his trip to China.

The biography of Thomas Sankara is the topic the second chapter. Differently than Nkrumah, Sankara came to power after independence had already been achieved in Upper Volta. He became president after the fifth coup d'état in the country and was killed in a coup d'état by the one who helped him in his

ascendency to power in the small country. Sankara was a military, a politician and a revolutionary.

The Third, Fourth and Fifth chapters are the core chapter of the thesis as they deal with the three main topics of this thesis. Neo-colonialism is the topic of the third chapter, which begins giving an historical background of a decolonized Africa and the political and economic instability of the continent in the decades following the first independencies. Then, the following paragraph explores how Nkrumah defined neo-colonialism in 1965. The third paragraph tries to reveal how Sankara adapted these neo-colonial themes to Burkina Faso in 1980s.

The fourth chapter deals with Pan-Africanism. This chapter in the first part analyses the contribution of Nkrumah to the theoretical and practical construction of African Unity. The second part of the chapter is a study on how Thomas Sankara revoked, implicitly or explicitly, Nkrumah's ideas on Pan-Africanism. Sankara adapted Nkrumah's ideas to the major issues of the 1980s, African debt and civil wars, especially in the Portuguese former colonies.

The Fifth chapter deals with how the two leaders moved in the international arena of the cold war as they were both part of the Non-Aligned Movement.

CHAPTER I- THE LIFE OF KWAME NKRUMAH



Figure 2. Dr. Kwame Nkrumah³

1.1 Biography of Dr. Osagyefo Kwame Nkrumah

Kwame Nkrumah was born in September 1909 at Nkroful, a small village in the west of Gold Coast (present Ghana), a Western African country. When he was born Gold Coast had been a British colony since 1874; it was divided in three regions, the coastal region, the Asante and the Northern territories. They were all placed under the authority of a resident commissioner, who was responsible to the Governor of Gold Coast. The governor then was responsible to the Queen.

Nkrumah's father, Kofi Ngonloma, was a goldsmith from the Asona⁴ clan and the mother, Elizabeth Nyanibah, a retail trader from the Anona clan.⁵

³ Picture taken from <http://www.britannica.com/biography/Kwame-Nkrumah>

His early education was conducted at the Roman Catholic school in Half Assini⁶; followed by his attendance to the Achimota College. After his graduation from the college, in 1930, he started his career as teacher at the Roman Catholic Junior School in Elmina and Axim, where he was also offered a post at the Roman Catholic Seminary at Amissano near Elmina. At the age of 26, he left Gold Coast to study in the United States, receiving a Bachelor degree in Economics and Sociology from Lincoln University in 1939 and a Bachelor of Sacred Theology in 1942. In the same year, he received a Master of Science in Education from the University of Pennsylvania, and a Master of Arts in Philosophy in 1943. He was also elected as the president of the African Students' Organization in the United States and Canada.⁷

During his studies abroad, he read the literature of Karl Marx and Marcus Garvey; and came across the writings of George Padmore, a leading figure of Pan-Africanism and African liberation, and William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (known as W.E.B Dubois)⁸. In May 1945, he linked up with Padmore in Manchester, United Kingdom, where he became joint secretary with him in the organizing committee of the fifth Pan-African

⁴ Asona is name of a group of people that are from the same maternal ancestor. This common ancestor is somewhere within their bloodline, which may go back as far as 1000 years. People may come from different tribes, but of the same clan. The same applies to the Anona (or Agona) clan. The other clans are Aduana, Asenie, Asakyiri, Bretuo, Ekuona and Oyoko. See *Historical dictionary of Ghana*, David Owusu-Ansah, Rowman & Littlefield, Plymouth, 2014, p.57

⁵ Ibid. p.239

⁶ A small town and capital of Jomoro district, in Western Region - Ghana. It was the hometown of Nkrumah's father.

⁷ See David Owusu-Ansah (2014, p. 239)

⁸ All these figures will have a significant influence in Nkrumah's political thinking. After the independence of Ghana in 1957 Padmore will be invited in Ghana by Nkrumah and will become his advisor on African affairs. W.E.B Dubois was invited on several occasions by Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana. He died in this country in 1963 as a Ghanaian citizen, which he had become after the U.S. government confiscated his passport. Dubois was also a Pan-Africanist, a sociologist, and civil rights activist. *Africa Unite! Une histoire du panafricanisme*, Amzat Boukari-Yabara, La Découverte, Paris, 2014, p. 128

congress⁹. This congress had a significant influence on Nkrumah's Pan-Africanist thought as it was in this occasion that it was decided to accelerate the struggle for the liberation of Africa from colonial rule¹⁰. Here, Nkrumah first came in contact with many liberation movement leaders, who will, in the years ahead become heads of state of the independent Africa. After the congress he was appointed as general secretary of the working committee of the Pan-African movement chaired by W.E.B Dubois.¹¹

During the two years he spent in Britain, Nkrumah initiated the West African National Secretariat and became its secretary. Its goal was to put into action the "the policies agreed upon in Manchester", in other words to build a united movement throughout West Africa for independence, on a platform of anti-imperialism. They published a monthly paper called *The New African*. In parallel to this movement, the more enthusiastic among them formed *The Circle*, which aim was to "prepare actively for revolutionary work in any part of the Continent".¹²

After 12 years of being away from the colony, he was invited to become the General Secretary of the first political party in the Gold Coast, UGCC (United Gold Coast Convention), presided by Joseph Boakye Danquah.¹³

In 1948 Gold Coast went through a perennial unrest that resulted in boycotts and mass actions (Goods that were brought from Asian, Lebanese and European traders were too much expensive for the locals to afford). In February 1945, due to the rising cost of

⁹ Nkrumah was a proponent of Pan-Africanism, a strong movement for African unity. His purpose was to first assist the other African countries achieve their independence and then unite the country under a continental government based on the example of the federal United States of America.

¹⁰ In the mid-20th century almost all African countries are under European colonialism. France and Britain had colonized almost the entire continent. Portugal, Belgium, Italy and Spain had a smaller share of the continent. African colonialism dates back to the 19th century.

¹¹ See Kwame Nkrumah (1963, p. 132-135)

¹² Nkrumah wanted to start the liberation struggle in West Africa and then expand it to the rest of the continent. See Kwame Nkrumah (1963, p. 135)

¹³ See Nkrumah (1957, p.93)

living, workers and ex-servicemen were protesting against the colonial leaders when the police fired on the protesters. This event instigated a series of riots in Accra, in Kumasi and other smaller cities. The colonial government declared a state of emergency in the Gold Coast. Suspecting the leaders of the UGCC had stirred up the protests; they arrested some of its party members and imprisoned them in the James Fort. Nkrumah was included. Yet, they were soon released as the suspect was proved unfounded.¹⁴

Due to strategic and ideological differences between Nkrumah and the more conservative wing of the UGCC, on 12 June 1949 Nkrumah split from the UGCC to form his party, the CPP (Convention People's Party).¹⁵

The CPP rejected gradualism and adopted as its slogan "Self-Government now". It advocated for "Positive Action", which Nkrumah defined as,

“The adoption of all legitimate and constitutional means by which we can cripple the forces of imperialism in this country. The weapons of Positive Action are: 1.legitimate political action 2.Newspapers and educational campaigns and 3.As a last resort, the constitutional application of strikes, boycotts, and non-cooperation based on the principle of absolute non-violence.”¹⁶

The CPP had the support of the army veterans, an entire generation of discontent school-leavers, large sessions of the vital community of small traders, and all those who for economic or political reasons wished to see the rapid end of the British rule over the country. On 21 January 1950, Nkrumah was tried for inciting an illegal strike and sedition

¹⁴ See, *The Political and Social Thought of Kwame Nkrumah*, Biney Ama, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2011, p. 41-45

¹⁵ *Ibid.* p.38

¹⁶ See *Revolutionary path*, Kwame Nkrumah, International Publishers, New York, 1973, p.94

for publishing an article in the Cape Coast Daily Mail. He was sentenced to three years of imprisonment.¹⁷

1951 was the year of the first Legislative Assembly elections in Gold Coast¹⁸. The election was contested by the CPP, the UGCC, and the smaller National Democratic Party. The CPP won the elections.¹⁹ The CPP had a large following; especially the youth believed in Nkrumah and in his ideologies, and campaigned actively for his release. After a hard pressure on the colonial rulers, Nkrumah was released from the prison on 12 February 1951 and nominated leader of Government Business in the Assembly. A year later he became Prime Minister of the country still under colonial rule. On 10 July 1953, he made his *Motion of Destiny*, calling for independence within the British Commonwealth.²⁰ In his speech in the House of Commons, on this day, he addressed his audience with these words,

“The right of a people to decide their own destiny, to make their way in freedom, is not to be measured by the yardstick of color or degree of social development. It is an inalienable right of peoples which they are powerless to exercise when forces, stronger than they themselves, by whatever means, for whatever reasons, take this right away from them.”²¹

¹⁷ See Political and economic encyclopedia of Africa, Guy Arnold, Longman Current Affairs, UK, 1993

¹⁸ Elections for the Legislative Assembly were held for the first time in Ghana in 1951. Even though there had been elections for the Legislative Assembly since 1925; it had never had control over the Legislation of the Country. In 1951 1951 election was the first to be held in Africa under universal suffrage. The 1951 constitution gave the Executive Council an African majority. An 84-member Legislative Assembly was created: 38 were to be elected by the people, 37 representing territorial councils, six appointed to represent commercial interests and three ex officio members appointed by the Governor.

¹⁹ The CPP won 34 out of 38 elected seats in the Assembly. In urban areas it claimed all five seats and nearly 95% of the votes. Nkrumah himself won the Accra Central seat with 22,780 of the 23,122 votes cast. In rural areas the CPP won 29 of the 33 seats, taking around 72% of the votes.

²⁰ See Ama Biney (2011, p. 44)

²¹ Speech “Motion of destiny”, Accra, 10 July 1953 In: Nkrumah (1980, p. 103)

In 1954 and 1956 the CPP consolidated its power winning both the elections held in these years. When Ghana attained its independence on 6 March 1957, the CPP will be the ruling political party, with Nkrumah as its leader and the head of state of the first independent Sub-Saharan country.²²

On 31st December 1957 Nkrumah married Fathia Helen Ritzk, an Arabic student attending Cairo University; together they had three children Gamal, Samia and Sekou Nkrumah. From a previous relationship he also fathered a son, Francis Nkrumah.²³

In 1960 Ghana became a republic, under the new Constitution, and Nkrumah its president.²⁴ However, he was soon perceived as a dictator by many as in 1964 he declared himself president for life and banned all opposition parties turning Ghana into a one-party state. The amendments to the constitution in January 1964 attributed him wide legislative and executive powers. In 1957 he passed the Ghana Nationality and Citizenship Bill that gave the Minister of the Interior the ability to determine who was or was not a Ghanaian citizen. The Avoidance of Discrimination Act, passed in the same year, forbade the existence of parties on regional, tribal, or religious bases. When the opposition joined to form the United Party (UP) to get around these restrictions, their success made Nkrumah respond more harshly. In 1958 he issues the Preventive Detention Act that allowed him to detain anyone he deemed a treat for the defense and security of the state; in other words his government. Even Though all these Bills were

²² See Ama Biney (2011, p.82)

²³ *Ibid.*p.99-118

²⁴ From 1957 to 1960 the head of state under the Ghana Independence Act 1957 was the Queen of Ghana, Elizabeth II. The Queen was represented in Ghana by a Governor-General, Sir Charles Arden-Clarke.

passed through Parliament, it was just a facade; since even Members of Parliament who opposed him were arrested and imprisoned.²⁵

During the seven years he remained in power, his government grew increasingly unpopular; and Ghana's economy deteriorated. On Feb. 24, 1966, while he was in China in a mission to help end the Vietnam War, he was overthrown in a joint military-police coup led by Major Akwasi Amankwa Afrifa. The coup lasted a day since there was not a significant opposition against it.²⁶ Gocking describes the event in the following words,

“Only the Presidential Guard put up a brief resistance, and within 24 hours the coup was over [...]. The bars were jammed with celebrants the night after the coup [...]. The CPP, with its 2-million-strong membership and 500,000 militants, offered no resistance, and the party allowed itself to be disbanded by a single radio announcement.”²⁷

After the coup Nkrumah went in exile in Guinea, where President Sekou Touré, named him co-president. He died on 27 February 1972 in Bucharest, Romania.²⁸

²⁵ See Kwame Nkrumah's *Politico-Cultural Thought and Politics: An African-Centered Paradigm for the Second Phase of the African Revolution (African Studies)*, Kwame Botwe-Asamoah, Routledge, New York, 2005, p.28-29

²⁶ See *The History of Ghana*, Roger Gocking, Barnes & Noble, USA, 2005, p. 137-138

²⁷ *Ibid.* p. 138

²⁸ *Ibid.* p. 139

CHAPTER II- THOMAS SANKARA

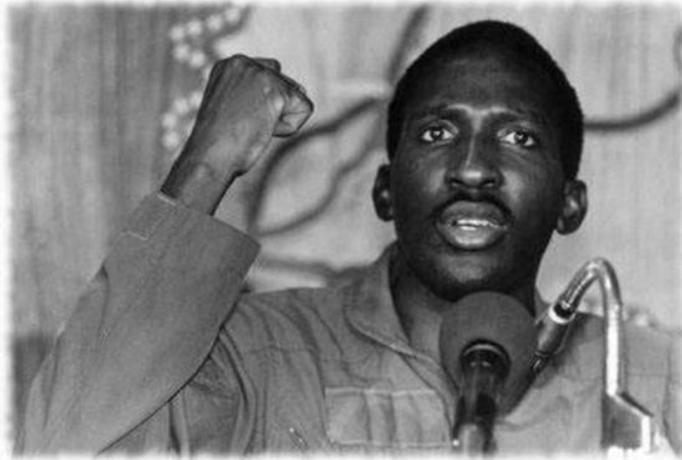


Figure 3. Thomas Sankara during the Speech in at the UN on 4 October 1984²⁹

2.1 Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso, literally the “land of the upright men”, is located in the Central-West Africa. A landlocked Country, this country is surrounded by six Countries, which are Mali on the north, Niger on the east, Benin on the south-east, Ghana on the south, and Ivory Coast on the south-east. Its territory extends to 274.000 square kilometers; and it is divided in 13 regions with Ouagadougou (situated at the center of the Country) as the capital of the Nation since. Burkina Faso is pronounced /buʁ.ki.na fa.so/ (in the international phonetic alphabet); and its people are called Burkinabé (pronunciation). Formally called Republic of Upper Volta, it was renamed on 4 August 1984 by Thomas Sankara.³⁰

²⁹ Picture taken from <http://thewire.in/2015/10/15/remembering-thomas-sankara-the-african-che-13258/>

³⁰ Burkina Faso, Katrina Manson and James Knight Bradt Travel Guides, 2011, p.2-3

Former French colony, Burkina Faso obtained its independence on the 5 August 1960.

Jhpiego account on this country in 2013 revealed that Burkina Faso is one of the poorest countries in Africa. According to the report of this Organization Burkina Faso is a country,

“With more than 80% of the population relying on subsistence agriculture, ongoing drought, poor soil, lack of adequate infrastructure and a low literacy rate have all adversely impacted the population’s health status. As a result, Burkina Faso’s rates of maternal, neonatal and infant mortality are among the highest in Africa.”³¹

In 1983, when Thomas Sankara took the power, Upper Volta –formal name of Burkina Faso before Sankara changed it in 1984- had been independent for 23 years; and four changes in the government had preceded him. In 1960 when the Country was decolonized, Maurice Yaméogo came to power as the leader of the most prominent party, the UDV. This party had already controlled much of the political aspect in Upper Volta when in 1958 France gave autonomy to its colony. In 1960 a new constitution was also adopted; unilateral parliament was set up, and alongside with it a multiparty government. However, Yaméogo did not see democracy as an adequate form of government. He believed that party politics did not promote national unity. So, under him Upper Volta became a one-party state; a state that had a supreme control of all institutions. After three years of government, he started consolidating his power by

³¹ See http://www.jhpiego.org/files/Burkina%20Faso%20Country%20Profile_0.pdf

appointing some of his family members to government posts, such as prime minister, chief of staff and secretary of state. He also started using the government's money to finance some extravagant parties for foreign officials visiting the Country; and travelled more than it was necessary on the expense of the government.³²

In December 1965 he approved a 20% cut in the salaries of civil service employees; as well as reductions in social security for pensioners. For this reason, workers unions started protesting on 3 January 1966 against salary cuts, practices of nepotism and the extravagant use of government funds. On that day Colonel Aboubakar Sangoulé Lamizana responded to the call of the demonstrators to the military to take over the government. He had Yaméogo imprisoned, after forcing him to resign. Lamizana proclaimed himself head-of-state on the radio and ruled the Country until 1980.³³

The government of Lamizana can be divided in three moments. A first stage in which Burkina Faso was under a military martial law, and Lamizana is the nominal head of a military government. In a second stage, in 1970, after a new Constitution had been rectified, he appointed Gérard Kango Ouédraogo (head of the political party UDV) as prime minister and restored, by so doing, the civilian multiparty politics. In the last seven years of his rule, Burkina Faso saw the gradual return to a military martial law. Lamizana in this stage abolished all parties and established a one-party government under the *Mouvement National pour le Renouveau* (MNR)³⁴. He divided the Country into ten districts each under a military prefect. During his fourteen years rule, Burkina Faso relied

³² See Historical Dictionary of Burkina Faso, Lawrence Rupley, Lamissa Bangali, Damitani; Scarecrow press, 1998, p. 67 /231-32

³³ See Histoire Politique Du Burkina Faso 1919-2000, Roger Bila Kabore, Editions L'Harmattan, Paris 2002 p.59-69

³⁴ Movement for national renewal

on foreign aid, especially that of his neighbor Ivory Coast and the former colonial power France, to fund economic and urban development.³⁵

In October 1980 school teachers, dissatisfied with Lamizana's government, began a strike that turned out in a general national strike. On 25 November 1980, Sayé Zerbo overthrew Lamizana's government and suspended the nation's constitution. He promoted his party *Comité Militaire pour le Redressement et le Progrès National* (CMRPN-Military Committee for Reform and National Progress). He aimed at satisfying the needs of all citizens. However he failed to meet the demand from the people to return to civilian rule losing his legitimacy.³⁶

On 1 November 1982 Zerbo banned strikes in the Country and dissolved the Labour Union Confederation (CSV-Confédération Syndacats Voltaïque). The secretary of the confederation, Soumané Touré, was imprisoned for organizing an illegal strike in favor of the right to strike, in December. These events made Zerbo unpopular among the people.³⁷

Sayé Zerbo failed to contain rivalries between Mossi chiefs and the more progressive elements in the army. His government was overthrown in a coup by Gabriel Yoryan Somé, the army chief of staff, on 7 November 1982. This colonel formed the *Conseil de Salut du Peuple* (CSP) formed by 120 members representing both civilians and soldiers. Two days later Jean-Baptiste Ouédraogo was appointed as the head of state. His government will last nine months; it was a period characterized by disagreements between the government and the civilian population on the role of the army in the politics

³⁵ *Ibid.* p.69-77

³⁶ *Ibid.* p.131-141

³⁷ *Ibid.* p. li

of the Nation. Along this, there were also divisions within the army as some were in favor of the Mossi chiefs and others in favor of a socialist government.³⁸

2.2 Biography of Thomas Sankara

Thomas Noel Isidore Sankara was born on 21 December 1949 to Sambo Joseph Sankara and Marguerite Kinda in Yako, a small town in the center of Upper Volta. As Bruno Jaffré narrates in his *Biographié de Thomas Sankara*, he was born as Thomas Noël Isidore Ouédraogo. His mother was from the Mossi tribe the major tribe in Burkina Faso, meanwhile his father was a Silmi-Mossi, a group formed out of the intermarriage between the Mossi and the Peulh herders (*silmisi*).³⁹

When Thomas Sankara was an adolescent, his father changed the family name back to Sankara. Sankara was the third of ten children. At the age of six years he started elementary school in Gaoua, in the Southwest of the Country, and concluded his education in a catholic high school in Bobo-Dioulasso, the second largest city in Burkina Faso and its commercial center. In 1966, at the age of seventeen, Sankara heard on the radio that Lamizana had established the first military academy in Ouagadougou. He was

³⁸ Ibid.p.141-155

³⁹ See Thomas Sankara: An African Revolutionary, Ernst Harsch, Ohio University Press, 2014, p.6
Joseph Sankara was born in Toma, in the district of Ziniguima. His family had good relations with the royal family in Téma. According to their customs, Mossi princes used to give their first daughters in marriage to Silmi-Mossi breeders in order to prevent them from the hard work of farmers. It is for this reason that the sister of Naba Koubri, then prince of the Mossi, married Joseph Sankara's father. So Joseph Sankara becomes indirectly a grandson of the first naba of the mossi, Ouédraogo. During WW2, the chief of Téma had to send one of his sons in war compulsorily. However, all of them were too much young to be enrolled in the army. Joseph was chosen to be sent to represent the family of the chief of Téma. He enrolled in the army with the name Ouédraogo. In the army, he converts to Christianity from Muslim.

also informed that the academy would take in three students who had just completed their secondary school.⁴⁰

At the time, according to Jaffré, the military career was very fascinating. The army had just overthrown the government of the despised president Yaméogo; so it was seen by many young intellectuals as an institution that could help discipline the inefficient and corrupt bureaucracy; and help modernize the Country. Enrolling in the Academy, was also a way to continue education since it came with a scholarship; and this was the main reason why Sankara took the admission exam, passed, and enrolled in 1966.⁴¹

Three years later, after graduating from the Academy, he was sent to Antsirabé, in Madagascar for an advanced officer training. In Antsirabé he had the opportunity to study diverse subjects. For example, he was able to follow some courses on agriculture; and had the chance to work for a year with the “green berets”, members of public service units, inside the army, who were focused on development activities. In his last year in Madagascar he experienced a series of popular uprisings against the conservative pro-Western government. Workers and students organized a wave of strikes and demonstrations and overthrew the regime of President Philibert Tsiranana. These revolts finally brought into positions of power, with the military takeover of Gabriel Ramanantsoa, very radical officers. In 1972, before his return to Upper Volta, Sankara attended a parachute academy in France, where he was exposed to leftist political ideologies.⁴²

In October 1973, on return to Upper Volta, he was given the task to train new recruiters in Bobo-Dioulasso. Here he adapted the military training programs by accompanying

⁴⁰ Ibid. p 9

⁴¹ See Biographié de Thomas Sankara, La patrie ou la mort; Bruno Jaffré, L'Harnattan, Paris, 1997, p.33

⁴² See Harsch (2014, p.11-12). See also Jaffré (1997, p.63)

them with civic education, as he underwent in Madagascar; with this he drew the attention from other in the military.⁴³

In March 1974, Sankara was transferred to Ouagadougou to work in the army's engineering corps; his work was mainly to oversee structures and infrastructures in the City. Here, he denounced openly the corruption of some government officers and army officials who diverted funds bound for public expenditures.⁴⁴

In 1974 a border war broke between Mali and Upper Volta on the control of a piece of land, Agacher, which was believed to be rich in mineral resources. Sankara was sent to the border. Here, he soon discovered that the officers were more interested in their personal enrichment than to help their armies become more efficient in the defense of the Country.⁴⁵

After becoming a full lieutenant, in 1976, Lamizana appointed him as commander of the national parachute commando based in Pô⁴⁶ (CNEC-Centre National d'Entrainement Commando).⁴⁷ Sankara continued the experiment that he had started in Bobo-Dioulasso: he decided to organize educational activities in order to raise the soldiers' civic awareness and intellectual acumen. Since books were not easy to be found in Po, every time travelled to the capital to meet his army superiors or friends, he came back with book. In one of his journeys to Ouagadougou, he met Meriam Sérème. The two got married in the capital in 1979; and had their first child in 1981.⁴⁸

Harsch claims that through all these years Sankara remained aware of the sufferings of his poor compatriots; and he became more and more convinced that something must be

⁴³ *Ibid.* p.12

⁴⁴ See Harsch (2014, p.12)

⁴⁵ See Jaffré (1997, p. 81-91)

⁴⁶ A small town in the Southern Burkina Faso

⁴⁷ See Harsch (2014: p.13)

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* p.14

done.⁴⁹ In his military trainings in France (1972) and in Morocco (1976), and his visits in Ouagadougou he tried to associate with people who were of the same idea that a radical change must take place in Burkina Faso. One of these was Blaise Compaoré, whom he met at the parachute school in Rabat, Morocco. In 1978 he made him his deputy commander at the training center in Pô. He also associated with members of the leftist group. He had some friends among the junior officers that he used to encourage to keep in contact with civilian activists. In the meanwhile, labor union strikes were becoming more frequent and the anger of the lower class population was increasing before the corruption of many élites in the army and civilian bureaucrats.⁵⁰

In 1981, while Sayé Zerbo was ruling the Country, Sankara was promoted to Captain and took his first political official post; he was appointed as the minister of information. He chose Fidèle Toé as his chief of staff and together with him many promising young journalists. However, On 12 April 1982 he dismissed from his post to show his disagreement with the politics of the government. On the radio, Sankara explained his reasons, "I cannot help serve the interests of a minority"⁵¹. What had happened is that the government had received aid from a Nertherland ONG to build a dam Korsimoro. However the money had disappeared. In addition to, this alimentary aid destined to the people had been shared among the ministers, government officials and their families. He senior officers reacted to his resignation by arresting him. He was also demoted in rank and deported in a military camp in Dédougou. This event demonstrated, on Harsch's view, a "broader split between the conservatives and the radical junior

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* p. 14

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p. 15

⁵¹ *Ibid.* p. 17

officers". Henri Zongo and Blaise Compaoré also resigned from the CMRPN and were given the same treatment.⁵²

On 7 November 1982 Colonel Somé Yoryan overthrew Saye Zerbo's government. In this coup d'état junior officers did not participate. Yoryan set a new government coordinated by the Council of Popular Salvation; and appointed Jean Baptiste Ouedraogo as President of Upper Volta. Sankara, Compaoré and Zongo were released from prison.

On 10 January 1983, Sankara was appointed as Prime Minister of the Council of Popular Salvation (CSP). As a minister, Sankara showed up at the first cabinet meeting in bicycle to demonstrate that it is possible to turn down ministerial privileges and benefits; especially when common people are fighting everyday against poverty, hunger and thirst. This post gave him the opportunity to come into contact with many figures in the international politics. For example, he met with some leaders of the Non-Aligned Movement, including Fidel Castro, Samora Machel and Maurice Bishop.⁵³

From the early months of this year Sankara started exposing in public his anti-imperialist and revolutionary ideas. On 26 March in a speech before thousands of people at a rally in Ouagadougou he openly criticizes the political élite of the country, "Who are the enemies of the people?" he asked and then answered,

"The enemies of the people here inside the country, they are all those who have illicitly taken advantage of their social position and their place in the bureaucracy to enrich themselves. By means of bribery, maneuvers, and forged documents, they have become shareholders in different companies."

He continues,

⁵² *Ibid.* p.16-17 / See Also Jaffré (1997: p.105-107)

⁵³ See Harsch (2014, p.17-19)

“They are that group of bourgeois who enrich themselves dishonestly through fraud and bribery, through the corruption of state officials, so that they can bring all kinds of products into Upper Volta, increasing the price tenfold. They are the enemies of the people.”⁵⁴

Sankara’s anti-imperialist stance and his popularity spoiled his relations with the conservative elements within the CSP, including President Ouédraogo. His invitation of Muammar Ghaddafi in Burkina Faso, in February 1983, was the spark that triggered the next coup d’état. On 17 May, two days after the visit of Guy Penne, African Affairs adviser to President Francois Mitterrand, Sankara was dismissed as prime minister and arrested. It was believed that after his arrested the country would restore political stability. Far from that, Sankara’s ouster triggered a series of protest. On 20 and 21 May violent protests conducted by students, trade unionists, workers, and people from the poor neighborhood. Sankara was released at the end of the month, but was soon rearrested.⁵⁵

On 4 august 1983 Blaise Compaoré and 250 soldiers of his forces in Po overthrew the government of Ouédraogo in a coup d’état and proclaiming Sankara head of state.⁵⁶

As soon as he became president of Upper Volta, Thomas Sankara drafted an economic development plan with the aim of achieving self-sufficiency in the country- in order to improve the quality of life of the Burkinabe, including women. He declared that his aim was to contrast an economy “independent, self-sufficient, and planned at the service of a democratic and popular society.” His foreign policy was marked by his anti-

⁵⁴ See *Thomas Sankara Speaks: The Burkina Faso Revolution 1983–87*, Thomas Sankara, Pathfinder Press, 2nd edition- 2007, p.53

⁵⁵ See *Harsch (2014, p.19-21)*

⁵⁶ See *Harsch (2014, p.23)*

imperialism, non-alignment with respect to the two blocks of the cold war and solidarity for the peoples in struggle against neo-colonialism.⁵⁷

Sankara was killed on 15 October 1987 in a coup d'état organized by Blaise Compaoré.

⁵⁷ See Harsch (2014, p.37-47)

CHAPTER III- NEO-COLONIALISM

*"Neo-colonialism is also the worst form of imperialism.
For those who practice it, it means exploitation without responsibility
and for those who suffer it, it means exploitation without redress."*

*Kwame Nkrumah
in "Neo-colonialism, the last stage of imperialism"*

3.1 Decolonization of Sub-Saharan African Countries

Before WW2 Africa was, with the exception of four countries⁵⁸, a continent entirely colonized by European countries. Great Britain and France dominated almost all the continent, leaving few colonies to Belgium, Italy, Spain and Portugal. Germany had lost its colonies after WW1. However, after WW2 had come to its end, African countries underwent a rapid process of decolonization that dismantled a system that had last for more than hundred years.⁵⁹

In the Sub-Saharan Africa this process started in 1957, when Gold Coast became the first country to have gained its independence; and it ended in 1990 with the concession of independence to Namibia, following the end of the apartheid in South Africa⁶⁰.

⁵⁸ Liberia (1847), South African Union (1910), Egypt (1910), and Ethiopia (1922). See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decolonization_of_Africa

⁵⁹ See Histoire de la décolonisation au xx^{ème} siècle, Bernard Droz, éditions du seuil; 2006

⁶⁰ Ibidem

Decolonization in some African countries was a peaceful one; even though it followed anti-imperialist struggles within the colonies, the organizational abilities of the national liberation movement leaders softened the process. In the case of Gold Coast, one of the richest colonies in Africa, the CPP (Convention Peoples Party)⁶¹, a political party led by Kwame Nkrumah started protesting for the right of self-government in 1949. In 1950 they organized a campaign of civil disobedience⁶², which led to massive strikes and rebellion throughout the nation. Nkrumah was arrested and imprisoned by the colonial authorities for sedition. However, after being imprisoned, he gained widespread popularity; and the number of people in Gold Coast in favor of independence grew allowing the CPP to win 34 out of 38 Legislative Assembly seats in 1951. After these elections, governor Arden Clark released Kwame Nkrumah from prison and nominated him Leader of Government Business in the Legislative Assembly. In 1954, as well as in 1956, the CPP won a decisive victory in the general elections. On 6th March 1957, Gold Coast became formally independent, with Kwame Nkrumah as its first Prime Minister⁶³. The process of decolonization in other African Countries with few or any European settlers, for example Nigeria, Uganda and Cameroon, was similar to the Ghanaian experience.

However, in the countries where there were large settlements of Westerners and stronger economic interests independence was obtained through bloody wars. Among these the former Portuguese colonies Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau; the British Kenya and Zimbabwe.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Socialist political party in Ghana. It was founded on 12th June 1949 and was based on the ideas of President Kwame Nkrumah (in charge from 6th March 1957 until 1st July 1960).

⁶² Bernard Droz (2006)

⁶³ Historical Dictionary of Ghana, David Owusu-Ansah, Rowman & Littlefield, 2014

⁶⁴ See *Decolonization, Independence and the failure of politics*, Edmond Keller, In: *Africa*, Edited by Phyllis M. Martin and Patrick O'Meara, Indiana University press, Indiana, 1995

Raymond Betts describes decolonization as a “literature movement that strongly fought against the imperial order.” According to Betts, anti-colonial movement leaders in Africa were usually part of the intellectual élite. Most of them had studied in Europe or in the USA. So, they were familiar with the philosophical Western protest tradition; and recognized the validity of Western values such as the principles of self-determination, economic progress and social welfare. Betts claims that many of these leaders started organizing their anti-colonial protests while they were still studying in the Western capitals.⁶⁵

According to this writer verbal protest played a very important role in the decolonization in Africa. In the early years following WW2, many books and articles were published. These works dealt with a wide range of themes shifting from mere consideration on the spirit of black people to strong condemnations of the European civilization. The subject of the protests of these intellectuals was imperialism, described as offensive, oppressive and devastating.⁶⁶

Léopold Sédar Senghor, poet and philosopher, as well as the president of Senegal from 1960 to 1980, wrote an article entitled ‘*African-Negro Aesthetics*’ in 1956. With this article, Senghor praises the spirit and sensitivity of black people. This idea of the negritude will be the subject of many other writings in this period. In his ‘*Discourse on colonialism*’ Aimé Césaire equals Adolf Hitler’s practices with that of colonialism. He claims that they are both based on humiliation and degradation of humanity. A review published on the magazine *Time* on 30 April 1965 uses these words to describe Frantz Fanon’s book *The wretched of the earth*, “This is not so much a book as a rock thrown

⁶⁵ See Raymond F. Betts, *La decolonizzazione*, Il Mulino 2013

⁶⁶ See Betts (2014)

through the *window of the West*". These works, together with others, will contribute in the shaping of the public opinion, both of the Europeans and Africans in the decades following the end of WW2 against colonial domination. The ideas of these intellectuals were able to travel for long distances thanks to the increasing advancement of newspapers and magazines, radios and cinemas.⁶⁷

The advent of World War II helped to speed up the process of decolonization, as it altered relations between the colonized and the colonizers. The racial hierarchy ordained by the settlers in the colonies was subverted, as the colonies had to support white nations fight against other white nations. Some African soldiers became non-commissioned officers in their colonizers' armies. The war experience enabled the African soldiers to see the other side of their European masters, previously viewed as invincible, self-assured and emotionless. In the course of the battles, the latter displayed the emotions of fear and apprehension just like all people do. They realized that death and suffering is no respecter of race. Fighting side by side with European soldiers had a formative impact on many soldiers, who expanded their world view and started to question their subject status. Many among them started having confidence that they could change the destinies of their countries if they were willing to.

Many tied with other soldiers from different colonies who shared their same concerns. It should also be add that the two world wars had made European powers lose prestige. They had been weakened by the war, became prey to the problems of reconstruction and dependent on U.S. aid.⁶⁸

WW2 favored, almost internationally, a raise of consciousness in favor of the necessity to establish legitimized countries both in the West and in the colonial countries. The

⁶⁷ See Betts (2003)

⁶⁸ See Bernard Droz (2006)

notion of the self-determination of peoples had already emerged in the writings of Lenin, in his book *The Right of Nations to Self-Determination* written in 1914. The 14 points of Woodrow Wilson, in 1918, promoted some principles such as that of nationalism and the right of all conquered countries to be freed. Yet, these concepts were applied only to the Balkans and the Mediterranean countries, and not to African colonies. In August 1941, in Terranova, the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and the U.S. president Delano Roosevelt signed the Atlantic Charter to entail their goals in case they should win the WW2. The third point of this charter stated, "They [the two parties] respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them". In this treaty, as during the Yalta Conference in February 1944 to which all the leaders of the Allied powers participated, Roosevelt tried to condition British Prime Minister to dismantle its colonial empire in exchange of aid from the USA. According to Brocheux, colonization was seen as a violation of the values defended by the allied powers against the Nazi expansion in Europe. In addition to this, the emergence of humanitarian organizations and movements in favor of human rights had made colonialism very unpopular. The Organization of United Nations was created in 1946 as the result of San Francisco Conference in which 51 Countries took part from 25 April to 26 June 1945. The statute of the Organization proved to be in favor of the right of self-determination of the people as it established in Chapter XI (Artt. 73, 74), the principles that guide United Nations' decolonization efforts, including respect for self-determination of all peoples.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ See Brocheux (2012)

From 17 to 24 April 1955, about 2000 delegates and observers from 29 countries of Asia and Africa met in Bandung (Indonesia), in a conference, to discuss their common problems. Prestigious figures such as the Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Chinese Premier Zhou En-lai and the Egyptian Gamal Abdel Nasser, participated. Among the seven main topics that were treated, self-determination was equated to human rights. The opening speech of the President Achmed Sukarno of Indonesia set a denouncing tone for colonialism and the conference adopted a final resolution condemning colonialism.⁷⁰

3.2 Post-colonial issues in Africa

Decolonization was accompanied by a common sense of optimism, it was seen as the inauguration of a new era, an opportunity given to Africa to grow and regain ground lost in the years of colonialism. However, in the decades following decolonization, the scenario in Africa was unstable economically, politically and socially. Many of the Leaders that led these countries to independence had been removed from power. In the case of Kwame Nkrumah, after nine years, he was removed through a coup d'état. His opponents charged him of inefficiency, corruption and authoritarianism. Disorder, oppressions, coup d'états and dictatorship were key concept to describe the post-colonial Africa. Authoritarian regimes were established in many Countries, sometimes in the form of military regimes. Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Togo and Zaire fell into this category. Betts highlights some leaders as Idi Amin in Uganda from 1971 to 1979; Jean-Bédél Bokassa who became president of the Republic of Central Africa in 1976; Mobuto Sese Seko ruled from 1965 until 1997 in Zaire oppressing his people, imprisoning his opposition and exploiting the nations' wealth for his personal use. In the three decades

⁷⁰ See See Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations*, New Press, New York, 2007.

that followed decolonization there were 75 coup d'états; most of them were in a military form. From 1966 to 1972 there had been three coups in Ghana; meanwhile in Nigeria in 1966 there were two of them in the same year. In Burkina Faso From 1966 to 1987 all the five government that came to power were removed through a coup d'état. In the 80s almost 60% of African countries had come under military rule. Of the remaining civilian regimes, only six (Mauritius, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Senegal and Gambia) had a competitive party system⁷¹.

Betts maintains that violations of human rights, poverty and unemployment were common elements to the newly independent countries. The economies of many countries did not bring successful profits and many infrastructures left by the colonial powers had been ruined. Prices of cash crops, set by old imperialists, were lowered on the detriment of African countries, which depended on monoculture economies. The emergence of a global agricultural trade resulted in the increasing import of products from abroad. For example many among them imported grain from the U.S.⁷²

Few years after decolonization civil war broke in different African countries; with the only exception of Senegal, Ghana, Cameroon, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe⁷³. Wars between different tribes were not uncommon. This was mainly due to the fact that with decolonization African countries had formed upon the same borders set by the colonizers; that meant fragmentation of some areas on one hand and in another the fusion of many different tribes with different cultures, histories and religion.

According to Betts, after decolonization one of the weaknesses of African former colonies is in many cases the lack of political leaders capable of dealing with global

⁷¹ See Betts (2003)

⁷² See Betts (2003)

⁷³ See *Authoritarian Rule and democracy in Africa: a theoretical discourse*, Yusuf Bangura, Discussion Paper No.18, UN Research institute for social development (UNRISD), March 1991.

issues. Most of them had studied law, journalism, pedagogy, and medicine so they could only engage in freelance jobs. Few of them were experienced in the field of finance or international commerce.⁷⁴

There was a lack of revolutionary or radical changes in the institutions and organizations inherited from colonialism. After decolonization, the structure of the state and the administrative offices remained the same. The only difference was that the administrators from the colonies had been replaced with ministers from the national governments. These ministers in most case pursued their own interests. Franz Fanon writes, “We have said that the native bourgeoisie, which comes to power uses its class aggressiveness to corner the positions formerly kept for foreigners”⁷⁵. This new leadership depended on Europe and US for financial assistance and the technological advice they needed to achieve their development plans. They put economic growth before economic development. They worked more to increase export production rather than diversifying the economy; or guarantee sufficient crops to meet the needs of domestic consumption.

The decades of decolonization coincided with those of international growth of the economy that ended in the oil crisis in 1973, when the organization of oil exporter countries cut production and increased prices. Many African oil consumer countries saw this as an obstacle to their development. This was followed by a period of a fall in the prices of raw materials and agricultural products. This was harmful for the economy of African countries with a monoculture economy, typical of neo-colonial economy.

⁷⁴ See Betts (2003)

⁷⁵ See *The Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon, Grove Press, New York, 2007, p.103

In many of these countries the land was too much infertile; so they could not increase agricultural production. They lacked agricultural machineries and technical experts necessary to advance agriculture. Also, due to the improving medical and hygienic conditions and the urbanization of some areas, there was a demographic growth that worsened the already hard conditions of these countries: many farmers moved to the cities leaving the cultivable lands.

Many countries had a monoculture economy as it was in the colonial era. Ivory Coast was a producer of bananas, Ghana was a cocoa producer and Senegal cultivated peanuts. Prices were set by capitalist countries; and maintained at very low estimates. For this latter reason the profit of these countries could not grow in parallel to the quantity of production. In 1960 Ghana produced 350.000 tons of cocoa; in 1965 it produced 495.000 tons. Yet, it did not bring any profit since the price of cocoa had fallen in these years. In addition to this, final products were sold to these developing countries at a high price.

Edmond Keller summarizes all the issues dealt above, and introduces another one: the permanence of the European powers in Africa after decolonization,

“When most African states achieved their independence during the late 1950s and early 1960s, there were great expectations for a bright future. It was assumed that they would develop rapidly, with the help of the more industrialized countries, and fully participate in the world community. Poverty and underdevelopment would be eliminated; the population growth rate and the incidence of disease would be reduced; the benefits of education, safe

water, and good health care would be made available to every African citizen. All African leaders had to do was to take control of the political destinies of their countries, and nothing but good would result. But, contrary to such early optimism, the road to self-sustained development in Africa has been long and difficult. Although formal, political colonialism ended, it did not completely disappear. In fact it was simply transformed into neocolonialism, colonialism of a different form. Rather than European interests controlling Africans directly, they came to do so indirectly, mostly through economic relations.”⁷⁶

Finally, economic and social development is subordinated to industrialization, for which the essential conditions these countries lacked: capitals and infrastructures.

This called for large loans that could have not come if not from countries with advanced economies. So, the new governments had to call upon the services of the former colonial powers and forge agreements with them.

3.3 Nkrumah: Neo-colonialism, the last stage of imperialism

Following Ghanaian independence, from 1957 until 1965 Thirteen French colonies and Ten English became independent. The liberation struggle conducted by Nkrumah and many other movement leaders deemed to be successfully bearing its fruits. Africa was getting rid of its colonialists.⁷⁷

However, during the 1960s Nkrumah realized that the presence of the imperialists was

⁷⁶ See Edmond Keller (1995 p.146)

⁷⁷ Ibid.

still rampant in Africa, and that the gaining of independence and national sovereignty by some African countries was purely nominal as it had not altered the relationship between the colonial powers and colonized states in any significant way. Former colonial masters had adopted new strategies to ensure their control of the former colonies.⁷⁸ So, even though some African countries were formally independent, they substantially still depended on their former rulers. In fact, it would have been unrealistic to think that after the concession of independence European powers would leave Africa completely, leaving a century of colonialism behind, abandoning their economic interests.

In 1965 Kwame Nkrumah wrote "*Neo-colonialism, the last stage of imperialism*". In this book, he describes how the colonial powers and the United States responded to the success of African colonial liberation, by shifting their tactics from colonialism to neo-colonialism. After granting African countries formal independence, they were now claiming to aid Africa achieve its development, as a pretext to "accomplish objectives⁷⁹ formerly achieved by naked colonialism⁸⁰".

In *Introduction to Neo-colonialism* Woddis writes,

"As the term itself implies, it is a new form of colonialism. Imperialism has refined and elaborated its methods. New subtleties and agencies have been pressed into service, new instruments added, new personnel trained, new weapons used."⁸¹

⁷⁸ Traditional colonialism in the sense of seizure of land and settlement of imperial populations, or establishment of trade centers to exploit resources.

⁷⁹ To exploit its resources

⁸⁰ The policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically

⁸¹ See Woddis (1972, 52)

A new colonial state may be an international subject, with a defined territory and its effective control, a permanent population, a government and the capacity to enter into relations with other countries. In fact, independent countries were admitted at the UN as sovereign states. Nkrumah argues that the essence of neo-colonialism is, "that the state which is subject to it is in theory independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus, its political policy is directed from outside."

According to Mazrui Kwame Nkrumah's book was inspired by Lenin's theory of imperialism and its title alluded to that of the pamphlet written by the latter in 1916, *Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism*. In his work, Lenin attributed a new meaning to the word "imperialism" by tying it to a particular phase of the capitalist economic development. He argued that the growth of *financial capitalism* and industry in Western countries had created a huge *abundance of capital*. This capital could not be invested conveniently at home, where the workforce was limited. On the contrary, the underdeveloped areas of the world lacked capital but had plenty of workforce and human resources. So capitalism, to support its growth, needed to expand and to subordinate non-industrialized countries. Lenin foresaw that with time the rest of the world would be absorbed by the European financial capitalists. This global system called "imperialism" was a particular stage of capitalist growth, *the highest stage*, according to Lenin. He believed that rivalry between the various imperial powers would accelerate the end of capitalism.⁸² Nkrumah believed imperialism sustained itself because of its never ending need of accumulation and production, now sustained on a global scale. Nkrumah resumed these themes by noting how capitalism and its problems -like class conflict-

⁸² See *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Vladimir Lenin, Penguin UK, 2010

occurring at the metropolitan centers become "transferred" into the peripheries. The widening gap between the poor countries and the rich capitalist countries, who exploited the resources of the former, was the evidence for Nkrumah that imperialism was still at work in the World. The developed countries were still gaining capital at the expense of developing nations' potential capital gain. Nkrumah sought to continue Lenin's thought. He believed that imperialism was in its final stage because in the past a country, on which neo-colonial regime had been imposed, could be converted into a colony. He cited the example of Egypt in the 19th century. From the mid-20th century this process was no more practicable. Nkrumah believed that old-fashioned colonialism was entirely abolished. Even though there were still colonial countries in Africa, this practice is retreating and it is irreversible. However, "in place of colonialism as the main instrument of imperialism we have today neo-colonialism."⁸³

According to Woddis, neo-colonialism began its operations even before the achievement of national independence by the colonies. The colonial masters prepared the ground in order to be able to continue their influence in Asia and in Africa. When after WW2, in face of the advance national movements in Asia and Africa, they had to retreat from these continents, they made sure that state power did not fall into the hands of leaders who were not prepared to co-operate with Western countries. Colonialism itself, argues Woddis, was not only a question of foreign rule, but also an alliance with some indigenous elites, relatively conservatists and traditionalists, who had interest in the alliance with the colonial rulers. After independence, the Western-trained élites were seen by the colonizers as potential allies in their effort to maintain Western presence in

⁸³ Nkrumah (1965)

the former colonies. The imperialist powers did their best to bring on top these élites before conceding independence to their countries. Woddis brings the example of Basutoland (present Lesotho). In the mid-1960s, when the pressure for independence grew in this country, the British government had to bring the conservative parties on top. The elections in April 1965 gave a majority of votes to the *Basutoland congress party* and the *Marematlou Freedom Party*. However, British Government handed over power to Chief Leabua and his National party, despite all the protests.⁸⁴ Nkrumah also reveals such attempts of the colonial powers to prepare the ground for neo-colonialism before independence. In “*Africa must unite*” he states that France never adhered completely to the idea of giving ultimate independence to its colonies. So, “when it became obvious that national sovereignty could no longer be withheld, the ground was prepared for maintaining the emerging independent nations within the French orbit.”⁸⁵

Neo-colonialism may be control exercised on a country by its former colonial master. However, it is not always the case; neocolonial control can also be exercised by a different actor, be it another country or an international financial and monetary organization- Belgian Congo's (renamed Zaire in 1967) immense mineral wealth were in the hands of Belgian, British and American multinationals. Woddis identifies the main neo-colonial countries as Britain, France, United States and Western Germany. The first two had substantial colonial empires in Africa at the end of WW2, meanwhile Western Germany and the United States, although imperialist powers, did not have colonial possession in Africa. He states that Britain and France had been the main target of the national liberation movements. After independence these movements saw with suspicion these two countries. On the contrary, the United States stepped into Africa in

⁸⁴ See Woddis (1972)

⁸⁵ See Nkrumah (1965)

the guise of *anti-colonial* power and as the dominant force- economically and militarily- in the capitalist world. This made the United States the major neo-colonial power. Nkrumah also identifies the United States as neo-colonialist. He stated that after exercising its power in Latin America for centuries, the United States turned towards Europe during the 20th century. After WW2 most of the Western European countries were indebted to the US. The latter had supported them with loans and supply of ammunitions to fight the Triple Alliance.⁸⁶

Neo-colonialism was exercised through economic and financial measures. However, this is not the only field in which they operate. According to Nkrumah they operate also in the “political, religious, ideological and cultural spheres.”⁸⁷

In the economic sphere, neo-colonial powers operate by exploiting the resources of the continent. Nkrumah judges Africa’s economic situation to be a paradox. Even though this continent is rich in mineral and agricultural resources, all that comes from its soil continues to enrich not the continent, but foreign "groups and individuals who operate to Africa's impoverishment." ⁸⁸

Mass investment is one of the economic methods through which imperialists exploit Africa. The European countries and USA have established many companies through which they exploit market area and cheap labor. Secondly, these countries control the world market and fix prices for African cash crops. These prices are kept very low. On the contrary, manufactured goods produced by capitalist countries are sold at high price

⁸⁶ See Woddis (1972)

⁸⁷ Nkrumah (1965, p.)

⁸⁸ Ibid.

in Africa.⁸⁹ For these reasons even though Africa produces much, it does not profit proportionally. Nkrumah reports that from 1951 to 1961 -without taking into consideration oil prices- the general level of process of primary products had fallen of 33,1 percent. At the same time, the prices of manufactured goods had risen by 3,5 percent. The price of machinery and equipment had risen 31,3 percent. The volume of exports grew in these years, meanwhile the profit in foreign exchange from the same exports decreased. Asia, Africa and Latin America in this period lost \$41,400 million in trade with capitalist countries. Ghana and Nigeria are two examples. In 1954 when Ghana's production was 21,000 tons, her earnings from the cocoa crop were £85 million. In 1964, with an estimate crop of 590,000 tons, Ghana's export profit was estimated at around £77 million. Nigeria in the same period had switched from a production of 89,000 tons of beans to 310,000 tons; her profit in 1964, however, was £40 million against the £39 million of 1954.⁹⁰

Another instrument of control according to Nkrumah were multilateral aid through international organization such as IMF (International Monetary Bank), World Bank, the IFC (International Finance Corporation and the IDA (International Development Association). These organizations have U.S capital as their major backing. The conditions to obtain their loans are offensive, comments Nkrumah, as countries who borrow money from them had to supply information about their economies, submit their policies and plans to be reviewed by the World Bank. The borrower and had to accept the supervision of the use of these loans by the agency. On the contrary, loans from Soviet Union were more flexible, judges Nkrumah; and their interest rates are also lower than the Western. He wrote in *Neocolonialism*,

⁸⁹ Sometimes the colonial state may be obliged to take the manufactured products of the imperialist power excluding products from other countries.

⁹⁰ Nkrumah (1965)

“Figures from the World Bank for 1962 showed that seventy-one Asian, African and Latin American countries owed foreign debts of some \$27,000 million, on which they paid in interest and service charges some \$5,000 million. Since then, such foreign debts have been estimated as more than £30,000 million in these areas. In 1961, the interest rates on almost three-quarters of the loans offered by the major imperialist powers amounted to more than five per cent, in some cases up to seven or eight per cent, while the call-in periods of such loans have been burdensomely short.”⁹¹

In most cases neo-colonialists exercised monetary control over the subordinated countries' foreign exchange by imposing banking systems that they themselves controlled.⁹²

Nkrumah criticized investments and aid from Western countries as not effectively useful for the development of African states. The French F.I.D.E.S (Fonds d'Investissement et de Développement Économique et Social) and C.C.O.M. (Caisse Centrale de la France d'Outre-mer) were founded with the purpose of aiding economic development, yet he reports that aid from C.C.O.M was mainly used to cover the cost of public administration and maintenance of French forces in its neo-colonies. F.I.D.E.S projects, on the other hand were in his view “inadequate and improperly planned, with little or no regard for local conditions or needs”. Within these projects no attempt was made to lay the foundations for industrial growth or diversification of agricultural products, these would promote true development.⁹³

⁹¹ Nkrumah (1965)

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Nkrumah 1963

Nkrumah claims that in a neo-colonial country the political and economic élite serve the interest of the colonial masters and are generally afraid of taking any step which would challenge the colonial pattern of commerce and industry. Any aid that came from the developed countries was invested in a circular circuit that returned profits to their neo-colonial masters.⁹⁴

“The struggle against neo-colonialism is not aimed at excluding the capital of the developed world from operating in less developed countries. It is aimed at preventing the financial power of the developed countries being used in such a way as to impoverish the less developed.”⁹⁵

It is important and unavoidable that the develop nations continue to trade with African countries; however, writes Nkrumah, this exchange should be profitable for the development of both rather than being beneficial only for one side.

Western countries also neo-colonized Africa through cultural means such as media, language, education and religion. On Nkrumah’s view, the cinema stories of Hollywood were used as instruments of cultural influence. He wrote,

“Along with murder and the Wild West goes an incessant barrage of anti-socialist propaganda, in which the trade union man, the revolutionary, or the man of dark skin is generally cast as the villain, while the policeman, the gum-shoe, the Federal agent- in a word, the CIA-type spy is ever the hero.”⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Nkrumah (1965)

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

Evangelism is another of their methods. Nkrumah proposes the example of Jehovah's Witnesses who had created trouble in some developing countries by teaching the new citizens not to salute their peoples.⁹⁷

The United States have more and more foreign correspondents and offices abroad. Nkrumah reports the systematic use of U.S. citizens abroad in virtual intelligence activities and propaganda work. Engaged in such activities are the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the U.S. Information Agency (USIA), and the Peace Corps. Nkrumah gives an account on USIA. This agency has a staff of 12,000 people; and US invest \$130 million a year in it. It had more than seventy editorial staff working on publications abroad; and sixty radio stations abroad outside the US. In Africa alone they conducted thirty radio programmes "whose content glorifies the U.S. while attempting to discredit countries with an independent foreign policy." Of its 120 branches, 50 were located in Africa. It had 250 centers abroad, 200 cinemas, 8,000 projectors and 300 film libraries. Nkrumah maintained that USIA planned and coordinated its activities in close relations with the Pentagon, CIA and other Cold War agencies, including even armed forces intelligence centers. Through monopoly of the press, information was filtered by neo-colonialists despite the immense number of newspapers and magazines in Africa.⁹⁸

In the decades following independence, imperialists conducted many coup d'états in Africa. They strove to remove from power all those leaders who were against their interest of exploiting the country. Leaders, who were bold enough to denounce the acts

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ See Nkrumah (1965)

of the neo-colonialists in Africa or to undertake a national economic plan centered on the benefits of their countries.⁹⁹

In 1960, conscious of the strength reached by the national liberation movement, and fearing a war as the one fought in Algeria, Belgium granted Congo its independence. Patrice Lumumba, the leader of National Congolese Movement (MNC), became Prime Minister of the country. No sooner had the country attained independence, than it started facing severe political insecurities: in July 1960 Moise Tshombe¹⁰⁰ backed by Union Meniere (Mining Union of Upper Katanga) and Belgian advisors, proclaimed the independence of the rich mining region of Katanga. This opened a crisis on the future prospects of the country: on one hand a government favoring continued ties with Belgium, on the other that of Lumumba, in favor of a revolutionary socialist regime that breaks all contact with the colonial experience. The United Nations tried to curb this conflict with a military intervention. However, this met a strong opposition from Belgium, France and England. Since the United Nations refused to help suppress the rebellion in Katanga, Lumumba turned to the Soviet Union for aid. This alarmed Western countries, especially the United States, which many believed was involved in the later assassination of Lumumba. Lumumba was subsequently imprisoned by state authorities under Mobutu and executed by firing squad under the command of the Katanga's authorities. After the withdrawal of UN troops in 1964, the crisis ended with the final seizure of power by General Mobutu, who established a pro-Western military regime. Tshombe became the Prime Minister of the Democratic republic of Congo.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ See Woddis (1972)

¹⁰⁰ Leader of the CONAKAT - Confédération des Associations Tribales du Katanga. This party won control of the Katanga provincial legislature in May 1960 general elections, a month before Congo Independence.

¹⁰¹ See Death in the Congo: Murdering Patrice Lumumba, Emmanuel Gerard, Bruce Kuklick, Harvard University Press, Feb 10, 2015

Many African countries signed a defense agreement with the neocolonialist; who in some cases had built military bases in their neo-colonies.

“The retention by the departing colonialists of various kinds of privileges which infringe on our sovereignty: that of setting up military bases or stationing troops in former colonies and the supplying of ‘advisers’ of one sort or another. As we have seen before, one neo-colonial relation is also supported by the establishment of relations with the ruling class, and the support of Puppet Leaders.”¹⁰²

During the cold war, because of the nuclear parity between them, the two superpowers, they never went to war directly with each other. However, in some occasions, the tension between the two led them in getting involved in conflicts where each one backed one side of the two fronts. Some examples are the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and conflicts in Central America. Much of the Cold War took place through these indirect conflicts, in which the major powers operated largely arming or funding the two fronts implied in the conflict.

“Certainty of mutual mass destruction effectively prevents either of the great power blocs from threatening the other with the possibility of a world-wide war, and military conflict has thus become confined to ‘limited wars’. For these neo-colonialism is the breeding ground.”¹⁰³

Other aspects of the cold war conflicts are the effort of Western allies and the Eastern bloc to keep developing countries under their ideological influence. Through espionage

¹⁰² See Nkrumah (1965)

¹⁰³ See Nkrumah (1965)

by spies and traitors who were working secretly on both sides they were able to transport their ideological conflict in Africa. According to Woddis the aim of neo-colonialism is to continue the economic exploitation of the Third World, as well as to prevent the advance of former colonial people to socialism. Western governments' spokesmen constantly made reference to the importance of keeping these countries "with the West".¹⁰⁴

"If Africa was united, no major power bloc would attempt to subdue it by limited war because from the very nature of limited war, what can be achieved by it is itself limited. It is, only where small States exist that it is possible, by landing a few thousand marines or by financing a mercenary force, to secure a decisive result."¹⁰⁵

Neo-colonialism can be defeated through the union of African countries. Nkrumah believed that the methods of neo-colonialism pointed in one direction, that of dividing the peoples of Africa and rule them. Divided Africa is weak, united they can fight and defeat all external enemies. Woddis writes,

"Clearly, despite their technical advantage in military terms, the Europeans could never have held on to their colonial possessions in the face of a united movement of awakened people. Thus it became a particular objective of colonial rule to keep the people divided, [...] divide and rule, the playing off of one nationality, tribe, or religion against another, became an essential characteristic of colonialism."¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ See Woddis (1972)

¹⁰⁵ See Nkrumah (1965)

¹⁰⁶ See Woddis (1972,)

Divided, African countries are forced to turn to the former imperialist power for defense and internal security since their individual strength is limited. In parallel to the continental unity, cooperation with Asian and Latin American countries has to be sought for. These, together with Africa were Third World countries. They shared the same fate and common external enemies. If the growing socialist sector of the world is also backing all these *liberatory forces*, then indeed neo-colonialism will be defeated.

In addition, African countries must encourage and utilize the support to the liberation struggle and anti-colonialism of the few people in the Western world who sympathize with their cause. Finally, countries should draft national plans designed to strengthen them as independent nations; and adopt a policy of political non-alignment.

The publication of Nkrumah's book *Neo-colonialism* in 1965 was not welcomed by the Western countries. It marked the deterioration in relations between the Ghana and the US. The US State Department reacted with hostility to the book and considered it "anti-American in tone." In November 1965 Mennen Williams, US ambassador to Ghana, sent a telegram to Miguel Augustus Ribeiro, Ghana's ambassador to the United States, condemning the book. He did not accept the argument that Nkrumah was attacking a system and not the American president and government.¹⁰⁷

3.4 Sankara: Neo-colonialism the enemy outside the country

Sankara was an ardent anti-imperialist. When he came into power in 1983, Burkina Faso had been an independent country for twenty-three years. In his 4 years on leadership in the country he repeatedly announced that his plan for Burkina Faso was to build a new society rid of imperial domination. In 1983 all African countries had attained their

¹⁰⁷ See Biney (2011, p. 153)

independence with the exception of Namibia, colony to South Africa, and Eritrea, under Ethiopia's domination.¹⁰⁸ Sankara used the word imperialism as interchangeable to neo-colonialism; or in other words as the idea that stands at the basis of neo-colonialism. Yet, he gave this word the same significance that Nkrumah had given it two decades back. However Sankara restrained his battle against neo-colonialism to France; most of his speeches are addressed to Paris, even though he does not preclude other imperial powers. Kwame Nkrumah in his battle against neo-colonialism did not focus on Ghana solely, but extended his view to all Africa. Again, Sankara resumed Nkrumah's criticism against most African élites, who pursuing their own interests, are more engaged serving the interest of the former colonial empires than their countries'. They both believe that neo-colonialism causes the division of the society into layers, the poor workers and the rich bourgeoisie are the two main divisions. The position of the latter is reinforced by the Western countries.

Sankara, more than Nkrumah does, places at the center of his criticism against neo-colonialism the issue of class struggle. His fight against neo-colonialism hammers the divisions against poor countries, exploited by the imperialists, and the capitalist countries, parasites of the Third World countries.

In the specific case of Burkina Faso, France still exercised control in the country when Sankara's revolution took place in the 1980s.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ See My life through six continents, Azm Fazlul Hoque, Xlibris Corporation, 2011, p.160

¹⁰⁹ See Batà (2003, p. 43)

3.4.1 French neo-colonialism in Africa

In 1983, when Thomas Sankara came to power, Burkina Faso had been independent for twenty-three years, yet the presence of the imperial power was still vivid. According to Ndiaye general Charles de Gaulle was a cunning politician, who organized the continuation of the colonial rule in a more subtle form. In 1954 France entered in war with the National Liberation Front (FLN) of Algeria. The aim of this movement was to end the French colonial occupation of the country. France colonialism was shaken by this war. De Gaulle in 1958 gave the choice to French colonies¹¹⁰ between maintaining their status quo, secession or cooperation within the French Community. The French Community would replace the French Union (name given to the French Empire in the aftermath of World War II). The Community would leave wide autonomy to the colonies. France would control only the currency, defense and the strategic raw materials. De Gaulle states that any country that adheres to the French Community may subsequently negotiate its independence. With the exception of Guinea, all French colonies choose adherence to the French Community, and later on independence.¹¹¹

When Sankara came to power, as until presently, former French colonies paid colonial debts to France for the benefits of colonization¹¹²; each former colony was obliged to put in the French treasury 20 percent of their foreign currency reserves for financial liabilities. Secondly, these countries deposited 65 percent of their foreign currency reserves into France Central bank. If they needed a sum from this money, they had to borrow from France at commercial rates. Thus, the monetary policies of these countries

¹¹⁰Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo-Brazzaville, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon.

¹¹¹See French-Speaking Africa since Independence In: African Affairs Vol.62, J. H. A. Watson, Oxford University press, 1963

¹¹² They paid for the infrastructures built in their countries during colonization.)

were operated by the French Treasury.¹¹³

France also had the first right to buy any natural resources found in the land of francophone countries. These states were allowed to seek for other partners only after France had manifested her lack of interest in the resources. French companies were considered first in the awarding of government contracts; and only after that, these countries could look elsewhere. It did not matter if they had obtained better proposals elsewhere.¹¹⁴

In 1983 French colonies were also members of the franc zone¹¹⁵ and were obliged through the Colonial Pact¹¹⁶ to use as their currencies the CFA franc, guaranteed by the French treasury. Siradiou Diallo noted that African members of the franc zone were never consulted in any affairs of real importance. For example, he cited, in 1969 after the devaluation of the franc by 12.5 percent, all the members of the franc zone had to devalue the CFA franc. This meant that all foreign debts of these countries, in currencies different than the French franc were increased by 12.5 percent. On this point Diallo sustained that France benefited from this monetary zone in Africa.¹¹⁷ France also promoted its culture in the former colonial countries by providing them with teachers, technicians and professors.

According to Wauthier, on addressing a media conference in Fort-Lamy on 30 January

¹¹³See Historical Dictionary of Burkina Faso, Lawrence Rupley, Lamissa Bangali, Boureima Diamitani, Pub. Rowman & Littlefield, 2013, p.80

¹¹⁴See Wauthier (1972)

¹¹⁵ An exclusive monetary area that linked France to its former colonies in Africa

¹¹⁶See The CFA Franc Zone: Common Currency, Uncommon Challenges,

Ms. Anne Marie Gulde, Mr. Charalambos G. Tsangarides, International Monetary Fund, 2008, p.6

¹¹⁷See Reflections on the first decades of Negro-African Independence, Siradiou Diallo, Presence Africain, 1971

1972, Pompidou angrily admitted that if helping its colonies made France a neo-colonialist, then long lived neo-colonialism.¹¹⁸

France signed military agreements with the Community countries. This did not only aim to defend them from foreign attacks, but it also represented a form of insurance against possible coup d'état, and to discourage subversive activities. Wauthier cites the example of the Gabonese president Leon Mba, a loyal ally to France in Africa, was assisted by the French paratroopers in the early 1964 coup against his government. Many other coup d'état, on the other hand, against revolutionary leaders were assisted by France.

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3.4.2 Sankara: the enemies inside and outside Burkina Faso

“The enemies of the people are outside our borders. [...] These enemies are neo-colonialism; they are imperialism.”¹²⁰

The above are the words of Thomas Sankara at a mass rally in Upper Volta on 26 March 1983. Sankara, speaking as the Prime Minister of the Council of Popular Salvation, delivered this speech in the country's Ouagadougou.

Sankara began his revolution by changing the colonial name of Upper Volta in Burkina Faso, the land of the upright men in the two major languages of the country, in Moré and Djula. In 1957, Kwame Nkrumah also changed the name of the former British colony Gold Coast into Ghana a name which was rooted deeply in ancient African history.¹²¹

Sankara's fight against neo-colonialism, can be interpreted on two levels. Firstly, it is a struggle against class differences. Sankara believed that class difference in Burkina

¹¹⁸See Wauthier (1972)

¹¹⁹See Wauthier (1972)

¹²⁰See Sankara (2007, p. 53)

¹²¹See Kwame Nkrumah: A Case Study of Religion and Politics in Ghana ,Ebenezer Obiri Addo, University Press of America, 1999, p. 184

Faso was a product of neo-colonialism. Those who were oppressing the people internally were the local representatives of the neo-colonialists. In a second dimension the struggle against neo-colonialism targeted the former colonial empires that after granting independence to the Third World countries, during the previous decades were now extending their tentacles in the affairs of the latter and exploiting their resources.¹²²

“In our country, the question of the class struggle is posed differently from the way it’s posed in Europe. We have a working class that’s numerically weak and insufficiently organized. And we have no strong national bourgeoisie either that could have given rise to an antagonistic working class. So what we have focused on is the very essence of the class struggle: in Burkina Faso it’s expressed in the struggle against imperialism, which relies on its internal allies.”¹²³

According to Sankara, in 1960 the Burkinabe attained their independence optimistic of the future outcome of the country. They celebrated this independence as a victory over *forces of foreign oppression and exploitation*. What they ignored was that France had not left the country, but had just transformed its mechanism of domination and exploitation into a more subtle one; and that Burkina Faso had turned to a neo-colony rather.

“In their essence, neo-colonial society and colonial society do not differ in any way from each other. And so for a colonial administration we have seen a neo-colonial administration substituted that is identical in every way with the first. For the colonial army is substituted a neo-colonial army with the same

¹²² See Sankara (2007, pp. 53-55)

¹²³ Ibid. p.384

attributes, the same functions and the same role of guardian of the interests of imperialism and of those of its allies within the nation. For the colonial school system is substituted a neo-colonial school system that has the same goals of alienating the children of our country and of reproducing a society that is essentially at the service of imperialist interests and secondarily at the service of imperialism's lackeys and local allies.”¹²⁴

This transformation resulted in a rearrangement of classes and social layers, and in the formation of new classes. After 1960, a new social class, which Sankara identified as the bourgeoisie, set the political and economic foundation for the imperialists to continue dominating the country. These people became the intermediaries of the former colonial power; and through them the latter perpetuated the exploitation of the people of Burkina-Faso. The bourgeoisie occupied the position of the imperialists and started exploiting the people on their behalf. Sankara called them the internal enemies of the people, and divided them in three categories. 1. *The state bourgeoisie* that has “enriched itself in an illicit and criminal manner through its political monopoly.” 2. *The commercial bourgeoisie*, who are strongly tied- because of their business activities- to the imperialists; the elimination of the latter will mean the collapse of this category. 3. *The reactionary forces that base their power on the traditional, feudal type structures* of the Burkinabe society. These people fought for the independence of the country; yet, from 1960 they joined the bourgeoisie in oppressing the people.¹²⁵

These three groups ruled the country with the priority of enriching themselves and serving the interests of the former colonial power in order to secure their positions. “They are and remain fervent defenders of the privileges acquired through their

¹²⁴Ibid. p.81

¹²⁵ Ibid. p.87-88

allegiance to imperialism.”¹²⁶ According to Sankara, the salary of this category was so high-70 percent of the state’s budgeted income- that it almost remained nothing for social and cultural investment. In order to be able to fight neo-colonialism, retained Sankara, corruption had also to be fought. Sankara charged this parasitic bourgeoisie to always “employ the most dishonest means, engaging in massive corruption, embezzlement of public funds and properties, influence-peddling and real estate speculation, and practicing favoritism and nepotism.”¹²⁷ They monopolize political positions and accumulate on the back of working people. They go to extravagant vacations abroad, their children attend the most prestigious schools in Western countries, and at the slightest illness they use the resources of the state to cure themselves in luxurious hospitals in foreign countries. All this at the expense of the “courageous, and hard-working Voltaic people” living in misery. This according to Sankara is the transportation of the “constraints and pitfalls of capitalist consumer societies, transported into the African societies” by imperialism. All this must be fought by eliminating neo-colonialism.¹²⁸

This difference between classes is not only internal. There are also two antagonistic camps in the world: the exploiters and the exploited. The former are the Western countries, the latter the Third World countries. A struggle against the exploiters has to be conducted. These rely on the sweat of the poorer countries to enrich their nations; they impoverish them by exploiting their resources. There is a huge gap not only between the bourgeoisie and the *wage earners or farmers*, but also between the rich countries and the poor countries. This gap has to be filled. And this is the message that Sankara took to the 39th Session of the UN General Assembly,

¹²⁶ Ibid.p. 86

¹²⁷ Ibid. p.52

¹²⁸Ibid. p. 82

“I speak on behalf of the mothers of our destitute countries who watch their children die of malaria or diarrhea, unaware that simple means to save them exist. The science of the multinationals does not offer them these means, preferring to invest in cosmetics laboratories and plastic surgery to satisfy the whims of a few women or men whose smart appearance is threatened by too many calories in their overly rich meals, the regularity of which would make you—or rather us from the Sahel—dizzy. We have decided to adopt and popularize these simple means, recommended by the WHO and UNICEF.”

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Burkina Faso has to fight against these capitalists protecting its agriculture against imperialist domination that plunder its resources. Sankara believes that Burkina Faso had engaged itself in an unfair competition. The country imports neo-colonial goods against its local products. In 1983, the value of Burkina Faso’s export covered only 25 percent of its import. The deficit of the country was growing constantly; and the country had to fall back on international aid to feed 90 percent of its population. Sankara promoted self-sufficiency in the country. He believed Agricultural products could be sufficient to feed the entire population without exporting from the neo-colonial countries, with the hard work of the Burkinabe. Imported Agricultural products such as apples and rice from Europe, has to be substituted with local products. There must also be a diversification of products. Sankara believed that Africans should learn how to produce and consume in Africa without exporting from imperialist countries. By importing, they allowed these countries to neo-colonize them.¹³⁰

¹²⁹Ibid. p.162-163

¹³⁰ Ibid. pp. 409-410

“Let us consume only what we control! There are those who ask, ‘Where is imperialism?’ look at your plates when you eat- the imported rice, corn, millet- that is imperialism. Go no further. So comrades we must organize ourselves to produce here, and we can produce more than we need.”¹³¹

In addition to that, he incites the Burkinabe to abandon the begging attitude; they should be able to do without foreign loans. Sankara judges this *humanitarian assistance* from Europe and U.S as an instrument of control. According to him the aid Africa received was not real help. If these imperialists wanted to give a constructive help to Burkina Faso, they should help the country to dig wells, build roads, create and improve camps, and provide them with agricultural machineries and technical experts, instead of giving them food, that continuously keep them in a dependent and poor condition. He stated that Burkina Faso welcomes only aid that will help the country to do without aid in the next future. Sankara affirms that the psychological attitude that comes from receiving assistance is that the African becomes much lazier; accustomed for centuries to be treated as inferior, and its people as slaves, they are now being treated as children in need of help.¹³²

According to Sankara private investment in Burkina Faso from abroad is not sufficient and at the same time constitutes a huge drain on the country’s economy. This does not help the country to accumulate wealth. A great percentage of the wealth created with the help of foreign investment is transferred abroad instead of being reinvested to increase the country’s *productive capacity*. He reports that in the period that goes from 1973 to

¹³¹ Ibid. p.176

¹³² Ibid. p.125-126/ p. 159-160

1979 around \$6.8 million left the country every year as income from direct investment, meanwhile in the same period new investments were estimated at \$5.2 million a year.¹³³

One of the principles of Sankara's revolution was to trade with all countries without any discrimination. The only condition for this was that all countries involved benefited equally from the exchange. On the contrary, trade with imperialists had always been beneficial only for these, in detriment of African countries.¹³⁴

As it was said earlier in this thesis, in 1983 when Sankara came to power-and even presently- Burkina Faso was still part of the Franc Zone, thus having as its currency the franc CFA. This currency had been introduced to the fourteen French colonies in 1945. The CFA franc zone arrangements define the monetary relations between the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC)¹³⁵, the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)¹³⁶ and France. The currencies of these countries were linked to the French franc at a fixed rate of exchange and were freely convertible into the franc.¹³⁷ During an interview on 3 November 1985, Sankara confessed to the Cameroonian writer Mongo Beti during an interview conducted by the latter,

“I will say that the CFA franc, which is tied to the French monetary system, is a weapon of French domination. The French economy, and consequently the French commercial capitalists, amass their fortune on the backs of our peoples on the basis of this link, of this monetary monopoly.”¹³⁸

¹³³ Ibid. p.85

¹³⁴ Ibid. p. 109

¹³⁵ Gabon, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Republic of the Congo and Equatorial Guinea.

¹³⁶ Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo

¹³⁷ See Gulde and Tsangarides (2008, p.11)

¹³⁸ Ibid. p. 245

Sankara believed that the French language remained the country's national language not only for historical reasons, but also as a neo-colonial strategy. He still saw this language as a means of communication between the numerous ethnic groups present in Burkina.¹³⁹

Under Sankara's presidency, education was totally reformed. In 1985 he stated,

“With regard to education we intend to attack both the container and its content. When the colonial masters opened schools, they had no benevolent or humanitarian intentions in mind. Their concern was to produce clerks capable of performing work useful to their system of exploitation. Our task today is to inject new values into our schools, so that they can produce a new man who understands ideas, who absorbs them, and who functions in total harmony with the dynamic evolution of his people.”¹⁴⁰

He believed that Burkina's culture had to be valorized; the *harmful influence of the cultural invasion*, the country had experienced from France, had caused cultural backwardness in regard to the culture of their ancestors. According to Sankara, on imperialists' point of view, cultural domination is more important than military domination. The former is less expensive, more effective and more flexible. Sankara thought that after decolonization, it was important to decolonize the minds of the Burkinabe, in other words free their minds of all cultural colonial influence.¹⁴¹

According to Sankara, as Nkrumah also noticed, some of the instruments through which imperialist still neo-colonized Burkina Faso were newspapers, radios and television.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ Ibid. p.247

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. p.247

¹⁴¹ See Batà (2003, p.41)

¹⁴² See Sankara (2007, pp.54 /240 /243)

He believed that the enemies of the Burkinabe revolution used the press to defame all their actions; they used the *well-financed newspapers, radio programs that obey orders* and other despicable ways to distort the revolution¹⁴³. He stated that this strategy was not new; it had been used severally by imperialists to destabilize many *revolutionary regimes*, like that of Nkrumah in Ghana, Lumumba in Congo and Allende in Chile. These men had been victims of neo-colonialism. Sankara hail them as “genuine patriots, political men who had a true love for Africa and for Africans”. He continues by saying, “Today we can only admire them and it’s an honor for us to show that they were the precursors, guides, and pioneers on the path of Africa’s dignity.” He believed that it was for the assassination of people like Maurice Bishop and Amilcar Cabral that the fight against imperialism had to be kept moving on. “If we don’t want other Maurice Bishops to be assassinated tomorrow, we have to start mobilizing”.¹⁴⁴

Asked if he knew his revolution could cause his physical elimination by the so called “enemies of the people”, Sankara responded to Mongo Beti that he was aware of that, every time there was a true revolution in favor of the people’s emancipation powerful measures were taken to quit the revolution. However, if he was physically eliminated there would be thousands of people who will replicate his ideas, and will continue his battle against neo-colonialism.¹⁴⁵

However, despite all the evildoings of neo-colonialists, many African countries signed defense treaties with them. Some of them even allowed imperialists to stance their troops on their lands. Imperialism armed some countries against others; and it was this

¹⁴³ On this note Nkrumah also criticized the Prejudice of the imperialist and their strategy of distorting revolutions. He noticed, "Wherever there is armed struggle against the forces of reaction, the nationalists are referred to as rebels, terrorists, or frequently 'communist terrorists!'" See Nkrumah (1965)

¹⁴⁴ See Sankara (2007, p.150)

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. p.239-240

same imperialism that had armed those who were carrying forward the Apartheid regime in South Africa.¹⁴⁶

One of neo-colonial strategies was that of *divide and rule*, also mentioned by Nkrumah. Not only on a continental scale, claimed Sankara, but also internally. Imperialism had tried to divide Upper Volta exacerbating the contradictions among its ethnic groups and turning one against the other. Sankara insists that even though there are multitudes of ethnic groups with different languages and customs, they all represent one nation. One of the aims of CNR¹⁴⁷ (National Council of the Revolution) is to unite these different groups.¹⁴⁸

According to Sankara the Monroe doctrine, which stated that Europeans should not intervene in American affairs or Americans in European affairs, should also be applied to Africa. As Nkrumah had said before him, “Africa is not an extension of Europe”. Sankara voiced out, “Just as Monroe proclaimed ‘America to the Americans’ in the 1823, we echo this today by saying ‘Africa to the Africans’ ‘Burkina to the Burkinabe’.¹⁴⁹

Since the imperialist system is worldwide and not located in just one country, it has to be fought together by the Third World countries. Therefore, these countries have to know each other better, understand each other and establish a platform, a common front against imperialism.

Sankara also incite U.S. workers to join Burkina Faso, and other countries engaged in this struggle, against their common enemies, the imperialist.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 151/55

¹⁴⁷ The CNR is a governing body formed by Sankara on 4 August 1983

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 108.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 165

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 187-188

CHAPTER IV- PAN-AFRICANISM

“I believe strongly and sincerely that the African race, united under one federal government will emerge as a great power whose greatness is indestructible (Nkrumah, 1961).”

Introduction

The word Pan-Africanism, as a movement and political doctrine aimed at implementing the unity of the African peoples, was used for the first time by William Dubois.¹⁵¹ Boukari-Yabara places the origin of Pan-Africanism in the 18th century. According to him the Haitian revolution was the starting point of African revolt against white domination. After the rebellion of slaves in the French colony of Saint Dominique, slavery was abolished in the colony and the Republic of Haiti was founded. Boukari-Yabara believes that Pan-Africanism was born in this idea of liberation from slavery and a system of oppression.¹⁵²

He places the second stage of Pan-Africanism in the 19th century. During this century, a movement originated in the United States, Back-to-Africa, encouraged the slaves of African descent to return to their ancestors' motherland. Very unique in this context is

¹⁵¹ See Nkrumah (1963, p.133)

¹⁵² See Boukari-Yabara (2014: p. 3)

the history of Liberia. This country was founded in 1822 by the American Colonization Society. In order to face the problem of a growing number of slaves in the United States, this company assisted free black people to immigrate and resettle in Africa.¹⁵³

The back to Africa movement will be made popular in the first half of the 20th century by Marcus Garvey, who founded the *Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League (UNIA-ACL)* in order to promote Black Nationalism and Pan-Africanism.¹⁵⁴

In the same period there was a tradition of Pan-African congresses taking place in the diaspora. These were led by intellectuals such as William Du Bois and George Padmore. The first of the series of five congresses was held in Paris in 1919. It was organized by Marcus Garvey, and attended by 57 representatives from various African colonies, from the United States and the West Indies. The attendees of this congress drafted a petition to the Versailles Peace Conference, to be held then in Paris, demanding that Africans should participate more in the government of their countries until, at some point in the future, they will become autonomous.¹⁵⁵

The second Pan-African congress was divided in three sessions that took place in London, Paris and Bruxelles, in 1921. This time 113 representatives attended. This congress concluded with the approval of the *Declaration to the World*, drafted by W.E.B Dubois, which stated that “the absolute equality of races, physical, political and social, is the founding stone of world and human advancement”. Nkrumah criticized this declaration as more concerned with social issues than political improvement.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ *Ibid.* p.28

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.* p. 70

¹⁵⁵ See Nkrumah (1963. p.133)

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.* p.133

In 1923, a Third Pan-African congress was held in London. This congress lacked funds, and membership was limited. Nkrumah criticized the representatives as more idealists than pragmatists.¹⁵⁷ Several resolutions were passed; one of them stated that Africans should have "a voice in their own governments" and "the right of access to their land and its resources". They sought for "the development of Africa for the benefit of Africans and not merely for the profit of Europeans". They demanded "Home rule and responsible government" for British West Africa and the British West Indies. For Kenya, Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), and South Africa, they appealed for "the abolition of the pretension of a white minority to dominate a black majority, and even to prevent their appeal to the civilized world." The congress also called for the suppression of lynching and mob law in the United States. The last session was closed with a petition to the World, "We ask in all the world that black folk be treated as men. We can see no other road to Peace and Progress."¹⁵⁸

Four years later, in 1927, a Fourth Pan-African Congress was held in New York with the participation of 228 delegates.¹⁵⁹

According to Asante, during the 1930s and the 1940s Pan-Africanism as a movement of integration lost its attraction, as colonialism was at its peak in these decades. It was revived in the 1940s through the activities of Nkrumah, Alioune Diop and Padmore in London. In 1947 Alioune Diop founded *Presence Africaine*, a culture movement that proclaimed that black culture could not flourish in a situation of political dependence,

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p.133

¹⁵⁸ See *Pan-African Chronology: A Comprehensive Reference to the Black Quest for Freedom in Africa, the Americas, Europe and Asia, 1865-1915*, Everett Jr. Jenkins, McFarland & Company, North Carolina, 1998, p. 328

¹⁵⁹ See Nkrumah (1963, p.133-134)

and that black people needed to be united by solidarity in the struggle.¹⁶⁰ Before this, in 1945 the Fifth Pan-African Congress had taken place in Manchester from 15 to 21 October. George Padmore and Nkrumah were joint secretaries of the organizational committee which planned the Congress. During this congress a series of declarations addressing the imperialist powers were drafted. They revealed the determination of the African countries to be freed from the burden of colonialism.¹⁶¹ This congress saw the participation of dynamic African figures such as Kwame Nkrumah. These men will take Pan-Africanism on the African continent as part of the anti-colonial struggle. Nkrumah will become the pioneer of this continental Pan-Africanism in the second half of the century.¹⁶²

Before 1935 Asante defines Pan-Africanism as,

“A political and cultural phenomenon which regards Africa, Africans and African descendants abroad as a unit, and aims at the regeneration and unification of Africa and the promotion of a feeling of solidarity among the people of the African world.”¹⁶³

And from 1935 as,

“An integrative force, which aims at achieving political, cultural and economic unity or co-operation in Africa; or as a movement of liberation of colonial countries in Africa. After pressing for the return of Africans in Africa, Pan-

¹⁶⁰ See *Pan-Africanism and regional integration in Africa since 1935*, Samuel Kingsley Botwe Asante, In: *Africa Since 1935*, edited by Ali Al'Amin Mazrui, UNESCO, 1993, p. 183

¹⁶¹ See Nkrumah (1963, p. 134)

¹⁶² See Boukari-Yabara (2014, p.110)

¹⁶³ *Ibid.* p.724

Africanists now claim the return of Africa to Africans; this is the time for independence.”¹⁶⁴

In “*Africa Must Unite*”, Nkrumah writes thusly, “Instead of a rather nebulous movement, concerned vaguely with Black Nationalism, the Pan-African movement had become an expression of African nationalism.”¹⁶⁵

However, it was only after the granting of independence to Ghana in 1957 that the Pan-African movement took a decisive impulse in the political sense. Today when we talk about Pan-Africanism we refer generically to a form of solidarity and cooperation among African States, which was partly achieved in 1963 with the birth of the Organization of African Unity.¹⁶⁶

4.1 Kwame Nkrumah: Africa must unite or perish

Kwame Nkrumah is one of the major contributors to the theoretical and practical construction of continental Pan-Africanism. He believed that unity was the only way through which Africa could defeat colonialism and neocolonialism. He systematically insisted that Africa should be united politically and economically in order to become less vulnerable to any foreign attack or invasion; and strongly advocated for the formation of a Continental Government for Africa or a United States of Africa on the example of the federal model of the United States of America. This superstructure should not be built as a loose cooperation on the example of the United Nations; rather it should be a political union that, without suppressing the sovereignty of the various states under it, will be

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.* p.724

¹⁶⁵ See Nkrumah (1963, p. 135)

¹⁶⁶ See Boukari-Yabara (2014, p. 124)

based on “defense, foreign affairs and diplomacy, a common citizenship, an African currency, an African monetary zone, and an African central bank”.¹⁶⁷

This unity will be acquired only through political means. Social and economic development will be achieved only as a consequence of this political integration. He wrote,

“African unity is, above all, a political kingdom, which can only be gained by political means. The social and economic development of Africa will come only within the political kingdom, not the other way round.”¹⁶⁸

And again,

“It is clear that radical changes in economic planning in Africa are urgently needed, and this can only be achieved quickly and effectively if we are united politically.”¹⁶⁹

Nkrumah affirms that this unity will favor the projection of Africa’s personality in the World. He believed that if Africa should speak with one voice in the international community it would gain more respect from the other countries. Africa would have more influence in the World’s decisions making giving its size and contribution in the Western economy.¹⁷⁰ He suggested then that Africa should have a common foreign policy and diplomacy.¹⁷¹

There must be unity in order to achieve the full liberation of the continent from colonialism. He urges African countries to unite in order not to end up like the Latin

¹⁶⁷ See Speech of Kwame Nkrumah at the founding of OAU on 24 May 1963, Addis Abeba. <http://newafricanmagazine.com/kwame-nkrumah-the-people-of-africa-are-crying-for-unity/>

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ See Nkrumah (1963, p. 167)

¹⁷⁰ See *I Speak of Freedom: A Statement of African Ideology*, Kwame Nkrumah, William Heinemann Ltd., London, 1961, p. 241

¹⁷¹ See Nkrumah (speech 24 May 1963)

American countries that are “prey of imperialism” after a century and a half of independence.¹⁷²

According to Nkrumah this unity must be created in order to enhance the effective exploitation and co-ordination of Africa’s natural and agricultural resources for development. He believed that even though Africa was known as a poor continent, it had great potentials to become a wealthy continent since it possessed vast mineral, agricultural and power resources. He affirmed,

“The unity of the countries of Africa is an indispensable precondition for the speediest and fullest development, not only of the totality of the continent but of the individual countries linked together in the union.”¹⁷³

Even though Africa is well known as a poor continent, it has great potentials to become a wealthy continent since it has vast mineral, agricultural and power resources. In his book “*Africa must Unite*” Nkrumah reports the data of the FAO in 1954. According to this report, in agriculture Africa supplies the World with 66% cocoa; 58% sisal; 65% palm oil; 26% groundnuts; 14% coffee; 11 % olive oil. It was estimated that Congo Basin alone could produce enough crops to satisfy the World population”. In mineral production, Africa provides 96% of gem diamonds (excluding U.S.S.R.); 69% cobalt;¹⁷⁴ In Addis Abeba he reminded his audience that Africa produces “more than 60% of the world’s gold. A great deal of the uranium for nuclear power, of copper for electronics, of titanium for supersonic projectiles, of iron and steel for heavy industries, of other minerals and raw materials for lighter industries”¹⁷⁵ Nigeria alone produces 85% of the world’s supply of columbite; meanwhile Ghana is the second world producer of manganese. Africa also

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

¹⁷³ See Nkrumah (1963, p. 163)

¹⁷⁴ See Nkrumah (1963, p. 151-152)

¹⁷⁵ See Nkrumah (speech 24 May 1963)

has different reserves of fissionable raw materials. Power resources are not less impressive. Nkrumah believed Africa to have the greatest water power potential in the world estimated at “42% of the World’s total”. Most of it lies within the tropical area: Congo has 21.6% of the world total water power. Africa also possesses 27% of the World forest area.¹⁷⁶

Nkrumah believed that it was African continent that had enriched the Western World; However, Africans are not able to use the same resources to accumulate wealth. The only reason why Africans have remained poor in the midst of plenty is that they are unable to form a strong political union that can effectively manage their resources.¹⁷⁷

Unity will allow all the countries to benefit from the resources of other states,

“Separatism, indeed, cuts us off from a multitude of advantages which we would enjoy from union. Though Ghana is bearing the cost of erecting the Volta dam, we would be more than willing to share its benefits with our immediate neighbors within a common economic framework. The Inga dam, a blueprint dream for the Congo, may not get beyond that stage without the cooperation of other African states, for no single state could afford to build it. Yet if it were built, the dam would provide 25 million kilowatts of electricity.”¹⁷⁸

African countries alone are not in the capacity to work towards economic development. Their financial structure and banking institutions are not equipped enough, their material resources and human capital are not enough to achieve their aspirations; their agricultural and urban development are delusional.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶ See Nkrumah (1963, p. 152)

¹⁷⁷ See Nkrumah (speech 24 May 1963)

¹⁷⁸ See Nkrumah (1963, p.169)

¹⁷⁹ See Nkrumah (speech 24 May 1963)

What Nkrumah proposes is the creation of an African Common Market devoted only to Africa's economic interests. Such a common market will adopt a common policy for extra-African trade as well as inter-African trade, granting all members, at the same time, the freedom to trade anywhere. This market would eliminate competition between African countries; and through a united selling policy they will be able to raise the prices of their goods. Nkrumah cites the example of Ghana and Nigeria. These two countries produce 50% of the World's cocoa, but have been competing for decades against each other. This rivalry has only favored their buyers. If these two countries would adopt a common trade policy and set their prices, their profit could increase. By so doing they would be able to use the surplus deriving from their risen revenues to implement "realistic development plans" and set off industrialization processes.¹⁸⁰

Nkrumah was of the view that until African states decided to unite, Africa will be continuously exploited by Europe. On the contrary, the union of Africa will put an end to the European neo-colonialist controls and interferences in Africa. He stresses the need for Africa to build its society according to its own aspirations without being influenced or threatened by any foreign entity.¹⁸¹

When in 1960 the province of Katanga tried to secede from Congo, in the night between 9 and 10 July 1960, a force of Congolese military headquartered at Camp Massart in the Southern province of Katanga mutinied and began to loot the nearby Elisabethville, the provincial capital. They killed five to seven European citizens. On this pretext and other similar incidents, the ex-colonial power, Belgium intervened militarily. Patrice Lumumba, the Congolese Prime Minister, had to seek for the intervention of the United Nations and

¹⁸⁰ See Nkrumah (1963, p. 163)

¹⁸¹ See Nkrumah (speech 24 May 1963)

of the Soviet Union in a second moment when the former neglected him its help. Nkrumah commented on the complicated situation in the country thusly,

“If at that time, July 1960, the independent states of Africa had been united, or had at least a joint military high command and a common foreign policy, an African solution might have been found for the Congo; and the Congo might have been able to work out its own destiny, unhindered by any non-African interference.”¹⁸²

On the contrary, Boukari-Yabara opined that the death of Lumumba symbolized the failure of Pan-Africanism since it demonstrated the incapacity of Africa to influence the decisions of the international community and UN, even in decisions that concerned its territory.¹⁸³ The African unity will enable them to face "every emergency and every complexity". African states should unite to eliminate controversies and border wars. They should go beyond the artificial boundaries set by their former colonizers. In his speech at the Casablanca conference on 7 January 1961 he foretold, “What I fear worst of all is that if we (African leaders) do not formulate plans and take active steps to form a political union, we (African peoples) would soon be fighting and warring among ourselves.”¹⁸⁴

Nkrumah also warned against regionalism. He stated that cooperation and association only in different fields of common interest, as well as inter-territorial relationships, did not give Africa a continental identity and the political and economic force that it needed to overcome the problems that it was facing. He encouraged African states to move

¹⁸² See Nkrumah (1963 p.138)

¹⁸³ See Boukari-Yabara (2014, p.168)

¹⁸⁴ See *Selected Speech of Kwame Nkrumah*, Samuel Obeng, African Publication Ltd, Accra, 2009, p. 121

beyond divisions based on the languages of their former colonizers; and avoid cultural divisions.¹⁸⁵ His faith these divisions could be eliminated is obvious in his words,

“Critics of African unity often refer to the wide differences in culture, language and ideas in various parts of Africa. This is true, but the essential fact remains that we have a common interest in the independence of Africa. The difficulties presented by questions of language, culture and different political systems are not insuperable. The present leaders of Africa have realized they have much in common, in their past history, in their present problems and in their future hopes.”¹⁸⁶

Africa’s unity will serve as an example to be emulated by other countries. In a World divided by the cold war, the contribution of Africa to World peace could be the avoidance of disunity, and embracement of mutual co-existence.¹⁸⁷

Nkrumah was of the idea that Africa needed a common defense system. He believed that it was too much expensive for each state to establish its own individual defense system. So, he proposes to the heads of state present at the founding meeting of the OAU, “We need a common defense system with African high command to ensure the stability and security of Africa.” He observed that most African countries, feeling insecure, have entered into defense pacts with foreign Governments. These pacts, he complained, have endangered the security of all Africa.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁵ See Nkrumah (speech on 24 May 1963)

¹⁸⁶ See Nkrumah (1961, p.157)

¹⁸⁷ See Nkrumah (speech on 24 May 1963)

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid*

4.1.1 Some attempts of unification

In April 1958 Nkrumah organized the Conference of Independent African States held in Accra, Ghana. It was attended by all the independent states of Africa, namely, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia, Libya, Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia. During this conference among the issues that were discussed, there was a call for the removal of customs and other restrictions on trade among African states; and the conclusion of multilateral payment agreements. The aim of these actions was to enhance economic exchanges and then consequently establish a common market. The Economic Commission for Africa was set up.¹⁸⁹ During this Conference, and the later ones Nkrumah promoted his idea of African Unity with vigor and fanaticism.¹⁹⁰

On 23 November 1958, Ghana and Guinea united to form “a nucleus for a Union of African States”. On this occasion, they established a system of exchange of resident ministers, who were recognized as members of both governments.¹⁹¹

In December 1958 All-African People’s Conference was held in Accra; with 62 African nationalist organizations attending. Other figures that attended were trade union leaders, heads of all the liberation movements of the countries still under the joke of colonialism. Together, they developed a strategy in the fight against colonialism and imperialism. Other All-African Peoples’ Conferences took place in 1960 in Tunis and 1961 in Cairo. The aim of these embryonal forms of unity was to set the ground for a future Continental government. In 1958 few are the countries who had been freed from colonialism, so it

¹⁸⁹ See Revolutionary Path, Kwame Nkrumah, Panaf books, London, 1980, p.246

¹⁹⁰ See Asante (1993, p. 725)

¹⁹¹ See Nkrumah (1963, p.141)

talking of a continental unity was still a project that would take shape as countries were breaking the colonial bonds tying them to the European imperial powers.¹⁹²

In July 1959 Nkrumah met William Tubman and Sekou Touré, respectively presidents of Liberia and Guinea, in Sanniquellie. During this meeting the issue of African emancipation and Unity was discussed. In the end a Declaration of principles was issued. This declaration stated that the organization that would come out of the union will be called Community of Independent¹⁹³ African States, which would be founded on economic, cultural and diplomatic relations; and above all it would help the African countries still under colonialism to obtain their independence. Membership to the community was open to all independent African countries, and to the other countries as soon as they attained independence from colonialism.¹⁹⁴

The Second Conference of Independent African States took place in Monrovia in August 1959; and the third in Addis Abeba in mid-1960.¹⁹⁵

In November 1959 representatives of trade unions all over Africa joined in the Accra Conference of All-African Trade Union Federation. They deliberated upon issues related to the welfare of workers across Africa.¹⁹⁶

In April 1960 the Conference on Positive Action and Security in Africa was held in Accra; and the Conference of African Women on 18 July. The latter was attended by wives of African political and nationalist leaders, women activists and professionals. The agenda

¹⁹² *Ibid.* p. 139

¹⁹³ This community would include only African countries who had obtained their independence from colonial domination. With time, as other countries were gaining their colonial independence, they would all join the union. An independent country, in Nkrumah's view, was a country with self-rule government.

¹⁹⁴ See Nkrumah (1963, p.141)

¹⁹⁵ See Asante (1993, p.725)

¹⁹⁶ See Nkrumah (1963, p.137)

of the conference centered on freedom, unity, social and economic progress and the welfare of women.¹⁹⁷

On 24 December 1960 Nkrumah met President Sekou Touré of Guinea and President Modibo Keita of Mali at Conakry, Guinea. After a series of meetings a Ghana-Mali-Guinea union will be found and named Union of African states (U.A.S). The 3rd article of the Charter that was drafted at the end of the last series of meetings held in Accra from 27 to 29 April 1961 is reported below,

“The aims of the Union of African States (U.A.S.) are as follows: to strengthen and develop ties of friendship and fraternal cooperation between the Member States politically, diplomatically, economically and culturally; to pool their resources in order to consolidate their independence and safeguard their territorial integrity; to work jointly to achieve the complete liquidation of imperialism, colonialism and neocolonialism in Africa and the building up of African Unity; to harmonize the domestic and foreign policy of its Members, so that their activities may prove more effective and contribute more worthily to safeguarding the peace of the world.”¹⁹⁸

In 1960 the number of African states who had attained their independence from colonialism rose from nine to twenty-six, and to thirty-three by 1964. This complicated the attainment of the integrative aspect of Pan-Africanism. The leaders of the newly independent countries were much interested in their internal problems (for example consolidating their power, unify ethnic and regional groups, fight poverty) than to engage in continental affairs outside their own borders. Asante claims that African leaders

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.* p.137

¹⁹⁸ See *Political Thought of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah*, Stephen Dzirasa, Guinea press, Accra, 1962 p.46

became divided in “pro-East and pro-West blocks; revolutionaries, progressives, reactionaries, capitalists, socialists, traditionalists and middle-of-the-roaders.”¹⁹⁹

During 1961 African states became divided in two Pan-Africanist groups with different objectives. Ghana, Guinea, Egypt, Libya, Mali, Morocco and the Algerian F.L.N, met in the Moroccan capital from 3 to 7 January 1961. These states formed the Casablanca Group, which was in favor of a strong political union as promoted by Nkrumah's United States of Africa. This group wanted that Africa to form *a federation of all African countries*.²⁰⁰ Nigeria, Ethiopia, Liberia, Sierra Leone and the remaining former French colonies formed the Monrovia Group, in favor of a loose confederation of independent sovereign African states that would promote voluntary participation and co-operation in cultural exchanges and economic interaction. Some key concepts were respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each state. Some members of this group were suspicious of the personal ambitions of some countries in the Casablanca Group, and of any interference in the internal affairs of their nation.²⁰¹

Through the efforts of Nkrumah, Sekou Touré and Modibo Keita, and with the support of Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, a Summit Conference of Independent African States was summoned in Addis Abeba in 1963. The aim of this conference was to resolve the *factionalism*, unite the leaders and form a common pan-African structure. On 25 May 1963, thirty African heads of independent states and governments signed the Charter of African Unity which established the Organization of African Unity (OAU), present African Union.²⁰²

¹⁹⁹ See Asante (1993, p. 726)

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.* p. 727

²⁰¹ *Ibid.* p. 727-728

²⁰² See Nkrumah (1963, p. 728)

Nkrumah proposed a declaration of principles that would unite and bind the members of the OAU together. He suggested they set up an All-Africa Committee of Foreign Ministers. This committee would establish a permanent body of officials and experts- two from every independent African state- to "work out a machinery for the union government of Africa".²⁰³ A capital for the union government ought to be established. Nkrumah proposes two places, Bangui in the Central Republic of Africa or Leopoldville in Congo. Two committees would be formed, one will frame a constitution for the union government; the other one will work out a unified or common economic and industrial plan for Africa.²⁰⁴

As the years go by, further All-African People's Conferences will take place, whether they are held to discuss political, social or economic problems; and their resolutions and declarations will become increasingly significant as other countries gain their independence.²⁰⁵

4.1.1 Opposition to Nkrumah's vision

When Kwame Nkrumah delivered his speech entitled "A Union Government for United Africa" in Addis Abeba on 24 May 1963, not all the heads of states present shared his ideas. The more radical countries such as Guinea, Mali and Ethiopia- who were members of the Casablanca group- supported his vision to create a United State of Africa. However, many others were not enthusiastic about his idea and were not ready to entertain the idea of a Union Government. Thus, Nkrumah met with great resistance from some African heads of states, mostly members of the Monrovia group. Some of

²⁰³ See Nkrumah (speech on 24 May 1963).

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁵ See Nkrumah (1963, p.148)

them did not support his vision; some others were partisans of a different model of gradual federalism. Some leaders such as Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and Leopold Senghor of Senegal proposed primary regional federations based on cultural and linguistic affinities that would later on expand to a wider continental political unity. As Gadio explained these men "promoted gradualism under the concept of concentric circles".²⁰⁶

Senghor for example declared his country was ready to "partially or totally give up her sovereignty to build African unity."²⁰⁷ Yet, he still opposed Kwame Nkrumah's idea of a continental government as he deemed it was not the opportune moment for Africa to unite. He believed African countries should unite first on the basis of affinities and shared cultural, linguistic, political and social affinities.²⁰⁸

Ivory Coast, Liberia, Togo, Benin, Sierra Leone and Nigeria also viewed Nkrumah's vision as too radical. These countries supported economic cooperation in place of political union. Many states were suspicious of Nkrumah's hegemonic political ambition; they were not willing to sacrifice the sovereignty they had so hardly fought for on the altar of a Continental Government. Moreover, the weaker states were afraid that the benefits of integration would be dominated by the economically stronger nations. According to Gadio, they lost trust and confidence in each other.²⁰⁹

The Prime Minister of Nigeria, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa did not hesitate to show his disagreement with Nkrumah's ideas. During the conference he opined-stated,

"There have been quite a lot of views on what we mean by African unity.

Some of us have suggested that African unity should be achieved by political

²⁰⁶ See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=44gQVHUVg0>

²⁰⁷ *Ibid*

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

fusion of the different states in Africa; some of us feel that African unity could be achieved by taking practical steps in economic, educational, scientific and cultural co-operation, and by trying first to get the Africans to understand themselves before embarking on the more complicated and more difficult arrangement of political union. My country stands for the practical approach to the unity of the African continent.”²¹⁰

Balewa also believed that an African common market had to be formed on the basis of regional cooperation. "That we should have an African Common Market based on certain groupings."²¹¹

Organization of African Union that finally emerged from Addis Ababa came in form of an international organization. Member countries conserved their sovereignty and did not form a common government. The organization fell short of the kind of union envisioned by Kwame Nkrumah.²¹²

4.2 Thomas Sankara: We must create a common front

Thomas Sankara was influenced by Nkrumah on the issue of African Unity. He cited him on several occasions and admired this leader he defined as a genuine patriot, with a genuine and true love for Africa. Asked during an interview with Mongo Beti, a Cameroonian writer, if he was thinking of taking up the torch of Kwame Nkrumah's Pan-Africanism, Sankara replied that it was a duty for every African to continue in that direction if they wanted to free themselves from foreign domination. Sankara

²¹⁰ See <http://www.blackpast.org/1963-sir-abubakar-tafawa-balewa-addis-ababa>

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹² See Boukari-Yabara

acknowledged that Nkrumah had every right to advocate for African unity as a means to contrast imperialism. United Africa was strong, divided it was weak and vulnerable to any foreign aggression. He declared that it was now his time and Africans' to resume the Nkrumah's battle,

“Faced with the ravages and other abuses of imperialism, Nkrumah had every reason to place all his hopes in the unity of the continent, as everyone today notes with bitterness. Nevertheless, the idea remains, and it falls to us, to African patriots, to struggle everywhere and at all times for its realization. It falls to all Pan-Africanist people to give Africa hope by taking up the torch of Nkrumah”²¹³

In 1984 Sankara declared that the OAU could not continue as it was in the past. It had to recognize that there is a revolutionary process going on that called for a redefinition of its goals. Between 1960 and 1980, there had occurred several events that had Portugal was the first European power to establish itself in Africa in the 15th century, and the last one to leave it. Portugal was the first European power to have settled in Africa in the 15th century, and the last one to leave it in the mid-1975. Even though in 1960 the UN general Assembly recognized the need to dismantle the colonial empires, Portugal kept holding tightly her colonies refusing to adopt the resolution.²¹⁴ During the 1970s, Mozambique, Angola, Guinée-Bissau, Cap-Vert, São Tomé et Príncipe, after bloody independence wars, finally became sovereign states. After independence was granted, however, some of these countries entered into civil wars. The case of Angola and Mozambique became even more complex with the interference of foreign countries.

²¹³ See Sankara (2007, p.246-247)

²¹⁴ See Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. On: <http://www.un.org/en/decolonization/declaration.shtml>

Boukari-Yabara deemed that liberation struggles and then civil wars in these countries put into question the role of the OAU.²¹⁵

Even before independence had been achieved, different factions had formed and contested on the rule of Angola, when the Portuguese would leave the country. The most important ones were the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA); and the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). In November 1975, when Angola became independent, the two factions began contesting for control. The MPLA seized power and occupied the country's capital. From this moment Angola entered into a civil war that lasted fifteen years. This war saw the interference of foreign countries that supported one side of the conflict in the form of funds and provision of ammunitions or troops. Zambia and South Africa²¹⁶, financed by the United States, gave their support to UNITA. The Soviet Union and Cuba²¹⁷ supported the MPLA. When Ronald Reagan came to power in 1981 he started giving a direct support to the UNITA. Angola had become a Cold war hotspot as Nkrumah had warned African countries concerning limited wars; and the situation became more and more complex. In 1988 when Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in the Soviet Union, he took a decision that ended this civil war. Since he was seeking to improve the relations with the United States, and also the Soviet Economy could not sustain anymore the Angolan war, he cut suppressed aid to the country. Following this action, the Cuban troops, which depended on the Soviet backing, left the country. South Africa followed this move by redrawing her

²¹⁵ See Boukari-Yabara (2014, 189-190)

²¹⁶ MPLA had publically vowed to assist the Southwest African People Organization (SWAPO) of Namibia to expel South Africa from this country; and to support the African National Congress (ANC) to end Apartheid in South Africa. South Africa decided to assist UNITA to fight MPLA indirectly.

²¹⁷ Cuba sent troops to Angola in 1988

troops. The United States reduced its aid to UNITA. In 1989 a ceasefire was established after the two factions, exhausted by this war, decided to agree to talks.²¹⁸

In Mozambique, the first liberation movement was set in 1964 under the name FRELIMO- Liberation Front of Mozambique. When the call for independence of this movement was turned down a military struggle broke between Mozambique and its colonial power. This war ended in 1975 with the colonial independence of Mozambique, but also with a country lying in ruins, poverty and with a cripple economy. In 1977, FRELIMO, which had taken the power after the Portuguese had left, declared itself a Marxist Leninist party, and Mozambique a one-party state. This party launched a program of modernization and by the end of the decade it had the majority consensus became favorable to its government. However, this government was opposed strongly by smaller movements striving for power. Among these the RENAMO- Mozambican National Resistance. In the early Eighties this movement began a series of attacks and sabotages against the country's structures, dragging Mozambique into a civil war that took place from 1977 to 1994. To complicate the war was the fact that RENAMO received funding from the white minority government of Southern Rhodesia, and the Apartheid regime in South Africa, who wanted to weaken the FRELIMO. This was due to the fact that the Mozambican government gave refuge and support to the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa and Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwean African National Union (ZANU) liberation movements. The former was an anti-apartheid movement, the latter a militant organization that fought against the white minority government in Rhodesia. It is estimated that almost One million Mozambicans died during this war, and almost Two million took refuge in the neighboring states. After the

²¹⁸ See Historical Dictionary of Angola, W. Martin James, Scarecrow Press, May 5, 2011, p.11-15

death of the leader of FRELIMO, Samora Machel in a suspicious 1986 plane crash, his successor Joaquim Chissano began peace talks with RENAMO. He enacted a new constitution in 1990 that provided a multi-party political system, market economy, and free elections. The civil war ended in October 1992 with the Rome General Peace Accords.²¹⁹

Before the turmoil in Angola and then in Mozambique, Boukari-Yabara judges the OAU to have demonstrated to be unproductive.²²⁰ In August 1984, during a press conference in Ouagadougou Sankara made mention of some of the failures of the OAU. He also criticized the organization for continuously avoiding problems by always *putting off until tomorrow*. For this reason it is never able to solve the problems Africa is facing. Even though he professed his disappointment in the achievements of the movement, Sankara still believed in the unity of Africa as a tool to exit from Africa's problems.²²¹

Twenty-four years after Nkrumah's speech in Addis Abeba in 1963, Sankara stood in front of the members of the OAU advocating for a united front against the foreign debt of African countries. These countries after decolonization were laying in so much poverty that they had to seek for financial aid from the capitalist countries. In the 1970s these states saw their debt increasing with the rise of interest rates due to global inflation following the oil crisis in this decade. In other words, he incited the other countries to refuse to pay their debt and call for a cancellation of the same. In his speech, Sankara explained to his fellow heads of state and government why African states should not pay their debts to the capitalist countries. Because, he believed, that was unfair from a moral

²¹⁹ See A History of Africa: African nationalism and the de-colonisation process, Assa Okoth, East African Publishers, Jan 1, 2006

²²⁰ See Boukari-Yabara (2014, p. 194)

²²¹ See Sankara (2007, p. 125)

and economic viewpoint, and from a political and historical standpoint. He protested that the debt originated from colonialism. The same people who were demanding to be paid were those who had exploited African countries and impoverished their land, ruling their governments and managing their economies. If Africans got indebted, it was because their former colonizers had ruined their economies and had impoverished them. They had left them with no capital that could enable them to draw developmental Programmes. In Addis Abeba Sankara said, “Those who lend us money are those who had colonized us before [...]. Debt is neo-colonialism in which the colonizers have transformed themselves into a form of technical assistant [...]. Debt is a cleverly managed reconquest of Africa.”²²² For Sankara, debt was a way for the former colonial powers to control Africa’s growth and development through foreign rules. It was a new form of slavery, *financial slavery*.²²³ During 1980s African indebted countries had to partly give up their sovereignty in order to follow Structural Adjustment Programmes submitted to them by Western countries. These Programmes did not allow many African leaders to implement efficient development plans in their countries.²²⁴

Sankara suggested countries should not pay their debts because they were not in the position to do it. African countries did not have the money to pay without dipping their economies and peoples into more crises. He affirmed,

“We cannot repay the debt because we have nothing to pay it with. We cannot repay the debt because it’s not our responsibility. We cannot repay the debt because, on the contrary, the others owe us something that the

²²² See Sankara (2007, p.375)

²²³ See Sankara (2007, p. 375)

²²⁴ See Harsch (2014, p.40)

greatest riches can never repay—a debt of blood. It is our blood that was shed.”²²⁵

For all these reasons, Sankara invited African states to unitedly decide to refuse to pay their debt. He believed that if only one country stood against the debt it would be unsuccessful; *individually they would be too weak to refuse to pay*. He prophetically said, "If Burkina Faso stands alone in its refusal to pay the debt, I am not going to be here at the next Conference" ²²⁶

Sankara believed that Africa should unite in order to avoid divisions. He was of the idea that there was nothing like black Africans or white Africans. During a press conference in Ouagadougou in August 1984 he declared, “So it's not a question of color. With regard to how we conceive of the OAU, there is no room for the color-sensitive. There is only one color- that of African unity.”²²⁷

The unity of Africa, for both Nkrumah and Sankara, will help promote peace in the continent. Sankara addressed his audience in Addis Abeba thusly, “with everyone’s support we can make peace at home”; and by *making peace at home*, Africa will be an example for other countries to imitate. Nkrumah also declared, “Is it not unity alone that can weld us into an effective force, capable of creating our own progress and making our valuable contribution to world peace?”²²⁸ Sankara acknowledged that every time an African state raised arms it was against another African country. As Nkrumah he

²²⁵ See Sankara (2007, p. 376)

²²⁶ See Sankara (2007, p. 379)

²²⁷ *Ibid.* p. 127

²²⁸ See Nkrumah (speech on 24 May 1963) On: <http://newafricanmagazine.com/kwame-nkrumah-the-people-of-africa-are-crying-for-unity/>

believed that Africa should unite in order to reduce wars in the continent. He suggested that the OAU should consider disarmament of its members as one of its goals.²²⁹

As Nkrumah, Sankara believed that the balkanization of Africa only created hostilities and competition among countries that if united, with their more than one billion people, could provide the market size necessary to stimulate a large-scale production. United, Africa had “an immense market, a vast market from north to south, east to west”.²³⁰

However, weak and divided Africa has been forced to turn to industrial countries for economic aid. To conclude his speech at the OAU summit in 1987 Sankara encouraged his fellow heads of state to make sure that *the African market remained a market for Africans*. He said, “Let’s produce in Africa, transform in Africa, consume in Africa. Consume what we need and consume what we produce in place of importing it.”²³¹

For both Nkrumah and Sankara Africa should unite in order to use its resources to develop the continent. They believed that Africa had agricultural and mineral resources that could facilitate its development; it also had the ability to create “technology and science” since it had “sufficient intellectual capacities”. They both maintained that it was Africa with its resources that sustained European industrial growth. Sankara in his speech at Addis Abeba stated, “Who saved Europe? It was Africa. There is a little talk about it. [...] if others can't sing our praise, we have the duty, at the very least”.²³²

Nkrumah also had sung “Africa's praise” two decades earlier by stating, “For centuries, Africa has been the milch cow of the Western world. Was it not our continent that helped the Western world to build up its accumulated wealth?”²³³

²²⁹ See Sankara (2007, p. 380)

²³⁰ *Ibid.* p. 380

²³¹ *Ibid.* p. 380

²³² *Ibid.* p. 376

²³³ See Nkrumah Speech on 24 May 1963

Sankara avowed that there should be more interest in the unification of Africa. He and Nkrumah both criticized some African countries that are not active in the African unity; Sankara asked his audience in Addis Abeba,

“How many heads of states are present here, after duly invited to come discuss Africa, in Africa? How many heads of state are ready to dash off to Paris, London, or Washington when called to meetings there, but are unable to attend a meeting here in Addis Abeba, in Africa?”²³⁴

Twenty years back Nkrumah had judged some African states as anti-unity. These are the countries that collaborated with the former colonists more than collaborating with other African states. He wrote,

“It seems, then, curiously paradoxical that in this period when national exclusivism in Europe is making concessions to supranational organizations, many of the new African states should cling to their new-found sovereignty as something more precious than the total well-being of Africa and seek alliances with the states that are combining to balkanize our continent in neocolonialist interests.”²³⁵

Nkrumah and Sankara believe that African nations alone cannot develop; instead they will only harm their people and disappoint them. Sankara asked during the summit of the OAU in 1987,

“Mr. President, are we going to continue to allow heads of states to seek individual solutions to the problem of the debt, at the risk of creating, in their

²³⁴ See Sankara (2007, p.374)

²³⁵ See Nkrumah (1963, p.158)

own countries, social conflicts that could endanger their stability and even the building of African unity”²³⁶

Sankara believed, as his fellow Ghanaian leader did, that Africa should speak with one voice in the global community. If it did so it would have more influence in world politics. He knew that if Burkina Faso alone refused to pay the debt it will not have a positive output. He warned the other countries, “Either we resist collectively and refuse categorically to repay the debt or, if we don't, we'll have to go off to die alone one by one.”²³⁷

In October 1986, Sankara delivered a speech on the death of Samora Machel²³⁸, president of Mozambique and leader of Frelimo (Mozambique Liberation Front). In this speech Sankara admitted, “We Africans also delivered Samora Machel to his enemies by not providing him with necessary support.” He believed that the OAU was responsible for the death of Samora Machel because they left him fight and resist South Africa alone, when, as a condemnation of the apartheid government his country “responded to the call of the Organization of African Unity and completely severed relationship with South Africa.”²³⁹

Despite all the similarities, there are also differences in the approach of these two figures to Pan-Africanism giving the different experiences. In 1987 when Sankara delivered his speech in Addis Abeba, the Organization of African Unity had existed for twenty-four years with all its successes and failures.

²³⁶ See Sankara (2007, p. 375)

²³⁷ *Ibid.* p. 375

²³⁸ His plane crashed in South Africa on 19 October 1986. Many supporters of the African freedom struggle expressed suspicion that the apartheid regime was responsible for the crash. See Sankara (2007, p.313)

²³⁹ See Sankara (2007, p. 317)

Nkrumah called on African countries to avoid divisions based on the language of their colonizers. He wrote,

“We cannot allow ourselves to be so disorganize and divided. The fact that I speak English does not make me an Englishman. Similarly, the fact that some of us speak French or Portuguese does not make us Frenchmen or Portuguese. We are Africans first and last, and as Africans our best interests can only be served by uniting within an African Community. Neither the Commonwealth nor a Franco-African Community can be a substitute.”²⁴⁰

Sankara did not share this idea. He believed in the unifying aspect of the French language. When the First Francophone Summit was held in Paris from 17 to 19 February 1986, Burkina Faso was represented by Henri Zongo, minister of economic development. This meeting was attended by numerous heads of states of French speaking countries. Sankara did not attend; however, he sent a message to the conference, which was later on published in *Sidwaya*, a French-language newspaper in Burkina Faso. In his message to the conference, Sankara affirmed that the French language, even though a colonial language, it has enabled Burkina Faso to reach other countries engaged in the anti-colonial struggle. He believed that francophone countries, despite all their differences, are united by the language in a “French speaking family”. Burkina Faso was as a result of colonialism, part of the *French-speaking world*.²⁴¹

²⁴⁰ See Nkrumah (1963 p. 217)

²⁴¹ See Sankara (2007, p. 268-269)

CHAPTER V- NON-ALIGNMENT



Figure 4. Founders of the Non-Aligned Movement.²⁴²

Introduction

With the conclusion of WW2 and the advent of the cold war the World became divided in two blocs. The countries that had exited from WW2 as winners were now divided by an

²⁴² From the left: Jawaharlal Nehru of India, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Gamal Abdul Nasser of Egypt, Sukarno of Indonesia, Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia. On: https://qph.is.quoracdn.net/main-qimg89388a424821dc9d0a1bac5bd06dda35?convert_to_webp=true

ideological conflict. On one side the United States as a democratic capitalist with Western countries under its influence, on the other side the communist Russia with its satellites. To formalize the political division of Europe was the adherence of nearly every European country to the two rival military alliances that had been founded, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949 and the Warsaw Pact in 1955. The former comprised the United States and eleven other Western countries, the latter communist countries in the Eastern Europe.²⁴³

It is in this contest that newly independent nations in Africa and Asia assembled with the aim to give a third voice on World issues. Debates on poverty, political inequality at the global level and struggle against colonialism, emerged during their gatherings; alongside with discussions on nuclear weapons deemed as a threat to humanity. These states that made up almost three-quarters of the World's population, amassed as the Third World.²⁴⁴ Despite the racial, cultural and political differences between them, they had in common the colonial past.²⁴⁵ During their conferences, whether leftist, of the center or the right²⁴⁶, they vigorously condemned colonialism and stood against imperialism. It was important for them not to act under the influence of any Western power, but to manage their own foreign policy and diplomacy independently. This, they believed, was a way to oppose imperialism.²⁴⁷

²⁴³ See Robert, McMahon, Cold war, A very short introduction, Oxford University Press, New York, 2003, p.61

²⁴⁴ Third in respect of the two blocs. This word was used for the first time by a French journalist, Sauvy in his article, *Trois mondes, une planete*, published in L'Observateur n°118, on 14 august 1952, p. 14. He used the word without any derogatory connotation, but to resume the debate of the French revolution on the "Third Estate".

²⁴⁵ See See Sukarno's opening speech of the Bandung Conference,

²⁴⁶ Some examples are the Left China, the center India and Burma, or the Right Turkey and the Philippines.

²⁴⁷ See Prashad (2007, p.34)

The developed countries expected the states outside their conflict to line up automatically with one of the two blocs. They did not consider neutralism as an alternative position. So, a state that was not militarily aligned with the U.S. was considered as communist. Yet, Third World countries refused to take sides in the Cold War and, instead, stressed the need to create a new international order.²⁴⁸ They did not intend to create a third bloc, but to raise an alternative voice to that of the two blocs. In “*Africa must unite*” Nkrumah explained the position of this group,

“At Belgrade, we did not intend to form a third power bloc, but we did hope by our solidarity to constitute ourselves into a distinct moral force which might hold the balance of power between East and West in the cause of peace.”²⁴⁹

The first conference organized by the Third World countries took place in Bandung in 1955. Between 1960 and 1983 seven summits were held in Belgrade (1961), Cairo (1964), Lusaka (1970), Algeria (1973), Colombo (1976), Havana (1979) and New Delhi (1983).²⁵⁰ It was during the second conference that the Non-aligned- Movement was found. This was a group of states that were not formally aligned with none of the two blocs engaged in the cold war. Core concepts at the basis of this movement were

²⁴⁸ See Prashad (2007, p.94)

²⁴⁹ These states view the international relations on a moral stand rather than on power politics or national interests. According to Sukarno a Third-World cannot influence the world politics economically, neither with arms; it can neither “indulge in power politics”. All it can do is to “inject the voice of reason into world affairs” and “mobilize all the spiritual, all the moral, all the political strength of Asia and Africa on the side of peace.” See *Address given by Sukarno* (Bandung, 17-24 April 1955).

On:http://docentiold.unimc.it/docenti/uoldelul-chelati-dirar/2013/storia-dellafrica-contemporanea2013/bandung/Address%20given%20by%20Sukarno.pdf/at_download/Address%20given%20by%20Sukarno.pdf

²⁵⁰ See Speech New Delhi, Summit of the OAU in March 1983. On: <http://thomassankara.net/spip.php?article324&lang=fr>

peaceful coexistence among states, peaceful resolution of conflicts and a strong condemnation of the acquisition of nuclear weapons.²⁵¹

Third World countries used the United Nations as a platform to put forward their ideas and demands. On 17 December 1963, with the resolution 1991 the number of the non-permanent members of the General Assembly was increased to ten, five from Africa and Asia, two from Latin America, one from Eastern Europe, and two from Western Europe.

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4.1 The Non-Aligned Movement

From 18 to 24 April 1955 the leaders of twenty-nine African and Asian countries met in Bandung, Indonesia, in the first large-scale Afro-Asian conference. The initiating figures of this conference were the Indonesian Prime Minister Ali Sastroamidjojo, the Pakistani Prime Minister Muhammed Ali Bogra, the Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, the Sri-Lankan Prime Minister John Kotelawala and the Burman Prime Minister U Nu. In addition to these sponsoring countries, other twenty-four states²⁵³ from Africa and Asia participated. The conference was coordinated by the Indonesian Foreign Minister Ruslan Abdulgani.²⁵⁴ These states were not united by any cultural or racial similarity, but they had the common aim to promote economic and cultural cooperation; to oppose colonialism; and to promote human rights and self-determination of all peoples. Prashad

²⁵¹ See NKrumah (1963, p. 198)

²⁵² See Prashad (2007, p.103).

See also Resolution 1991/63 On:[http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/1991\(XVIII\)&Lang=E&Area=RESOLUTION](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/1991(XVIII)&Lang=E&Area=RESOLUTION)

²⁵³ Afghanistan, Cambodia, People's Republic of China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gold Coast, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Laos, Liberia, Libya, Lebanon, Nepal, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Thailand, Turkey, State of Vietnam, Democratic Republic of Vietnam and Yemen.

²⁵⁴ See *Asia-Africa speak from Bandung*, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia (Ed.). Djakarta: 1955, pp. 161-169.

observed that, “If you fought against colonialism and stood against imperialism, then you were part of the Third World”.²⁵⁵

In his opening speech at the conference, Sukarno urges his listeners to uproot colonialism by creating a united front against it.²⁵⁶

Prashad remarks that some African and Asian independent nations were excluded from the Conference despite the claims of this gathering to be inclusive. For example, Apartheid precluded South Africa from attending the conference; meanwhile Israel and Formosa were judged as not “driven by the dynamics of anti-colonialism as they were still bound to their colonial powers”; Outer Mongolia, the two Koreas and the Soviet Central Asian Republics had too intimate relationship with Moscow. However, to attend this conference were also the Communist China, and other countries that had recently made military-economic arrangements with the United States and Britain with the pretext to defend their small and weak states from “domestic and international communism.”²⁵⁷

The final declaration of the Bandung conference proclaimed the equality of all nations, it affirmed its support for liberation movements engaged in the struggle against colonialism, it rejected any hegemonized military alliances with superpowers and delineated some basic principles of international political cooperation among the member states. The dissolution of colonialism and the safeguard of peace were defined as priorities. Finally, the 29 countries made an appeal to the Super Powers to suspend

²⁵⁵ See Prachad (2007, p.34)

²⁵⁶ See *Address given by Sukarno* (Bandung, 17-24 April 1955). On:http://docentiold.unimc.it/docenti/oldelul-chelati-dirar/2013/storia-dellafrica-contemporanea2013/bandung/Address%20given%20by%20Sukarno.pdf/at_download/Address%20given%20by%20Sukarno.pdf

²⁵⁷ See Prashad (2007, p.38)

nuclear tests, reduce armaments and increase economic aid.²⁵⁸

The role of Zhou Enlai in the conference was significant. On Prashad's view, his attempt to befriend most of the delegates made him esteemed by many. He addressed as many sessions as possible, speaking always with a conciliatory tone toward the nationalist rhetoric of the conference; and met almost all the delegates. He introduced and reinforced the idea of neutrality as a guiding principle of this conference, and insisted that the debate of the conference should not be subject to ideological views. Another important figure was Nehru, who stressed the importance of peace and co-existence as founding principles in the relations between States. He was one of the pioneers of the theory of non-alignment.²⁵⁹

According to Prashad delegates present at the Bandung conference declared their refusal to follow the decisions of their former colonial powers, and proved to be capable of making their own decisions. Also, they showed the ability to discuss international issues and put together their ideas to sort out possible solutions.²⁶⁰

However, the Western countries viewed this conference as a meeting inspired by communist ideas. In an era of cold war, for US a country was either on their side or against them; they felt the need to compete with the Soviet bloc in order to keep under their influence the non-aligned countries of the Third-World. This could be done by tying these states to their economy by providing them with economic and technical assistance; bounding them to their cultural institutions that would help educate technically competent *pro-Western civilian and military leaders*. US forces would be

²⁵⁸ See See *Asia-Africa speak from Bandung*, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia (Ed.). Djakarta: 1955, pp. 161-169.

²⁵⁹ See Prashad (2007, p.36)

²⁶⁰ See Prashad (2007, p.41)

maintained in these countries in order to *exert a deterrent influence against communist aggression*.²⁶¹

The Bandung conference was the first of a series of Afro-Asian conferences in the second half of the 20th century. It was followed by the Belgrade Conference, which took place in September 1961. The founders of this conference were Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia, Sukarno, Nasser of Egypt, Nehru and Nkrumah. Twenty-five countries attended this conference. The Asian members were Afghanistan, Burma, Cambodia, Ceylon, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Lebanon, Nepal, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen. From Africa there were Algeria, Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Morocco, Somalia, Sudan and Tunisia. The other members were Cyprus, Yugoslavia, and Cuba. Bolivia, Brazil, and Ecuador attended as observers.²⁶²

The participants of the Belgrade conference were newly independent nations, who had decided to form a third front that was not tied to Western or Soviet influence. Any tie to one of these Superpowers would mean that they were involved in the Cold War politics, something that they were trying to avoid. It was during this occasion that the Non-Aligned Movement was founded. The principles of this movement were support for self-determination, national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of states; opposition to apartheid; non-adherence to multilateral military pacts; struggle against imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism; racism; foreign occupation and domination; disarmament; non-interference in the affairs of states; peaceful coexistence among states; rejection of the use or threat of the use of force in international relations. They

²⁶¹ See Prashad (2007, p.47-48)

²⁶² See Belgrade Declaration of Non-aligned countries. On: [http://pustakahpi.kemlu.go.id/dir_dok/01st%20Summit%20of%20the%20Non-Aligned%20Movement%20-%20Final%20Document%20\(Belgrade_Declaration\).pdf](http://pustakahpi.kemlu.go.id/dir_dok/01st%20Summit%20of%20the%20Non-Aligned%20Movement%20-%20Final%20Document%20(Belgrade_Declaration).pdf)

also advocated for a strengthened role and effectiveness of the UN, democratization of international relations, socio-economic development and international collaboration on an equal footing. They adopted a declaration on promotion of world peace and cooperation; independent foreign policy that would not be dictated by capitalist powers; they shared their problems of resisting the pressures of the major powers maintaining their independence and opposing colonialism.²⁶³

Consisting of many states with vastly different ideologies, the NAM was unified by its commitment to world peace and security. At the summit held in New Delhi in March 1983, Mrs. Gandhi described the movement as “history’s biggest peace movement.”²⁶⁴ It was characterized by solidarity, moral force and strong political force at the United Nations and other multinational forums.²⁶⁵

Non-alignment was a consistent feature of Indian foreign policy by the late 1940s. The term itself was used for the first time by the Indian diplomat Vengalil Krishnan Krishna Menon in 1953, at the United Nations²⁶⁶. In February 1947 Nehru, in a message delivered to the U.S. magazine *The New Republic*, remarked,

“Our policy is based on United Nations Charter and cooperation of all nations for peace, freedom and liberation of all suppressed peoples. We propose to avoid entanglement in any blocs or groups of Powers realizing that only thus we can serve not only (the) cause of India but of world peace. This policy sometimes leads partisans of one group to imagine that we are supporting

²⁶³ See *Non-Alignment in an Age of Alignment*, A. W. Singham & Shirley Hune, Zed Books Ltd., 1986
On: [http://www.freedomarchives.org/Documents/Finder/Black%20Liberation%20Disk/Black%20Power!
!/SugahData/Books/Singham.S.pdf](http://www.freedomarchives.org/Documents/Finder/Black%20Liberation%20Disk/Black%20Power!/SugahData/Books/Singham.S.pdf)

²⁶⁴ See *India and the Nonaligned Summits: Belgrade to Jakarta*, Renu Srivastava, Northern Book Centre, 1995, p. 86

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.* p. 97

²⁶⁶ See *India and the Non-aligned Movement*, H. M. Wajid Ali, Adam Pub., 2004

the other group. Every nation places its own interests first in developing its foreign policy. Fortunately India's interests coincide with peaceful foreign policy and cooperation with other progressive nations”²⁶⁷.

In 1954, in a treaty stipulated between India and the People’s Republic of China five principles were mentioned that will later be used as basic concepts of the NAM. These were (1) mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, (2) mutual non-aggression, (3) mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, (4) equality and mutual benefit, and (5) peaceful co-existence.²⁶⁸

For a state to be considered as a member of the NAM it had to desist from alliances or defense pacts with any of the Superpowers. This would allow countries to maintain their autonomy and not to commit to either side of the cold war. By unifying themselves, the NAM countries thought they could shift the balance of power and gain a greater influence in the international decision making. They pressured the Superpowers regarding their growing nuclear arsenals as they feared they would end up in a nuclear war. The participant of the Belgrade conference in 1961 exerted pressure on Khrushchev and Kennedy to negotiate a peaceful settlement of the conflict.²⁶⁹ Especially regarding the Berlin crisis; and warned them about the treats of a nuclear war.

The NAM was able to exercise pressure on modern nations on key issues such as the Korean War, the crisis in the Congo, the Suez crisis, the soviet invasion of Afghanistan

²⁶⁷ See *The Non-Aligned Movement and the Cold War: Delhi - Bandung – Belgrade*, Natasa Miskovic, Harald Fischer-Tiné, Nada Boskovska, Routledge, 2014 (p.3-4)

²⁶⁸ See Agreement between the republic of India and the People's Republic of China on trade and intercourse between Tibet region of China and India. Signed at Peking, on 29 April 1954- United Nations - treaty series volume 299, p.70)

²⁶⁹ See Prashad (2007 p.101)

and the Iran-Iraq war²⁷⁰. Many of the non-aligned countries tried to exploit the bipolar divide into their own advantage. They were able to play in both sides without getting involved in a particular bloc. A significant example was Tito's Yugoslavia.²⁷¹ He was a dedicated communist, who did not want to sacrifice his independence by becoming a Soviet satellite state. According to Prashad, Tito had "joined the Italian Communist Party's view that each national party had to be independent of Moscow, even though it must have strong fraternal ties to the socialist bloc."²⁷²

This led him to a split with Stalin in 1948. In order to increase the gap between Tito and the Soviet Union, the United States supported the former in his bid for a seat in the United Nations Security Council in October 1949, despite Soviet opposition.²⁷³ In 1951 the United States offered economic and military assistance to Tito,²⁷⁴ whom he accepted thinking that it would safeguard his country from a possible Soviet invasion. However, when Stalin died in 1953, Tito approached the USSR. In fact, Khrushchev had taken control introducing a more flexible communism and a less repressive style of government. Tito gave tacit support to the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956, but harshly criticized the Russian intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968. Relations between the United States and Yugoslavia warmed considerably after Tito's denunciation of the

²⁷⁰ See Miskovic, Fischer-Tiné, Boskowska (2014)

²⁷¹ See Prashad (2007 p.97-98).

²⁷² See Prashad (2007 p.97-98).

²⁷³ See *With Stalin Against Tito: Cominformist Splits in Yugoslav Communism*, Ivo Banac, Cornell University Press, London, 1988

²⁷⁴ During the Second World War, Yugoslavia was occupied by the Axis. The occupying powers were opposed by several resistance groups; the Communist resistance, led by Marshal Josip Broz Tito, was the largest and took control of the country by 1945, with minimal Soviet intervention. At this point, Tito was loyal to Moscow. but also caused him to be more insistent that Yugoslavia would get more room to follow its own interests than other Eastern Bloc leaders who had more reason (and came under more pressure) to recognize Soviet efforts in helping them liberate their own countries from Axis control. But also caused him to be more insistent that Yugoslavia would get more room to follow its own interests than other Eastern Bloc leaders who had more reason (and came under more pressure) to recognize Soviet efforts in helping them liberate their own countries from Axis control.

Czech intervention, but cooled again when he sided with the Soviets during the Arab-Israeli conflict of 1973. Tito never came too close to the U.S. as he did not want to introduce capitalism in his country. Yet, he was able to play on both sides according to the temporal needs of his government.²⁷⁵

Egypt was another significant member, since the Bandung conference. Nasser decided to pursue a neutral position in the cold war and to resist the attempt of the U.S. to convert the non-aligned countries into spheres of influence. He triggered a crisis in the Middle East known as the Suez crisis. On 19 July 1956, while Nasser was in Brujuni²⁷⁶, the Secretary of state John Foster Dulles announced the U.S. decision to withdraw its offer of financial aid to Egypt to finance the Aswan High Dam construction on the Nile. Dulles was suspicious of Nasser, whom he judged as "reckless and a dangerous man". Nasser's attacks on Western colonialism and imperialism had made him unpopular among the Western countries. When Nasser returned to Cairo he decided to raise the Aswan funds by nationalization of the Suez Canal. He pushed the British to remove their military base from Suez. The Soviets also lend him a hand and the Dam was opened officially in 1964. The U.S withdrawal of aid had provided the opening for soviet penetration of Egypt.²⁷⁷

In October 1956 when Britain, France and Israel invaded the Suez canal in retaliation for Egypt's action. The crisis ended when the Soviet Union threatened to intervene on the side of Egypt and the United States, fearing the extension of the conflict, forced the

²⁷⁵ See Tito: A Biography, Geoffrey Swain, I.B.Tauris, 2010

²⁷⁶ In mid-July 1956, President of Egypt Gamal Abdel Nasser, Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru, and President of Yugoslavia Josip Broz Tito met here to discuss their opposition to the Cold War. See Prashad (2007 p.96)

²⁷⁷ See Prashad (2007 p.96-98)

British, French and Israelis to retreat.²⁷⁸ When he realized that U.S. terms of arms selling were not convenient for his country, as they offered only a restricted range of arms that had to be accompanied by a U.S. military assistance mission, he turned to Czechoslovakia to buy them.²⁷⁹

In 1962, when the Sino-Indian war broke out and a dispute between some of the top leaders undermined the credibility of the movement, this led to a better relationship between India and USSR. Nehru died in 1964 and Nasser in 1970.

In the 1980s the NAM started to lose momentum with the Soviet Union invasion in Afghanistan.²⁸⁰ During the 1980s political and economic changes brought all the countries into different directions, South Asian countries, for example, experienced an economic boom. On the contrary, the Latin American and African countries had difficult economies.²⁸¹

The NAM continued to hold international conferences. However, rather than focusing on political issues, it focused on the promotion of solutions for global economic problems.

4.2 Nkrumah and the Non-Aligned Movement

Kwame Nkrumah was one of the founding fathers of the Non-Aligned movement. Even though he did not attend the Bandung conference in 1955, Gold Coast was represented by the Minister of State Kojo Botsio. "He refused to go to Bandung himself as he does

²⁷⁸ See Prashad (2007 p.99-100)

²⁷⁹ See Prashad (2007, p.99)

²⁸⁰ See *Conflict and Peace in South Asia*, Manas Chatterji, Emerald Group Publishing, 2008

²⁸¹ See *The A to Z of the Non-Aligned Movement and Third World*, Guy Arnold, Scarecrow Press, 2006

not want to leave the country until he is able to represent the G.C.²⁸² as a full sovereign state.”²⁸³ In 1961, after the independence of Ghana in 1957, he attended the Belgrade Conference and was present at the preparatory meeting three months earlier. According to Mahoney Nkrumah adhered to the ideas of the NAM after his visits to Egypt and India in 1958. Through these visits, “he laid the foundation of a non-aligned ‘third force’ in international affairs.”²⁸⁴ Nkrumah pursued a policy of positive neutralism and non-alignment with respect to the Cold War politics. Non-alignment for him meant the absence of alliance with either of the two blocs involved in the cold war. Positive neutralism was an extension of non-alignment, which involved a “further commitment to participate in cold war issues, to play leading roles in neutralist conferences, to offer advice to the great powers, especially the West, to exert influence, diplomatic, psychological, and especially moral”.²⁸⁵ Nkrumah referred to Ghana’s foreign policy in terms of positive neutralism to indicate that the country was not a passive role player in world politics.²⁸⁶ He believed that it was not possible for a state in the 1960s to be indifferent to international affairs and refuse to take position on issue that concerned the cold war. As war between the greater powers would not bring misery and destruction only to those who took part in the conflict, but also to the other nations who abstained from it.²⁸⁷ He wrote, “Since war, if it comes, is likely to destroy most of us, whether we are participants or not, whether or not we are the cause of it, negative neutralism is no

²⁸² Gold Coast

²⁸³ See Aerogramme from George Padmore to W. E. B. Du Bois, June 21, 1955

On: <http://credo.library.umass.edu/view/pageturn/mums312-b161-i232/#page/1/mode/1up>

²⁸⁴ See *J.F.K. Ordeal in Africa*, Richard D. Mahoney, Oxford University Press, New York, 1983, p. 163

²⁸⁵ See Theodore L. Shay, *Nonalignment Si, Neutralism No*, *The Review of politics*, Vol. 30, No.2 (April 1968), p.218

²⁸⁶ See Nkrumah (1963, p.135)

²⁸⁷ See Nkrumah (1963)

shield at all. It is completely impotent and even dangerous.”²⁸⁸ And again, “For peace is indivisible. Disagreement between East and West, for example, over Laos or Berlin, can threaten the security of the whole of the rest of the world.”²⁸⁹

This constant threat of universal destruction calls for a numerical increase of the non-aligned countries. “The wider the non-committed area of the world, the better the chances of human survival. By moral force, if not by material strength, the non-aligned nations must exert their influence to save the world from ultimate disaster.”²⁹⁰

Nkrumah believed that War between the two blocs was not only a menace to the World peace, but also to economic growth. Nkrumah reported that in 1961 that the United States spent, on defense and armaments, more than half of its \$47,966 million annual national budget. The Soviet Union spent on defense, in 1960, 96,100 million roubles out of a national budget of 745,800 million roubles²⁹¹. Nkrumah wrote, “It has been estimated that one-tenth of the expenditure involved in armaments would be enough to raise the whole of the less-developed world to the level of a self-sustaining economy.”²⁹²

He advocated for the peaceful settlement of international disputes in accordance with the charter of the United Nations; and used the United Nations as a platform to appeal for disarmament.²⁹³ In January 1962 Nkrumah was elected into the United Nation Security Council for two years. On 29 September 1960, five countries²⁹⁴ including Ghana draft a UN resolution that invited the United States and the Soviet Union to

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*

²⁹² *Ibid.*

²⁹³ See Nkrumah (Speech at the united nations general assembly meeting on 23 September 1960)

²⁹⁴ Ghana, India, Indonesia, the United Arab Republic, and Yugoslavia Documents

renew their suspended talks on nuclear matters.²⁹⁵ Nkrumah' desire for a nuclear weapon-free world was clear in his words,

“As I have said elsewhere, the balance of forces in the world today has reached such a stage that the only avenue open to mankind is co-existence. The only alternative to this is chaos, destruction and perhaps even complete annihilation. As I see it, mankind must decide whether it prefers the "world without the bomb" or "the bomb without the world".”²⁹⁶

In June 1962 the Ghanaian government organized a meeting in Accra sponsoring it with almost fifty-thousand pounds. This assembly was attended by different organizations from around the World, who sought for the end of the nuclear war and international peace. The topics treated during this meeting were as follows,

“The reduction of international tensions; methods of effective inspection and control in disarmament; the transformation of existing military nuclear materials to peaceful purposes, and the prevention of the spread of nuclear weapons; economic problems involved in or arising from disarmament; and the examination of such fundamental problems as hunger, disease, ignorance, poverty and servitude, with a view to utilizing for social purposes resources now misused as a result of the armaments race.”²⁹⁷

The non-aligned Ghana was not indifferent to the issues of the World or isolated to the World affairs. Irrespective of Nkrumah's strong opposition to colonial powers, he sought

²⁹⁵ See United Nations General Assembly fifteenth session Official records, 1960.

On: <http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/dag/docs/apv883e.pdf>

²⁹⁶ See Nkrumah (speech at the Accra Assembly on disarmament on 21 June 1962)

On: <http://www.nkrumahinfobank.org/article.php?id=373&c=51>

²⁹⁷ See Nkrumah (1963: p. 199)

economic cooperation with a number of countries, both in the East and West. He pursued a productive and mutually beneficial cooperation with the industrialized countries in order to obtain financial and technical assistance necessary to implement Ghana's economic Programmes. Biney claims that "Ghana's nonaligned stance enabled Nkrumah to express freedom of action in its foreign policy and to draw on both world powers for technical and material aid"²⁹⁸. In this context, the policy of Non-Alignment, which Nkrumah had adhered to, served a useful purpose. He believed that he could maintain relations with both Soviet and United States and keep their ideological conflict distant from Ghana. He established diplomatic relations with both blocs; he condemned any action taken by the two Superpowers that he thought was a threat to world peace. For example, he criticized U.S. intervention in Congo and firmly condemned Vietnam War, which he viewed as a form of imperialism. After his trip in the Soviet Union in 1961, several Ghanaian embassies were opened in Eastern European capitals. Biney recounts that in his trips to the Eastern Europe Nkrumah never visited the Eastern Germany on purpose, because "the Western German representative in Ghana had made it clear that this would be regarded by his government as a hostile act."²⁹⁹ She also explains that Nkrumah acceded with their wish in order to obtain a two-million loan to build a second bridge over the Volta River from the Federal Republic of Germany. In July 1958, during his official visit to the United States Nkrumah took the opportunity to discuss the Volta Dam Project with President Eisenhower. The latter put him in contact with Edgar Kaiser of the Henry John Kaiser Company. The cost of the project was to be shared between the two governments, the United States and Ghana.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁸ See The political and social thought of Kwame Nkrumah, Ama Biney, Palgrave Mcmillan, 2011, p. 151

²⁹⁹ See *Ibid.* 151

³⁰⁰ See Biney (2001, p.133)

According to Thompson, Nkrumah's relations with the Soviet Union only served to assure him that in case the negotiations with the United States over the Volta River Project failed, he could find an alternative source of capital.³⁰¹

Nkrumah's good relations with Russia, China and some other communist states made him suspected in the United States. In response to Nkrumah's rapprochement to the Soviet Union and his criticism towards U.S. foreign policy, President Eisenhower had delayed the loan guarantees for the Volta Project. When Kennedy took office, he continued delaying the final funding, urged by his advisors to do so. According to Biney, U.S. relations with newly independent Ghana was amicable until Ghana intervened in the Congo crisis in 1960 in Favor of Lumumba.³⁰² The involvement in the Congo crisis of the Soviet Union alarmed the United States. The government of Dwight D. Eisenhower, conforming to Belgian criticism, believed that Lumumba was a communist ally to the Soviet Union. In August 1960, Lawrence Devlin, the local CIA station chief reported to the headquarters of the CIA, "Embassy and Station believe Congo experiencing classic communist takeover government".³⁰³ He also warned that they should take action in order to avoid another Cuba. Biney wrote, "The United States did not interpret Nkrumah's conduct in the Congo as a matter of Pan-Africanism, that it was. Rather for the Americans, it confirmed Nkrumah's communist and pro- Russian affiliations." Yet, she wrote, based on the principle of non-alignment Nkrumah had done

³⁰¹ See Thompson, S. Ghana's Foreign Policy: 1957– 1966. Princeton, NJ: 1969., p. 385

³⁰² See Biney (2001, p.151)

³⁰³ See William Blum , Killing Hope: US Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II , Zed Books, 2003 p.135

his best to restrain Lumumba from accepting the Soviet military aid. He knew that it was dangerous to allow the Superpowers to become involved in the crisis.³⁰⁴

When in January 1961 Lumumba was assassinated, Nkrumah blamed the United States and Belgium to be complicit in the murder of the Congolese prime minister. Yet, despite his suspicions, Nkrumah accepted fifty-two American Peace Corps volunteers in August 1961. According to Biney “Nkrumah accepted the volunteers due to the vacuum created in Ghana’s educational system with the departure of British teachers when Ghana acquired republican status in 1960.”³⁰⁵

In his relations with other Western countries, Nkrumah fervently opposed to French nuclear tests in the Sahara in February 1960. This demonstrated his strong anti-nuclear position. On this issue, he declared,

The cardinal principles upon which the peace and security of this continent depends, is the firm insistence that Africa is not an extension of Europe or any other continent. A corollary of this principle is the resolution that Africa is not going to become a cockpit of the Cold War, or a marshalling ground for attack on either West or East, nor is it going to be an arena for fighting out the East-West conflict.³⁰⁶

Nkrumah's oscillation between the East and the West as a result of his non-alignment position revealed to be noxious to his political career which ended on 24 February 1966,

³⁰⁴ On the invitation of Kwame Nkrumah, Lumumba flew to Accra on 7-8 August. Here they drafted a secret agreement between the two countries for the establishment of an African union. They condemned the refusal of Belgian government to withdraw his troops from Katanga and enlisted the support of other nations ready to assist Congo in the withdrawal of Belgian troops from the region. See Biney (2001 p.145)

³⁰⁵ See Biney (2001, p. 152)

³⁰⁶ See *Positive Action Conference for Peace and Security in Africa - Accra, 7th to 10th April, 1960*, Kwame Nkrumah, published by Community Centre, Accra, Ghana, 1960, p.8

when he was overthrown by a military and police coup. Nani-Kofi reports that in 1999 some declassified files of the CIA revealed the involvement of the latter in the overthrowing of Nkrumah. After the coup Koumer wrote to Johnson on 12 March 1966,

“The coup in Ghana is another example of a fortuitous windfall. Nkrumah was doing more to undermine our interests than any other black African. In reaction to his strongly pro-Communist leanings, the new military regime is almost pathetically pro-Western.”³⁰⁷

4.3 Sankara’s approach to the NAM

In his speech in Havana on 25 September 1984, Armando Hart sustained that Burkina Faso’s “active foreign policy is [...] a policy of support for national liberation movements and of adherence to the principles of the Non-Aligned Movement; in conclusion, a policy of anti-imperialist unity and of struggle for peace.”³⁰⁸

In 1983 Sankara attended the seventh summit of the movement in New Delhi. Before that Burkina Faso had been already a member of the NAM since 1973 under the presidency of colonel Lamizana. On this occasion, Sankara ushered a speech on the role of the NAM in Africa and the world. In September 1986, during the eighth summit held in Harare, Zimbabwe, he addressed his audience on the same topic. Here, Sankara described how during his childhood he heard about the NAM, and how as an adolescent he fervently proclaimed that the NAM was “A force against colonialism, neocolonialism,

³⁰⁷ See Remembering the sixties, Godfrey Mwakigagile, New Africa press, 2014

³⁰⁸ See Sankara (2007, p.139)

imperialism and racism”, that “will, like a volcano, soon set the earth on fire to create a new international order”.³⁰⁹

Sankara, as Nkrumah did, stressed the need for the movement to work towards the liberation of all countries still under colonial burden. He sustains that there must be a relation between “Non-alignment and the concrete demands of [anti-colonial and anti-imperialistic] liberation struggles.”³¹⁰

Sankara claimed that non-aligned countries could ally with other nations and still maintain their independence of action. He believed in the right of all nations to choose freely and without intimidation their own friends in the world. They could have the same political ideology as other nations, but still remain autonomous.³¹¹ He declared,

“We the Non-Aligned countries are of the opinion that the politics of blocs is harmful to world peace. We refuse to be either backyards of the West or beachheads of the East. Though we are willing to cooperate with both, we demand the right to be different.”³¹²

When criticized for visiting Libya and North Korea Sankara defends himself by saying that Burkina Faso cooperate even with countries that had attacked it and exploited it. No one condemned such relationship. Why should its relationship with Libya and North Korea be criticized; Libya has never harmed Burkina Faso nor Korea ever exploited it.³¹³

³⁰⁹ Ibid. p.304

³¹⁰ Ibid. p.306

³¹¹ Ibid. p.304

³¹² Ibid. p.189

³¹³ Ibid. p. 128-129

Sankara reveals that in the two years Burkina Faso was a member of the Security Council, each time they took a different position than that of the Western states, these threatened to withdraw their aid to the country.³¹⁴

In his speech in Harare he affirmed, “The Non-Aligned Movement signifies [...] the refusal to be the grass that fighting elephants trample with impunity”.³¹⁵ A decade back Nkrumah quoted an African proverb, referring to the situation of the Third World countries during the cold war, “When the bull and elephant fight the grass is trampled down.”³¹⁶ This signified the refusal of the Third World countries to be affected by a war they were not involved in. This called for an active role of these countries towards the issue of disarmament and peace. Sankara strongly sought for freedom of action and of thought. He gave the Libyan example,

“We went to Libya after Colonel Gheddafi had sent us emissaries three times. We told the Libyan leaders that we had nothing against Libya, but that we have positions of our own. When it comes to ideology, we are not virgins. We are ready to collaborate with Libya, but we are also ready to tell them, in a responsible manner whatever we might criticize.”³¹⁷

Similarly to Nkrumah, Sankara believed that the movement could give *solutions to the problems of security, peace, of good neighborliness*; and he urged its members to still consider the fight for disarmament as one of the permanent goals of the movement. “Disarmament, peace and development are closely interrelated concepts for the Non-aligned. One cannot sincerely want one without fighting for others”. He believed that

³¹⁴ Ibid. p. 195-196

³¹⁵ Ibid. p.306

³¹⁶ See I speak of freedom, Kwame Nkrumah, Panaf, London, 1973. P.143

³¹⁷ See Sankara (2007, p.59).

disarmament was strongly related development in the sense that if governments would spend less on disarmaments, they could allocate the resources spent in military expenditures in economic development.³¹⁸

Sankara remembers Tito, Nehru, Nasser and Nkrumah. He believes that with the absence of these men, the movement is losing its strength. Sankara quotes Kwame Nkrumah and Houari Boumediene as men that he will always remember with “profound respect” as they played a dynamic role in the enhancement of the movement in order to avoid its “sclerosis”. During the 80s, according to Sankara, the movement was losing its strength, and frustration had “taken the place of certainty, of the enthusiastic promise of victory, and of hopeful satisfaction.” He remembered with melancholy the early years of the movement, when its pioneers dared to stand against colonialism sure of their victory and in the end emerged as victorious. In the decades following the birth of the Bandung conference many countries attained their independence. Sankara believed that the “philosophy of the struggles” that led them to independence was “the application of the general principles of the Non-Aligned Movement”.³¹⁹

³¹⁸ See Sankara (2007, p.311).

In 1977 a commission, composed by Governmental experts, was set by the United Nations General Assembly to study the relationship between disarmament and development. A report on this study was prepared between 1978 and 1981, and published in 1982. The final result of this study stated that development and disarmament are interrelated. It argues that since military expenditures are essentially government expenditures, the reduction of these expenditures may promote government consumption and investment for economic and social development. Also, the reduction of tax, as a result of disarmament, may promote private consumption and investment. However, they admitted that the link between disarmament and development of Third World Countries was not automatic. Firstly because if countries cut their defense spending, they will be prone to spend the savings at home; secondly, because even if the Western powers invested this money in Africa it is not obvious that it would produce the desired effect: it may not turn into profitable investments. The United Nations had in many occasions –without success - to call for the diversion of scarce resources from military expenditure to “economic and social development of developing countries”. See *The relationship between Disarmament and development*, Committee of Governmental Experts, United Nations publication, New York 1982

³¹⁹ See Sankara (2007, p.305)

In 1986, as he was ushering his speech in Harare, he reminded his audience that many of the battles the pioneers of the movement had been instigated, however, still remained uncompleted. In Namibia and South Africa blacks are still treated as slaves; and the rights of the Palestinians have not been restored yet.³²⁰

Differently than Nkrumah, despite Sankara his adherence to the Non-Aligned Movement, affirmed that it would be unfair for him to maintain the same relationship with all countries. Those who oppress other countries could not be put on the same level as those who sustain them in their struggle for independence.³²¹ So, he had a cold relationship with Europe and US. With his criticism against capitalist countries and the interventionism of France and US he attracted many enemies. When Francois Mitterrand visited Burkina Faso in 1986, Sankara criticized him for hosting the Prime Minister of the Apartheid South Africa Peter Botha. He criticized France's hypocrisy, a country that claimed to be friendly to African states, but still sustained racial segregation.³²² Mitterrand will later describe Sankara thusly, "*Sankara* is a disturbing person. With him it's impossible to *sleep* in peace. He doesn't leave your conscience alone." In 1984 Sankara visited Cuba. When he left the island aboard the *Cubana de Aviacion*, the aircraft did not get permission to land at the airport in Atlanta, where the president of Burkina Faso had been invited by the mayor of the city, Andrew Young³²³. Sankara had to continue to Harlem, New York, where he delivered a famous speech³²⁴.

³²⁰ These were two among the aims of the NAM. SWAPO (South West Africa People's Organization-national liberation movement in Namibia) and **PLO** were admitted as full members in the NAM respectively in 1978 and 1976. See Sankara (2007, p.306)

³²¹ See Sankara (2007, p.147)

³²² See Sankara's speech: Sankara sermone François Mitterrand

On: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=18AoRhBos4g>

³²³ Democratic African American leader Andrew Young. See Harsch (2014, p 48)

³²⁴ See Sankara (2007, p. 147)

See also Carlo Bata (2003, p.121)

In 1985, Batà reports that Vice-president George Bush canceled his visit to Burkina Faso. Sankara had condemned the foreign policy of the United States.³²⁵

Sankara's good relationship with Libya, Cuba and the Soviet Union availed him the title of communist in the sight of the Western countries. From Libya and the Soviet Union Burkina Faso received money, weapons, training and Marxist influence. Sankara had greater relationship with Cuba as a sister revolutionary country. Harsch defines Burkina Faso's relationship with Cuba,

“Just a few months after the CNR was established, in December 1983, Burkina Faso signed a scientific, economic, and technical cooperation agreement with Cuba. Under it, Cuba sent some two dozen medical personnel to Burkina Faso and provided aid in agriculture, economic planning, stockbreeding, transportation, education, and dam construction.”³²⁶

In September 1984 Sankara was awarded the Order of José Martí, the highest honor conferred by the Cuban government.³²⁷

Sankara criticizes the Soviet Union. According to him their aid provided to the liberation struggle of the peoples of Africa is "scandalously insufficient". In 1984 Burkina Faso faced a major draught and a shortage of 150 thousands-ton of food. They refused aid from the Soviet Union- an offer of five-thousand tons of food- because it did not meet their expectations. He believes that if Lenin was still alive and had seen the revolution they were caring out, he would have surely helped them.

³²⁵ See Carlo Batà (2003: p. 118-120)

³²⁶ See Harsch (2014 p.50)

³²⁷ See Sankara (2007, 137)

Sankara condemned the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan, in the same way he had condemned the U.S. invasion of Grenada in 1983.³²⁸

³²⁸ See See Sankara (2007, p.171)

CONCLUSION

This these attempted to found the analogies and the differences in the ideas of Kwame Nkrumah and Thomas Sankara, concerning the three topics, Pan-Africanism, Non-alignment and Neo-colonialism.

The study, which started from the biography of these two figures show already Thomas Sankara and Kwame Nkrumah, shoed already in the first two chapters how different were the two African leaders. First of all Nkrumah arise as a statist, a thinker and an organizer, who led his country out of the bondage of colonialism. On the other hand, Sankara was a military who came into power through a coup d'état Twenty-three years after the independence of his country.

Thomas Sankara hailed Nkrumah's effort to create an African union. He believed that unity was the only way through which Africa could defeat imperialism. Though, Sankara criticized the Organization of African Union. According to him, the OAU had not proved during the decades following its institution, to be effective. In several occasions, this organization failed to aid its members, who felt into the hands of imperialists.

Sankara contextualized also Nkrumah's thoughts on neo-colonialism. He introduced the issue of class struggle. For Sankara the world is divided in two camps: that of the exploited and that of the exploiters. This division had also moved to a national level splitting the population into a majority of poor people, and a minority of rich bourgeoisie, who lay in comfort and serve the interest of the imperialists.

A difference in the Approach of the two leaders to non-alignment is determined by the phase of the cold war in which both ruled their countries. Meanwhile in the 1960s the cold war was in its hottest decade, in 1980s it was almost coming to its end. Sankara, differently than Nkrumah, did not express his ideas on the nuclear weapon. He also did not actively engage himself in the settlement of the conflict between Soviet Union and the US. To him the Non-Aligned Movement assumed more a role of a liberatory force of the countries struggling against foreign domination.

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