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Socialism Reconsidered

The Domestication and Worldmaking of Socialism

> Indeed, it is not too much to say that the most dynamic socialist movement in the world to-day is in Africa. It is the most comprehensively revolutionary continent.
>
> —Fenner Brockway, socialist British parliamentarian (*African Socialism: A Background Book*, 1963), 17

INTRODUCTION

In the 1950s and 1960s, Ghana was the heartbeat of socialist and liberationist movements not simply in Africa but around the world. Leftist thinkers in Ghana and from around the world shared multiple and competing ideas about socialist nationalist development projects and the meanings of African and Black freedom in Ghana. Sites such as secondary schools, universities, the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute in Winneba (Institute) – a Ghana-based socialist educational center and think tank, newspapers, magazines, lectures, and conferences became forums where global socialist ideas found expression and character. They were sites where formerly colonized people were being transformed into state and global socialist citizens.

Once suppressed under British colonialism, socialism, Marxism, and the histories and living conditions of China, Cuba, and the nations behind the Iron Curtain became widely disseminated and debated in Ghana. Rather than a singular definition of or state-led construction of socialist principles, people in the socialist de-colony were introduced to varieties and conflicting conceptions of socialism and Marxism. These socialist theorists were

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Marxist-socialist nation-and-world-builders.[1] They grounded their ideas about the nature and tenants of socialism within local and global debates and paradigms. In so doing, they were simultaneously domesticating socialism in Ghana, decolonizing socialism from its European roots, and remaking it globally.

This chapter then unpacks how socialists in Ghana were being made and the multifaceted debates that animated them, such as: socialism's relationship to Black liberation, whether socialism could be reconciled with religious belief; morality in a socialist African society;[2] the importance of creating a nation of Marxist-Socialists and how to do it; the historicization and historical accuracy of an egalitarian precolonial African society; or whether they were building "African Socialism" or "socialism in Africa." Whereas global histories of socialism have often understood and framed Nkrumah's Ghana as a key embodiment or leading charge of "African Socialism," this chapter argues that from the onset leading socialist theorists in Ghana rejected that association. They called African Socialism reactionary and neocolonial, arguing that the historical and ideological premises underpinning African Socialism were ahistorical and dangerous. They maintained that African Socialism situated African societies and its histories outside of world history, corrupted their conceptions of socialism, and constrained African and Black liberation.

Underlying this chapter's arguments is the contestation that portrayals of Nkrumah's government as an environment underpinned by the increasing suppression of dissent and freedom of speech is untenable when we move beyond the narrow confines that situate discussions of Western liberal political, social, and economic traditions as indicative of an open, pluralistic society.[3] Whereas the British colonial government had previously shut down public debates on socialism and Marxism in its African colony, confiscated and banned books on African liberation, socialism, and communism, and unleashed a global security apparatus to spy on and

[1] Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire*; Robin D. G. Kelley, "From the River to the Sea to Every Mountain Top: Solidarity as Worldmaking," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 48, No. 4 (Summer 2019): 69–91.

[2] Examining the case of Mozambique from the late 1960s to 1990, historian Benedito Machava argues that the question of morality was central to the socialist Mozambican government's political agenda. See Benedito Luís Machava, *The Morality: Reeducation Camps and the Politics of Punishment in Socialist Mozambique, 1968–1990* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2024).

[3] Peter T. Omari, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Anatomy of an African Dictatorship* (New York: Africana Publishers, 1970); Miescher, *A Dam for Africa*.

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incarcerate people on the basis of ideology and political thought as seen in the previous chapters, this chapter shows that a multiplicity of socialist ideas and knowledge about different societies and political-economic systems were courted and flourished in Nkrumah's Ghana. Nkrumah's Ghana was something new. It was a fledging state in the throes of building its own conceptions of an African and global socialist society. This chapter is concerned then with these processes and returns to this exciting national-and-worldmaking socialist moment.

CREATING SOCIALISTS IN GHANA: "SOCIALISM NEEDS SOCIALISTS TO BUILD IT"

Ghana's socialist intellectuals believed that a new socialist citizenry had to be fashioned to erase almost a century of colonial "corruption" and decadence. Despite British and American anticommunist hysteria and efforts to prevent and demonize socialist nation and worldmaking efforts, including plotting coups and assassination and bomb attempts in Ghana, socialist thinkers in Ghana forged ahead with their visions. After a second bombing incident against Nkrumah and members of the CPP in Accra, Ghana's capital city, in late March 1963, resulting in numerous deaths and injuries, the CPP kept their decision to hold their forthcoming national seminar on socialism a few weeks later in the coastal city of Cape Coast. John E. Hagan, the regional commissioner of the Central Region (where Cape Coast is located) and a key socialist theorist, told the participants that "We [Ghana] cannot build socialism . . . [w]ithout socialists." Hagan continued, "we must take positive steps to ensure that the Party and the country produce men and women who can handle a Socialist Programme."[4] On April 5, writers in the CPP's socialist, pro-African liberationist and Pan-Africanist magazine, *The Spark*, were unambiguous on the need to create socialists to achieve the socialist decolony. "Let it be said without equivocation that no one can become a good architect of the socialist society if he has no faith in socialism." They were insistent that socialism was necessary to transform and create a "totally new civil service."[5] Later that year, on December 11, Kofi Batsa, *The Spark*'s editor, wrote: "Socialism can never be built without

[4] Hagan, *Seminar Report on "Nkrumaism"* (Cape Coast, Ghana: Mfantsiman Press, 1962), 11.

[5] Batsa, "Editorial," *The Spark*, April 5, 1963.

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socialists."[6] Nkrumah agreed: "Socialism needs socialists to build it." Nkrumah maintained that Ghana needed to take "positive steps to ensure that the party and the country produce the men and women who can handle our socialist programme."[7] Echoing Hagan and Nkrumah, George Padmore, the Caribbean Marxist who had been influential in Moscow and now Ghana, concluded, "you cannot build socialism without socialists."[8] Schools and television programming would aid in this transformative process. Nkrumah demanded that Ghanaian television "assist in the Socialist transformation of Ghana."[9] The leading voices of socialist reconstruction were clear on a few points. First, people in Ghana were not naturally socialists. There was no inherent socialism animating from the population. Instead, the state had to produce socialists. Without the socialist-types they envisioned, the state could not construct and implement the totality of its domestic and global socialist program.

For the non-celebrated, and well-known everyday socialist thinkers like J. Ofosu Appiah, socialist-modeled schools would "promulgate the ideals of socialism to the people."[10] Schools would not just teach students the alphabet, geography, and mathematics but instruct them with socialist principles. Padmore agreed. "The new education," Padmore emphasized, "must be geared to producing a different kind of citizen from the one we know: one who will know his history, his background, and his socialist future."[11] Throughout the Nkrumah-era, political theorists, writers, government officials, and others argued that the new state had to create socialists to remedy deliberate colonial efforts at creating colonial subjects both ignorant of their histories and hostile to socialism (see Chapters 1 and 4). These figures understood that the socialist de-colony's long-term success was tied to making a new, socialist orientated society. From the civil service to engineers to drillers, every sector of society needed socialist orientated individuals to ensure immediate, intermediate, and long-term Black and African freedom. Consequently, alongside the creation of an

[6] Editorial Board, "The Issue Is Joined," *The Spark*, December 11, 1963.
[7] Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite*, 130.
[8] George Padmore, "A Guide to Pan-African Socialism," in *African Socialism*, eds. William H. Friedland and Carl G. Roseberg, Jr. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1964), 223–238, 231.
[9] Howard University, MSRC, Kwame Nkrumah Papers, Series B Conakry Correspondence, box 3, file folder 56, Shirley DuBois, 1967 (154-3-File Folder 56), Shirley Graham Du Bois, "A Careful Look at Ghana," 3, citing Nkrumah's speech.
[10] Appiah, "From Colonialism to Socialism," *Seminar Report on "Nkrumaism"* (Cape Coast, Ghana: Mfantsiman Press, 1962), 26.
[11] Padmore, "A Guide to Pan-African Socialism," 233.

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African Studies Institute at the University of Ghana, Legon, in October 1963, to project Ghana's version of the African personality to liberate the African mind,[12] the government built socialist-inspired schools.

Two years after Ghana had become a Republic and started to engage earnestly with their Soviet counterparts, on March 16, 1962, the Ghanaian presidential cabinet decided to construct the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute at Winneba to spread the socialist state-capitalist gospel.[13] Putting the Ideological Institute in the coastal town of Winneba, approximately seventy kilometers from Accra and eighty-six kilometers from Cape Coast, was not accidental. Socialism had a history in Winneba. The Ghana United Kingdom based National Association of Socialist Student Organization (NASSO) hosted a weekend-long seminar in Winneba in 1958 to discuss socialism. Tawia Adamafio, a leftist CPP stalwart who would be charged and then acquitted of treason charges in 1963 in relation to the first bombing attempt on Nkrumah, formed the branch to train Ghanaians in the UK in socialist thought and to counter the National Liberation Movement's (NLM's) alleged efforts to use the Ghana Students' Union to criticize Nkrumah's government's socialist plans. Indeed, at the 1958 weekend seminar, lectures were given by key government and party officials.[14] As the creation of the NASSO-UK branch demonstrates, Ghanaian socialists were being created in Ghana and globally. While the earlier generation of Colonial Ghanaians like Nkrumah and Awooner-Renner did not have spaces like the NASSO-branch in the UK to discuss their socialist ideas, this new generation of politically liberated Ghanaians, with the backing of a sympathetic Black socialist state, could openly create a national socialist organization in

[12] Jean Allman, "Kwame Nkrumah, African Studies, and the Politics of Knowledge Production in the Black Star of Africa," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (2013): 181–203, 183.

[13] PRAAD-Accra, RG 3/5/1532, "Development of the Kwame Nkrumah Institute, Winneba, as the Institute for Political Science." The National Liberation Council formally terminated the Institute within months of the February 24, 1966, coup d'état and converted it to center for Advanced Teacher Training. See PRAAD-Accra, RG 3/5/1637, June 16, 1966, J. S. Pessey to the Principal Secretary of Ministry of Education.

[14] Figures such as Nkrumah, George Padmore, Kofi Baako (the Minister of Information and Broadcasting), John K. Tettegah (the Secretary of the Ghana Trade Union Congress), Komla Gbedemah (the Minister of Finance), Kojo Botsio (the Minister of Trade), T. Ras Makonnen (the Caribbean Pan-Africanist), and P. K. Quaidoo (the Minister of Communications) spoke there. PRAAD-Accra, RG 17/1/A24 formerly RG1/17/1/404, "First Week-End-Seminar to be Held at Winneba (Ghana College) on Sunday, 5th January, 1958."

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London, the former heart of Western empire. However, NASSO was not free from internal strife.

While tensions within the Ghana Students' Union resulted in NASSO, problems between NASSO's members came to the fore over a disputed leadership contest, fracturing NASSO and prompting the Ghana High Commission in the UK and Nkrumah's office to intervene. The disgruntled losers, Kweku Budu Acquah and K. Gyemu Kyem, formed a breakaway group, the Socialist Association.[15] The rift reached Nkrumah's office, upsetting him. Nkrumah's office chided the warring factions, and called for the NASSO leadership to forgive the breakaway group, urged unity and reconciliation amongst the Ghanaian socialist movement abroad, and disciplined conduct. Nkrumah noted that all who "claim to be loyal to him" or the "party" should endeavor to ensure unity of purpose and vision within NASSO.[16] In the early years of Marxist-socialist nation-and-worldmaking, Nkrumah was simultaneously calling for generosity, leniency, and discipline among the comrades. Nkrumah understood that internal division among the socialists would undermine their political project. However, asking for party unity did not mean a conformity of ideas.

Back at Winneba, Nkrumah envisioned everyone "meet[ing] at Winneba ... to broaden their political knowledge and ideological understanding."[17] "The Institute should," the government believed, permit those without a formal education "to bring themselves up to the intellectual level expected of graduates whilst at the same time providing them with academic training in the ideology of the Party and in other subjects related to the government, economic and social life of the country."[18] Besides its history as a site of socialist thought, Winneba was also part of Nkrumah's broader ambition to ease the stranglehold Accra, the nation's capital, had on intellectual innovation and money in the new nation. Just as development projects were conducted in the North (as seen in Chapter 2), intellectual centers of power would be distributed across the country.

[15] PRAAD-Accra, RG 17/1/A24 formerly RG1/17/1/404, November 26, 1959, Kwesi Armah to Kojo Botsio. Kweku Acquah was formerly known as G. Abednago Acquah.

[16] PRAAD-Accra, RG 17/1/A24 formerly RG1/17/1/404, December 9, 1959, Nkrumah's Personal Secretary to K. Gyawu-Kyem and K. Budu Acquah; PRAAD-Accra, RG 17/1/A24 formerly RG1/17/1/404, December 2, Kwame Nkrumah.

[17] Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite*, 130–131.

[18] PRAAD-Accra, RG 3/5/1532, "Development of the Kwame Nkrumah Institute, Winneba, as the Institute for Political Science."

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Winneba then became the hotbed of global socialist thought. People throughout Ghana and the world sought it to enhance their socialist knowledge. Literature such as *Marxism Today* lined the Institute's shelves.[19] The Institute's instructors taught courses such as Nkrumaism, Marxism, and Leninism.[20] On May 17, 1963, a writer named Kwame Atuapem was proud that Ghana was "providing lessons for the enrichment of the teachings of Marx and Lenin, based on Nkrumaism. . ."[21] While much has been made about of the non-African teachers from "the United Kingdom, Yugoslavia, Poland, and Czechoslovakia,"[22] many of the teachers came from Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal.[23] While the former were intended to unpack the particularities of European socialist ideas, the West African and diasporic contingent were there to demonstrate how local conditions in West Africa and the Black world were necessary to making socialism a truly global ideology. Thus, the West African and diasporic Black socialist instructors were important conduits of the state's plan to educate and disseminate socialist ideas both to the local population and to their European comrades. In effect, the European instructors would be like bees, taking the intellectual pollen from their African and Black colleagues and spreading it to their European socialist circles, thus assisting in the global proliferation and pollination of socialist theories from Africa.

Yet, for those unable to gain admission into the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute's gates or unwilling to risk weeks or months without an income while studying there,[24] they could find solace in knowing that the Institute's instructors traveled throughout the nation lecturing on

[19] PRAAD-Accra, RG 17/1/5E, July 31, 1965, Kodwo Addison to James Klugman.

[20] Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah*, 240.

[21] Kwame Atuapem, "The African Struggle" and "Nkrumah: The Apostle of Peace," *The Spark*, May 17, 1963.

[22] PRAAD-Accra, RG 3/5/1532, "Development of the Kwame Nkrumah Institute, Winneba, as the Institute for Political Science." Soviet, Chinese, and Cuban tutors were conspicuously absent from this list.

[23] Kofi Darkwah, "Nkrumah and His 'Ideological Institute,'" in *Kwame Nkrumah 1909–1972: A Controversial African Visionary*, eds. Bea Lundt and Christoph Marx (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2016), 39–48, 45.

[24] See PRAAD-Accra, RG 3/5/1532, January 23, 1963, Kodwo Addison to the General Manager; PRAAD-Accra, RG 3/5/1532, February 11, 1963, the General Manager of the R. C. Educational Unit to the Principal Secretary of the Minister of Education; PRAAD-Accra, RG 3/5/1532, July 1964, Kwaku Duah to the Supervisor of Schools, Presbyterian Church. See PRAAD-Accra, RG 3/5/1532, March 10, 1964, "Application for Advance for Teachers Undertaking Courses at the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute, Winneba."

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FIGURE 5.1 "They Hear Baako's Speech," *The Ghanaian Times*, January 3, 1963.

socialism, socialism's relationship to the party, African unity, and its role in Ghana's development (Figure 5.1). People like J. Kwasi Nsarkoh traveled to places like Sekondi-Takoradi, in the Western Region, to give lectures to city council members and party chairpersons.[25] Figures like R. Annoh-Apremsem went to Apowa, a small town west of Takoradi, to speak at the Teachers' Training College,[26] and others like Nana Nketia, the director of the Institute of Art and Culture, went to Tamale, Northern Ghana, to present "on the Dynamics and Values of African society or the Cultural Foundation of Socialism in Africa."[27] These addresses were frequent and sprinkled throughout the country, but at times suffered from organizational issues, with seminars often canceled or rescheduled. Administrative lapses, at times "incompetence," and a lack of interest from hosts poked holes in the state's mission to build a new socialist citizenry.[28]

The nation's new socialist ideologues complained that certain local authorities did not always give them the proper respect or fanfare they thought they deserved. Addison reprimanded the regional commissioner

[25] PRAAD-Sekondi, WRG 24/2/459, June 18, 1964, K. Egyir Asaam to Dr. J. K. Nsarkoh.
[26] PRAAD-Sekondi, WRG 24/2/459, May 30, 1964, K. Egyir Asaam to Comrade R. Annoh-Apremsem.
[27] PRAAD-Tamale, NRG 2/9/10, June 8, 1964, S. S. Sakarah to All Heads of Departments, Secretary Conveners, District Commissioners, Educational Institutions, Trade Unions and Ghana Young Pioneers.
[28] Group 1, *Seminar Report on "Nkrumaism"*, 13.

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of the Western Region for the widespread reports from his lecturers that their treatment within his region, compared to the others, was unsatisfactory. Addison informed the commissioner "to make sure that in [the] future [that] all arrangements are straightened up before invitations [we]-re extended."[29] The directive appeared to fall on barren soil. Some hosts continued to welcome the lecturers apathetically, showing that local receptions to the socialist preachers varied considerably. Some were enthusiastic. While others were annoyed and uninterested.[30] As the above section highlights, it would be a gross exaggeration to assert that everyone in Nkrumah's Ghana felt empathetic to or enthused about the country's new socialist orientation. Indeed, some sought to resist the development of socialist ideas in the nation through bombs, senate hearings in the United States denouncing the socialist project, "incompetence," or by canceling talks. However, despite these setbacks and acute realities, the socialist theorists in Ghana pushed on with greater enthusiasm to educate their fellow citizens about socialism and devised new strategies to connect with their compatriots.

The socialists urged their comrades to publish "pamphlets and books in various Ghanaian languages to arouse the firm interest of the people of all calibre of work even in the remotest villages."[31] Figures like D. A. Quansah, the assistant regional secretary, were adamant that socialist instructors should translate "all aspects of Socialism in simple English and possibly in local languages."[32] He further advised that lectures on socialism around the country should be conducted in the evenings and in local languages. To make socialism accessible to the vast majority of the nation, socialist theories needed to be translated into the local vernacular. The promoters of socialist thought in Ghana sought to remove linguistic and occupational barriers to the building and circulation of socialist knowledge throughout the nation. Others called for more celebrated local theorists to produce "more matured," "authoritative literature" for

[29] PRAAD-Sekondi, WRG 24/2/459, June 30, 1964, Kodwo Addison to the Western Region Regional Commissioner.

[30] Moreover, they sought to ensure that socialist instruction should not conflict with the national imperative to increase national production or one's ability to earn a living. However, there was a silence on who would care for children in the evenings if socialist lectures were highly encouraged and take place in the evenings.

[31] Group 1, *Seminar Report on "Nkrumaism"*, 13.

[32] PRAAD-Accra, RG 17/1/101, May 1962, D. A. Quansah, "Convention People's Party Ideological Education." Moreover, Quansah warned people not to lecture about socialism during funerals.

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study.[33] In one sense, some argued that the current literature on socialism was not sophisticated enough to convince their countrymen of its virtue. There was a genuine belief amongst the socialist intellectuals that the socialist de-colony's subjects would be conversant in Marxist-Leninist-Nkrumahist terminology. That teachers, teenagers, market women, and those without a formal education and perhaps not fluent in English would throw around opaque terms such as dialectical and historical materialism, relative form of value, mass and relative surplus value, neocolonialism, and commodity fetishism in casual discussions in farms, market spaces, verandas, and *tro-tros*.[34] Theorists in Ghana, however, were not simply concerned about disseminating their socialist ideas to people in Europe and Ghana but to their non-Anglophone African counterparts as well.

The Institute established a French Department and added Arabic and French courses to further the diffusion process. In opening the Department, Kodwo Addison, the Institute's director and a member of the Presidential Commission, argued that Arabic and French would permit students to "foster" unbreakable and "indispensable" "links" with other African "vanguard activists," ushering in the "great revolution of our times," including African "unity" and continental "reconstruction."[35] Nkrumah's government envisioned the Institute as an ideological site for a continental-wide push toward Black freedom and socialism. These additional languages underscored deliberate attempts to spread outside of Ghana the socialist ideas brewing within it, underscoring these figures' intellectual foresight and their global aspirations. Socialists in Ghana explicitly linked African liberation to Ghana's version of socialism. While adding more languages made the socialist vocabulary more intelligible to people in Africa and beyond, one's gender impacted access to and experiences within some of the nation's socialist educational hubs.

At the onset of locating students for the Institute, the state and its male socialist theorists emphasized geographic and demographic diversity but neglected gender variance, making socialist educational spaces challenging for women. Of the 113 people admitted to the Institute in 1964, only 10 were women.[36] While they were women socialist theorists in Ghana,

[33] Group 6, *Seminar Report on "Nkrumaism"*, 28.

[34] A *Tro-Tro* is a taxi in Ghana.

[35] Kodwo Addison, "French and Arabic Courses at the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute, Winneba," *The Spark*, December 24, 1964.

[36] The student population at the Institute was purposefully geographically and demographically diverse. See PRAAD-Accra, RG 3/5/1532, May 12, 1964, J. S. Kaleem to Kodwo Addison. Out of the 113 people admitted on October 14, 1964, 5 were from the Greater Accra Region, 19 from the Eastern Region, 39 from the Central Region, 7 from the

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they were a distinct minority. At the two-day Nkrumaist Seminar in Cape Coast, women constituted a small minority of attendees, and they even cooked for and served their male counterparts. Historian Merve Fejzula urges us not to dismiss such tasks as menial but as intellectual labor.[37] However, in the spaces where women helped theorize about socialism, they were also vulnerable to sexual exploitation. For instance, Guadeloupean-French theorist Maryse Condé was forced out of the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute when she "stopped having sex" with Addison, the Institute's director.[38] Thus, socialist making spaces were also dangerous and unequal spaces for women. Yet, during its heydays, the Institute was a political space for and symbol of socialist re-education. It also served as a model for other independent African states.[39]

The creation of socialists was not solely a top-down affair, however. Initially, government officials sent explicit directives to high school principals that the creation of NASSO branches within their institutions was the sole prerogative of high school students, and not the principals. State officials wanted students to take the initiative. On July 12, 1960, the principal secretary of the Ministry of Education, E. S. Peckham, wrote to school principals that "The Minister [of Education] considers it necessary that ... the establishment of such societies [NASSO] should be come from the students themselves and the formal permission of the Principal or Headmaster should be obtained."[40] High school students accepted this

Western Region, 13 from the Volta Region, 12 from the Ashanti Region, 6 from the Brong Ahafo Region, 4 from the Northern Region, and 8 from the Upper Region. See PRAAD-Accra, RG 3/5/1532, "List of Successful Candidates Being Admitted on 14th October 1964," 87–88.

[37] Fejzula, "Gendered Labour, Negritude and the Black Public Sphere," 423–446.

[38] Gerardo Serra and Frank Gerits, "The Politics of Socialist Education in Ghana: The Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute, 1961–1966," *Journal of African History*, Vol. 60, No. 3 (2019): 407–428, 424. Jean Allman writes a sobering but fantastic article on the disappearance of the CPP stalwart, Hannah Kudjoe, and other women theorists from postcolonial histories and memories. See Jean Allman, "The Disappearing of Hannah Kudjoe: Nationalism, Feminism, and the Tyrannies of History," *Journal of Women's History*, Vol. 21. No. 3 (2009): 13–35.

[39] More work needs to be done to properly draw out the connections between the Institute and the Leninist Vanguard. However, it is my strong assumption that there were connections between the two, but I will need to dig further into the archives to highlight this. See Eric Burton, "Forging the Vanguard of Development Socialism: Ujamaa, Respectability, and Transnationalism," in *Histories of Development in the Socialist South: Third World Internationalism and Post-Colonial Futures*, eds. Su Lin Lewis and Nana Osei-Opare (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2024), 193–214.

[40] PRAAD-Accra, RG 17/1/101, July 12, 1960, E. S. Peckham to the School Principals.

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role. By 1961, NASSO branches had been or were being established across numerous schools around the country, such as the Cape Coast schools of Adisadel College (an all-boys school), Ghana National College (an all-girls school and the site of the 1962 Seminar Report on Nkrumahism, where over 500 people attended),[41] and the co-ed Aggrey Memorial Zion Secondary School.[42] While the formation of NASSO groups was voluntary and student initiated in 1960 and 1961, as time passed and violence against the ruling party sharpened, they became top-down directives.

In 1963, the Central Region party attaché wrote to all the school principals in the region that Nkrumah had declared that "study groups should be established in all Secondary Schools, Colleges and Universities."[43] Within a few years, the government felt that more urgent action was needed to build socialists. In 1965, the minister of Education and Citizenship, Kofi Asante Ofori-Atta, introduced to the nation's primary and middle schools a new socialist syllabus.[44] This act satisfied the calls by numerous socialists for teachings on socialism to be embedded within the socialist de-colony's educational structures. The following year, the Western-backed NLC instigated a successful coup against Nkrumah's party, ending any hope that a new generation of socialists could and would be built within the public school system.

While the process of creating socialist citizens was an important state goal and preoccupied the new state's financial and intellectual energies, it was not easy or straightforward. The socialist intellectuals did not believe that they were drawing upon an older, lost version of socialism that could be manipulated into a new version. Instead, they believed that they had to build new socialists to create their new society. To do so, they constructed institutes, traveled to cities, towns, and villages around the country to educate the people about the tenets of global socialism and its applicability for the new society and world that they were building. The coastal town of Winneba became a hotbed of socialist conversations in Ghana and around the world. The goal was not simply to spread socialist ideas to the educated or the English-speaking populace but to convert Marxist-

[41] PRAAD-Cape Coast, RG 1/13/1, September 24, 1962, John E. Hagan to Kwame Nkrumah.

[42] PRAAD-Accra, RG 1/13/1, April 17, 1961, Regional Educational Officer (Central) to the Secretary to the Regional Commissioner (Central Region).

[43] PRAAD-Accra, RG 17/1/101, June 10, 1963, Annan to All Headmasters/Headmistresses and School Principals.

[44] *Nkrumaist* (January/February 1965), 47.

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Leninist-Nkrumahist thought into local vernaculars and idioms, and to share it with those who spoke and read Arabic and French as well.

The minds and hearts of both the younger and older generations were cherished. Ministers encouraged secondary school students and principals to create study sessions on socialism. Initially, these were to be organic, not forced, but toward the end of Nkrumah's tenure, increasingly compulsory. For those in primary and middle school, a socialist curriculum became institutionalized. Its tenure was too brief to ascertain its impacts. Nonetheless, throughout the country, the leaders of the socialist movement called on their comrades to both teach and learn about socialism from the people. Socialist education in Ghana had to be dialectical and dialogical. Despite efforts to spread the socialist message throughout the land, not all received the news with open hearts.

A GLOBAL AND LOCAL SOCIALISM

Socialist theorists in Ghana drew from the rich global socialist traditions in circulation. As noted in Chapter 4, figures like Nkrumah and certain Black Marxists had studied and drawn their political and economic inspiration from Lenin and their understanding of early Soviet history. Founded by Nkrumah in 1962 and run by Kofi Batsa and Samuel Ikoku, *The Spark* was a hotbed for socialist and decolonization theories and debates.[45] *The Spark*'s name mirrored Lenin's first Russian socialist newspaper, *Iskra*, meaning "the spark."[46] According to Batsa's 1985 autobiography, the paper was intended to "propagate" and debate "radical ideas."[47] Like the contemporaneous *Ngurumo* newspaper in socialist Tanzania,[48] *The Spark* and the Ghanaian press were sites where events and issues in Africa and the globe were brought to the attention of its readers and debated. They introduced their readers to countries and people from the socialist world, ranging from Cuba to Hungary to Romania to the USSR. In this sense, the global socialist world inspired the socialist movement in Ghana and Ghana was a site of global socialist articulations.

[45] Batsa, "Editorial," *The Spark*, 15.

[46] Ali Mazrui, "Nkrumah: The Leninist Czar," *Transition*, No. 26 (1966): 8–17, 9; Ted Widmer, "Lenin and the Russian Spark," *The New Yorker*, April 20, 2017.

[47] Batsa, "Editorial," *The Spark*, 17.

[48] George Roberts, "The Rise and Fall of a Swahili Tabloid in Socialist Tanzania: Ngurumo Newspaper, 1959–76," *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 1–2 (2023): 1–21. I do not believe the editors of *The Spark* and *Ngurumo* communicated.

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Romania became a site of one such study. It was but one reminder to the formerly colonized, whose economic and political development colonialism had stifled, that it did not need to wait for centuries like the Western imperial powers to achieve modernization and industrialization.[49] In 1964, an article in *The Spark* praised the Romanian socialist experiment for its stunning success. Since Romania's transition to "socialist industrialization" in 1938, the article noted that its "gross industrial output" "rose by 7.4 times" by 1963. The article praised Romania's phenomenal economic and industrial growth. Its "textile industry was more than 3.5 times bigger than in 1938," "the garments industry 11 times bigger and ... the leather, fur and footwear output 5.6 times bigger." *The Spark* gushed over "the advance[s]" in Romania's economy and particularly "the growing material welfare of the people."[50] In another article, Dumitru Dumitrescu, the first secretary of the Romanian People's Republic Academy, tied Romania's "remarkable" scientific "growth" to its socialist orientation.[51] For those in Ghana, the two nations were similar in a few key respects. They lacked the material conditions and foundations that spurred Western industrialization and modernization.[52] Thus, Romania too had to devise a strategy to "catch-up with the West." Through socialism, people in Ghana learned that Romania had collapsed and solved the space–time problematique of industrialization and modernization. It was not over centuries but in a singular generation had the Romanian government and people significantly improved their material conditions. Similarly, the Ghanaian writers noted that within a generation, Black Africa, with the shackles of colonialism removed, could catch up with the West through socialist industrialization. Not only would socialism transform Black Africa's material and economic fortunes, it would also boost significantly their quest for "scientific equity,"[53] a scientific-technological and intellectual monopoly that the Western and Eastern blocs believed they had over

[49] Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*.

[50] "The Rumanian Peoples of Building," *The Spark*, August 21, 1964.

[51] Dumitru Dumitrescu, "Science and the Building of Socialism," *The Spark*, December 18, 1964.

[52] Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*; Katie Donington, "Eric Williams' Foundational Work on Slavery, Industry, and Wealth," *Black Perspectives*, September 21, 2020; Frederick Cooper and Catherine Hall point out that Williams' position has been criticized and much debated. See, *Africa in the World: Capitalism, Empire, Nation-State* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 6; Catherine Hall, "The State of Modern British History," *History Workshop Journal*, No. 72 (Autumn, 2011): 205–211, 210.

[53] Osseo-Asare, *Atomic Junction*.

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Africans. The rapid economic success of the socialist experiments globally provided people in Ghana with a renewed optimism about transforming their own societies.

The press published adulatory pieces about the lives, works, and histories of socialist luminaries, including but not limited to Lenin, Engels, Marx, and Fidel Castro. The latest books and articles on socialism, communism, and Marxism were published in the Ghanaian reading commons. For instance, in 1963, *The Ghanaian Times*, a newspaper geared toward women,[54] publicized Nikita Khrushchev's *Socialism and Communism*. The paper informed its readers that the book contained Khrushchev's ideas "on the key practical and theoretical questions of Socialist and Communist construction and the problems related to the peaceful competition of the two socio-economic systems."[55] The people of Ghana were avid students of international socialist regimes and their political zeitgeist.

However, the written word was not the only space through which conversations and pedagogy about socialism were occurring in Ghana. On June 16, 1961, the CPP's Cape Coast study branch wrote to the Chinese ambassador to Ghana, Huang Hua, to "repeat" his lecture on "'Socialism as practiced in the People's Republic of China" to the University of Cape Coast's CPP study group.[56] Similarly, the CPP's Cape Coast study branch also wrote to P. H. Bertelsen, a member of the Extra Mural Department at the University of Ghana, Legon, to "repeat" his lecture on "Socialism in practice in the Scandinavian Countries."[57] On November 10, the same branch also contacted the German Democratic Republic's acting trade representative to "give a talk on the 'East Berlin Crisis,' a subject agitating the minds of all members of the Study Group."[58] State representatives from around the world were giving lectures on how socialism was practiced in their respective countries. These talks greatly appealed to the excited youth in Ghana, prompting further requests for lectures. Furthermore, the aforementioned requests reveal that young Africans felt empowered to correspond directly with

[54] Ahlman, "Africa's Kitchen Debate," 157–177.
[55] "Now on Sale: Socialism and Communism," *The Ghanaian Times*, December 18, 1963.
[56] PRAAD-Accra, RG 17/1/101, June 16, 1961, Eddie B. K. Ampah to Huang Hua.
[57] PRAAD-Accra, RG 17/1/101, June 16, 1961, Eddie B. K. Ampah to P. Bertelsen.
[58] PRAAD-Accra, RG 17/1/101, November 10, 1961, Eddie B. K. Ampah to German Democratic Republic's Acting Trade Representative. On August 12, 1961, Walter Ulbricht, the East Berlin mayor, erected barriers to prevent East Germans moving to West Germany.

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foreign dignitaries and intellectuals about socialist societies, socialist governing systems, and geopolitical concerns involving a socialist nation. Barriers to accessing socialist knowledge that had once existed during the colonial era had broken down. The youth learned about multiple socialist policies and practices occurring throughout the world in diverse spaces as far as East Asia and Scandinavia. There were no political repercussions for expanding one's global perspective and knowledge. In fact, this was encouraged.

Young socialists in Ghana were actively seeking and building global socialist knowledge. The lyrics of NASSO's hymn is indicative: "Let all forms of Socialist Contest / Which gives best results is best / From each according to ability / To each according to need."[59] Those lyrics indicated that Ghana was not wed to a particular socialist system. Each socialist idea and political-economy would be subject to scrutiny. After rigorous debate and study, the form of socialist economic and cultural development that produced the best results would be exalted. Such debates during the repressive intellectual tradition of British colonialism were unimaginable. However, in Nkrumah's Ghana, ideas from the world's Eastern nations, previously shackled, became topics of debate and the basis of knowledge making and pedagogy in Ghana.

Yet, while drawing heavily from the experiences and words of other socialist traditions, the Ghanaian socialist circles dismissed Ghanaian socialism as a mimicry of other socialisms. They argued that their ideas had to be situated within and adapted to local historical and material conditions and realities. "Our road to socialism must be a road designed and charted in accordance with the conditions of Ghana and the historical and social conditions and circumstances of Africa as a whole," Nkrumah reminded the nation in an April 1961 speech.[60] In September 1962, Hagan reiterated that socialism in Ghana was neither British nor Chinese or Soviet. While socialism in Ghana might be similar to and draw from those other forms of socialism, Hagan argued that it was "a different brand of socialism peculiar to Ghana,"[61] which fit within Ghana's "culture and tradition,"[62] and was "most appropriate to our (Ghana's) needs."[63] Similarly, Padmore implored Ghana not to "follow

[59] PRAAD-Accra, RG 17/1/A24 formerly RG1/17/1/404, "NASSO Battle Hymn."
[60] The Schomburg Archives, St. Claire Drake Papers, MG 309, "April 18, 1961 – Tuesday."
[61] Hagan, *Seminar Report on "Nkrumaism,"* 9.
[62] Group Reports, *Seminar Report on "Nkrumaism,"* 16.
[63] State Archives of the Russian Federation (Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF), f. 5446, op. 120, d. 1726, A welcome address by Hon. J. E. Hagan, Regional

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blindly the socialist lines of approach which have occurred either in Western Europe or in Soviet Russia, where conditions are entirely different from those in Africa."[64] Instead, Padmore encouraged Ghanaians to adapt everything to their own conditions and historical experiences. "While admitting the universal validity of the cannons of socialism," Batsa argued in 1964 that Ghana's brand of socialism needed its people to "see that the institutional forms vary with different social milieu, since pattern of social organisation owes much to the history, traditions and the psychology of a people."[65] Theorists could only understand the psychology, traditions, and culture of a people by embedding themselves within that community. Batsa encouraged this approach, admonishing socialist thinkers divorced from the everyday person. "These men of letters must leave 'their ivory towers,' Batsa wrote, "and live with the people. For it is only by living with the people, by sharing their fears and aspirations that the socialist intellectuals can understand the people and correctly chart and illumine the path of socialist advance."[66]

Socialism then had to be dialectically constructed from within and outside the nation-state, from the top down, and the bottom up. The project of reimagining one of the world's greatest historical political-intellectual projects could not be completed by intellectuals alone. An accurate theory on society had to incorporate its different peoples, components, and histories. The ideas and experiences of the nonelite, those without state-sanctioned educational certificates and international acclaim, had to find a space and be reflected in any socialist theory.

By localizing and domesticating socialism, intellectuals in Ghana rebuked the universalization of European socialism. They accepted the charge to decolonize Marxism's "Western construction," as historian Cedric J. Robinson wrote, to decouple Europe's particular historical "structures and social dynamics" from a "world-historical" teleology.[67] Socialists in Ghana then were deconstructing the analytical paradigm that European and socialism were one and the same, and that their own forms of socialism were adjectives to the noun of European socialism. They were reinvigorating socialism through African histories and conditions. African societies and histories had currency and value in the exchange of socialist

Commissioner in Honor of Anastas Mikoyan, First Deputy Prime Minister of the Soviet Union, January 16, 1962.

[64] Padmore, "A Guide to Pan-African Socialism," 230.

[65] Kofi Batsa, "Editorial," *The Spark*, December, 1964.

[66] Kofi Batsa, "Editorial," *The Spark*, April 12, 1963.

[67] Robinson, *Black Marxism*, 2.

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ideas. Socialist societies that did not trade or incorporate this new currency into their economies of socialist thought were cheapening their products and intellectual rigor. In an unironic sense, figures in Ghana understood that the conditions in Ghana were both parochial and universal.

SOCIALISM IN AFRICA OR AFRICAN SOCIALISM?: NEW EPISTEMOLOGIES IN AFRICAN HISTORY

While many scholars have categorized the socialist ideology emanating from Ghana as part of the intellectual canon called "African Socialism,"[68] for mid-20th-century socialist thinkers in Ghana, African Socialism and "socialism in Africa" – what they were practicing – were two distinct and heavily contested categories. They represented two different conceptions of socialism, African history, Africa's connection to world history, and Africa's future. The radical socialists in Ghana denounced African Socialism as a conservative, neocolonial ideology that was dangerous to African liberation because it mischaracterized socialism, African societies, and African histories, and that it would stunt present and future economic and scientific development in Africa. Yet, for some Africans, the allure of a decolonized, romanticized African historiography that African Socialism brought was too seductive to dismiss.

For the backers of African Socialism, Africans did not need to turn to "Western" liberal-parliamentary or socialist traditions to create non-oppressive societies. Africans could turn to their own histories – undistorted and untainted from European corruption and myth – to forge new egalitarian societies.[69] For instance, thinkers like the Nigerian priest, Father Bebe Onuoha, argued in 1965 that "Classic African society was homogenous and unstratified." For Onuoha, precolonial African society had "no capitalists and, therefore, no one without property."[70] A few everyday socialist theorists in Ghana prefigured Onuoha's idea at the

[68] Emma Hunter offers a historiographical review of the term "African Socialism" in postcolonial African history generally. See "African Socialism," in *The Cambridge History of Socialism Vol. 2*, ed. Marcel van der Linden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 455–473. Fenner Brockway breaks down the camps in socialist and Marxist thought in Africa into four camps. See Fenner Brockway, *African Socialism: A Background Book* (London: The Bodley Head, 1963), 18–23.

[69] Father Bebe Onuoha, *The Elements of African Socialism* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1965), 30.

[70] Ibid., 34.

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seminal two-day socialist seminar in Cape Coast in 1962. Echoing the president of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere, and Jacques Rabemananjara, the Madagascan theorist, these figures insisted that Africans did not need to read Karl Marx or Friedrich Engels to learn about socialism.[71] "[B]efore the advent of the whiteman," the participants argued, their "forefathers" practiced and "enjoyed" socialism.[72] They dismissed the idea that socialism was "completely alien" to Africans,[73] arguing essentially that African societies were egalitarian. Furthermore, if the idealized version of socialism, according to leftist Anglo-European thought, represented the highest stage of socioeconomic and political equality and development amongst humans, then a proper retelling of African history, they maintained, would demonstrate that Africans had already reached the pinnacle of human civilization.[74] Consequently, it was not Africans who had to learn from the West, but the West who had to learn from Africans. This formulation reversed the axis of intellectual exchange and knowledge production and consumption between Africans and Europeans. This push to counter centuries of anti-African historiography that had justified slavery and colonialism was certainly seductive and had its adherents. However, it also had its critics. Not only from the Global North, but among some of the most radical elements of socialist thought in Ghana, who argued that the aforementioned ideas were part of African Socialism's seductive, but misleading ideology and mischaracterization of African societies and histories.

For the socialists in Africa against African Socialism, a return to precolonial or colonial Africa did not represent the socialist modernity they

[71] Julius Nyerere, *Ujamaa: Essays on Socialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), 4–5; Onuoha, *The Elements of African Socialism*, 31.

[72] Group 2, *Seminar Report on "Nkrumaism,"* 16.

[73] See Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah*, 240.

[74] There was an effort to rewrite African history as not a space of barbarism, slavery, and despotism before the arrival of Europeans on the continent post 1400s. See Cheikh Anta Diop, *African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality* (Westport, CT: Lawrence Hill & Co, 1974) – first published in French in 1955 as *Nations Nègres Et Culture* (Presence Africaine, 1955); W. E. B. Du Bois was working on an Africana Encyclopedia. See Henry Louis Gates, Jr., "W.E.B. Du Bois and the Encyclopedia Africana, 1903–63," *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 568, No. 1 (March 2000): 203–219; See John Henrik Clark, "The Historical Legacy of Cheikh Anta Diop: His Contributions to a New Concept of African History," *Présence Africaine*, No. 149/150 (1989): 110–120; and Sarah C. Dunstan, "Cheikh Anta Diop's Recovery of Egypt: African History as Anticolonial Practice," in *The Anticolonial Transnational: Imaginaries, Mobilities, and Networks in the Struggle against Empire*, eds. Erez Manela and Heather Streets-Salter (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 135–161.

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imagined, but a mythologized, romanticized, and regrettable stage of African history. They maintained that African societies had not been egalitarian but oppressive and exploitative. Samuel Ikoku argued in 1963 that the "traditional collectivist way of African life is a mere illusion." Referencing Tsarist Russia to elucidate African history, Ikoku wrote that the "old" traditional African lifestyle was "based on the hegemony of a few big families larding ... over [the] less privileged ones and even serfs. Human rights were non-existent and industrialisation was absent."[75] Ikoku turned to cocoa production in Ghana – the state's primary means of acquiring foreign capital – to prove his point. The social and economic facts surrounding cocoa production, Ikoku noted, demonstrated unequivocally a system of exploitation and domination. Similarly, an unnamed University of Ghana lecturer dismissed the idea that "Class structure in traditional African society" was "horizontal" and not "vertical."[76] From the sanctuary of Guinea-Conakry a few years after his presidency ended via a military coup and with plots to forcibly kidnap him and return him to Ghana, Nkrumah wrote: "All available evidence from the history of Africa up to the eve of the European colonisation shows that African society was neither classless nor devoid of a social hierarchy." Nkrumah maintained that prior to colonialism, "Feudalism existed in some parts of Africa." Like Ikoku before him, Nkrumah evoked a European historical experience to make sense of African realities. Because of different and unequal access to land ownership in Africa, Nkrumah argued that precolonial Africa was not egalitarian but deeply exploitive and fostered "social stratification." Nkrumah was adamant that the biggest supporters of a romanticized, egalitarian African historical narrative were those using the phrase "African Socialism." "Such a conception of socialism," Nkrumah wrote, "makes a fetish of the communal African society. But an idyllic, African classless society (in which there were no rich and no poor) enjoying a drugged serenity is certainly a facile simplification." Drawing on his doctoral training and research in anthropology, Nkrumah concluded that "there is no historical or even anthropological evidence for any such society. I am afraid the realities of African society were somewhat more sordid." During the precolonial era,

[75] Julius Sango (Samuel Ikoku), "The Ideological Battle in Africa," *The Spark*, April 19, 1963. Gareth Austin's account of cocoa-production in Colonial Ghana supports Ikoku's viewpoint. See Austin, *Labour, Land and Capital in Ghana*.

[76] Unnamed University of Ghana Lecturer, "'African Socialism' as a Neo-colonialist Ruse," *The Spark*, April 19, 1963.

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Nkrumah noted joylessly that "Africans were prepared to sell, often for no more than thirty pieces of silver, fellow tribesmen and even members of the same 'extended family' and clan."[77] In *Class Struggle in Africa*, Nkrumah was adamant that "the term 'African Socialism' is . . . meaningless and irrelevant. It implies the existence of a form of socialism peculiar to Africa and derived from communal and egalitarian aspects of traditional African society. The myth of African socialism is used to deny the class struggle, and to obscure genuine socialist commitment."[78] For Nkrumah, then, "African Socialism" was dangerous precisely because it offered a misguided and an ahistorical account of the African past. It was a shameful and painful history that they did not wish to return to. Yet, for others, even if African society was egalitarian at some historical juncture, a "return to it [wa]s completely out of the question," if not futile.[79] For them, "African society" had to "evolve." It could not return "to two or three centuries ago" because human society "is always changing in response to the interplay of social and economic forces from the both internal and external sources."[80]

For figures like Nkrumah, the University of Ghana lecturer, and Ikoku, their ideas about the African past were embedded within an older African historical tradition of understanding suffering and domination. For example, in 1903, Joseph Ephraim Casely Hayford, one of the most educated and respected voices in Colonial Ghana, wrote about the history of slavery and social stratification in West Africa. In *Gold Coast Native Institutions*, Hayford wrote that while slavery in West Africa was different from that in Ancient Rome and the Americas, two classes of people did exist: "freemen and slaves or pawns." This "dividing line between the two classes of people was always clearly defined." To support his point, Hayford referenced an old saying: "'*Akwa onyi ni wura ba rigura, na nakwa owo ni tsirin*;' meaning, 'When a slave is playing with his master's son, he remembers his condition of being a slave.'"[81] While enslaved peoples in West African societies were perhaps not subjected to similar

[77] Kwame Nkrumah, "African Socialism Revisited, 1968," in *Kwame Nkrumah Revolutionary Path* (London: Panaf, 1973), 440–441.
[78] Nkrumah, *Class Struggle in Africa*, 26.
[79] Ghana University Lecturer, "African Socialism."
[80] Ghana University Lecturer, "African Socialism;" Sango (Ikoku), "The Ideological Battle in Africa."
[81] Joseph Ephraim Casely Hayford, *Gold Coast Native Institutions: With Thoughts upon a Healthy Imperial Policy for the Gold Coast and Ashanti* (London: Forgotten Books, 1903), 81–83.

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levels of physical and psychological degradation and torture as those in the Americas and could rise up to prominent positions in society, they were continuously aware of or reminded of the precarity of their condition.[82] Such histories, circulating in West Africa for at least half a century by the 1960s, undercut claims of a classless, egalitarian Africa. While colonialism, Nkrumah admitted, certainly "deserves to be blamed for many evils in Africa," Africans could not argue then that "an African Golden Age or paradise" "preceded" European colonization.[83] For Nkrumah, this was a logical and historical fallacy. "A return to the precolonial African society," Nkrumah concluded, "is evidently not worthy of the ingenuity and efforts of our people."[84] For figures like Nkrumah, the intellectual and political imagination of socialists in Africa was endless and the window to dream and turn them into reality was brief and could not be squandered on reclaiming a mythical, non-oppressive past. Energies had to be put (or redirected in some cases) toward a more useful and utopian purpose – the reimagination of Ghanaian, African, and global society. They were living in a revolutionary movement and had to embark on revolutionary intellectual exploits.

Criticisms of a classless precolonial Africa simultaneously served to also undermine Nkrumah's domestic and international political rivals. As historian Priya Lal argues, the governing principles of *ujamaa*, socialism in Tanzania, advanced by the Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere, was the rejection of "class conflict as an organizing principle."[85] This perspective clashed with the ideas emanating from the socialists in Ghana that societal differentiation was present and already an organizing principle of society in Africa. Thus, in positioning themselves against African Socialism's conceptions of societies in Africa, socialists like Nkrumah were seeking to garner international support, both privately and publicly, for their political visions while diminishing Nyerere's increasing popularity. In addition, Ikoku's critique of cocoa production in Colonial Ghana was an implicit knock on the United Party (UP) – the

[82] Claire C. Robertson, "Post-Proclamation Slavery in Accra: A Female Affair," in *Women and Slavery in Africa*, eds. Claire C. Robertson and Martin Klein (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1997), 220–242; Bruce S. Hall, "How Slaves Used Islam: The Letters of Enslaved Muslim Commercial Agents in the Nineteenth-century Niger Bend and Central Sahara," *Journal of African History*, Vol. 52, No. 3 (2011): 279–297.

[83] Asantehene Osei Bonsu lamented British attempts to abolish slavery in the early 1800s.

[84] Nkrumah, "African Socialism Revisited, 1968," 440–441.

[85] Priya Lal, *African Socialism in Postcolonial Tanzania: Between the Village and the World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 30.

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latest incarnation of anti-CPP and Nkrumah forces – whose historical fortunes were derived partly from enslaved labor in cocoa production and in the kola, gold, and slave trades.[86] However, deconstructing the fetishized African past, acknowledging that slavery and oppression existed in Africa before Europeans arrived, did not translate to a failure to distinguish between types and degrees of slavery and its brutality.

Thinkers like Ikoku and Nkrumah were also wading into contemporaneous anthropological and historical debates – often against prominent and preeminent Western historians of Africa – about the nature of slavery in Africa.[87] While acknowledging that "slavery" existed in Africa prior to European contact, Nkrumah sided with the Guyanese Marxist historian Walter Rodney's contemporaneous argument that the nature of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade spurred the particular harshness of the institution of slavery in Africa.[88] Nkrumah wrote: "slavery existed in Africa before European colonisation," but "European contact gave slavery in Africa some of its most vicious characteristics."[89] Intellectuals like Rodney, Nkrumah, and Hayford argued that the Transatlantic Slave Trade had exacerbated cruelty within African societies. Whereas Nkrumah and Rodney disagreed on the issue of state capitalism and its historicity within the Marxist-Leninist tradition, on the question of the institution of slavery and its character in Africa, they agreed that the particular bestiality of chattel slavery was not endogenous to Africa but a product of the European Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.

Socialists in Ghana maintained that the ahistorical, romanticized view of precolonial African society furthered racist paradigmatic conceptions of African peoples and their histories. In a lecture in the early 1800s, German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel opined influentially that Africa and its peoples were outside of world history. Hegel

[86] Austin, *Labour, Land and Capital in Ghana*. Moreover, one can see the fissures between Nkrumah and the NLM and UGCC leaders in Allman, *The Quills of the Porcupine*; Richard Rathbone *Nkrumah and the Chiefs: The Politics of Chieftaincy in Ghana, 1951–1960* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000) and Richard Rathbone, *Murder and Politics in Colonial Ghana* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 170–202.

[87] Paul E. Lovejoy, "The Impact of the Atlantic Slave Trade on Africa: A Review of the Literature," *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (1989): 365–394; J. D. Fage, "Slavery and the Slave Trade in the Context of West African History," *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (1969): 393–404.

[88] Walter Rodney, "African Slavery and Other Forms of Social Oppression on the Upper Guinea Coast in the Context of the Atlantic Slave-Trade," *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (1966): 431–443.

[89] Nkrumah, "African Socialism Revisited, 1968," 440–441.

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maintained that Africans and "Africa proper," which was south of the Saharan desert, lay "beyond ... self-conscious history" and existed outside "the category of Universality."[90] During the middle of the 20th-century, through their criticisms of African Socialism, figures like Nkrumah directly challenged Hegel's characterizations of African society and its peoples. Nkrumah argued: "For too long, social and political commentators have talked and written as though Africa lies outside the mainstream of world historical development – a separate entity to which the social, economic and political patterns of the world do not apply."[91] In proffering the concept of a classless, egalitarian society, African Socialists were one such entity. Thus, the radical socialists encumbered it upon themselves to nullify this narrative. They were reclaiming Africans and their history from History's dustbin. It was only through a serious reckoning with the African past, socialists in Ghana believed, could Africans reclaim and make a revolutionary present and future for themselves. In doing so, they were simultaneously domesticating socialism and decolonizing anthropology, history, and philosophy.

For the radical theorists in Ghana, the concept of African Socialism was a Western vessel for neocolonialism to flow into and flourish on the continent. It was a deliberate Western ploy to undercut African liberation, sabotage development in Africa, and was not simply a naïve intellectual or political undertaking or (mis)understanding.[92] On April 19, 1963, an unnamed Ghana University lecturer published "'African

[90] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, With Prefaces by Charles Hegel and the Translator, J. Sibree, M. A. (Kitchener: Batoche Books, 2001), 109–113. Despite important work showing that the Saharan Desert was not a barrier but a bridge. See Ghislaine Lydon, *On Trans-Saharan Trails: Islamic Law, Trade Networks and Cross-Cultural Exchange in Nineteenth-Century Western Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Ghislaine Lydon, "Writing Trans-Saharan History: Methods, Sources and Interpretations across the African Divide," *Journal of North African Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 3–4 (2005): 293–324. Western academic epistemologies, centers, departments, and job advertisements continue to separate Africa between an "Africa proper" and North Africa. Contemporary scholars like Olúfẹ́mi Táíwò have criticized the Africa Hegel constructed as a "land that Time forgot, a veritable museum where there are to be found the relics of the race, the human race, that is: hence the anthropological preoccupation with hunting down (very apt phrase) exotic practices, primitive rituals, superseded customs." See Olufemi Taiwo, "Exorcising Hegel's Ghost: Africa's Challenge to Philosophy," *African Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (1998): 3–16, 5.

[91] Nkrumah, *Class Struggle in Africa*, 10.

[92] Jodie Yuzhou Sun shows that radical thinkers in Kenya had similar concerns about the term "African Socialism" in the 1960s. See "'Now the Cry Was Communism': The Cold War and Kenya's Relations with China, 1964–70," *Cold War History*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (2020): 39–58, 50.

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Socialism' – A Neocolonialist Ruse," in *The Spark*, arguing that "After the foregoing analysis of the content of the doctrine of 'African Socialism' one is strongly tempted to identify its origin with neo-colonialist sources."[93] Batsa concurred. Focusing on Western scholars' writings about socialism in Africa, Batsa maintained that "The imperialist powers are busy forging a new ideology for Africa ... conveniently labeled 'African Socialism.'" This was a deliberate "attempt to beguile the unwary. It is significant," Batsa continued, that "in 1964 alone at least three books have appeared on 'African Socialism.' And it is no mere coincidence that all these are written by non-Africans, that the authors are all from imperialist nations of the world; that one each of these books is published in France, in Britain and in the U.S.A."[94] Ikoku was adamant that the "Leaders of the Western world have decided to pass on to *their* [italicize mine] African intellectual ... pro-imperialist ideas which should be diseminated [sic] throughout Africa under the deceitful label of 'African socialism.'" "African Socialism," Ikoku continued, was an imperialist imposition that Western intellectuals employed to "flatter African intellectuals into believing that the new ideology is of their creation."[95]

Ikoku went on to criticize the famous 1962 African Ways to Socialism Conference in Dakar, Senegal, and its delegates for holding imperial or colonial ambitions and using socialism to mask them. For example, Ikoku charged Senegal's president Leopold Senghor with having "strong right-wing connections." He lambasted the Frenchman M. Guy Mollet as "a supporter of the colonial wars" in Algeria and Vietnam, and mocked Nigerian Saburi Biobaku, the vice-principal of the University of Ife in Nigeria, as not even "remotely associated with the socialist movement inside Nigeria." Ikoku wondered what "sort of socialism can such a motley gathering of spokesmen of imperialism [resolve]?"[96] Like Ikoku, Nkrumah denounced the 1962 Dakar Conference, describing it as a willful attempt to confuse socialist-minded Africans and subdue "genuine" socialism. Nkrumah wrote:

[93] Ghana University Lecturer, "African Socialism."

[94] Kofi Batsa, "1964 In Retrospect," *The Spark*, December 24, 1964. One of these books was the British Labour MP Fenner Brockway's 1963 *African Socialism* published in London, and the other was W. H. Friedland and C. G. Rosberg, Jr.'s 1964 well-read and cited edited volume on *African Socialism* published at Stanford, California.

[95] Sago (Samuel Ikoku), "The Ideological Battle in Africa."

[96] Ibid.

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It was no accident, let me add, that the 1962 Dakar Colloquium made such capital of "'African socialism'" [quotations in original] but the uncertainties concerning the meaning and specific policies of "'African socialism'" [quotations in original] have led some of us to abandon the term because it fails to express its original meaning and because it tends to obscure our fundamental socialist commitment.[97]

Yet, unlike the imagined and ill-defined concept of African Socialism at the 1962 Dakar Conference, where "'no single definition of African socialism emerged,'"[98] for Batsa, socialism in Ghana "extracted [from] the cannons of socialism . . . which are universally valid. To these we have added the essence of traditional Africa life – group responsibility for the individual, and individual welfare being conditional on group well-being."[99]

One of the biggest curiosities of academia and the collective historical memory more broadly over the last sixty to seventy years has been the linking and celebration of socialist thought in Nkrumah's Ghana as one of the premier examples of "African Socialism." Yet, Nkrumah and socialists from Nkrumah's Ghana from the beginning ridiculed and explicitly distanced themselves from African Socialism. Indeed, the Ghanaian lecturer lamented in the 1960s that Nkrumah's name was being identified with African Socialism. The lecturer concluded correctly that Nkrumah was "too mature" of a socialist to subscribe to a bankrupt doctrine like African Socialism.[100]

Indeed, the historical record shows that for figures like Ikoku and Nkrumah, the proponents of African Socialism had hallowed socialism by squeezing all useful meaning from it. Its emptiness represented a danger to African liberation. These figures warned that African Socialism was an unscientific, racist, colonial, and imperially imposed nomenclature that simultaneously belittled 'real' socialist theories from Africa, posited Africa outside global historical processes, and compartmentalized socialism in Africa as distinct from the "real" socialist tenants globally. They maintained that "'African socialism' is the ideal ideology of neo-colonialism" and was dangerous because it masqueraded as endogenous while exogenous.[101] For these thinkers, the West had deliberately sown this confusion to enslave

[97] Nkrumah, "African Socialism Revisited, 1968," 440.
[98] Sago (Samuel Ikoku), "The Ideological Battle in Africa."
[99] Batsa, "1964 In Retrospect." [100] Ghana University Lecturer, "African Socialism."
[101] Ikoku, "The Ideological Battle in Africa."

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"the minds of Africans." The task of true socialist theorists from Africa, then, was to liberate the African mind by waging "a relentless war ... against the revisionism and opportunism cleverly labelled 'African socialism.'"[102].

SOCIALISM AND THE QUESTION OF CORRUPTION AND MORAL DECAY

Besides building socialists and warring against the doctrine of African Socialism, the socialist theorists in Ghana were consumed with cleansing the national body politic from colonialism's moral rot. In September 1962, Hagan demanded that socialism cleanse "the filth of the old" colonial society.[103] Others concurred, noting that "all imperialist and colonialist vestiges, including bribery and corruption, nepotism, 'lording it over the friend,' should be wiped out" by socialism.[104] In 1965, the CPP political activist J. Ofosu Appiah observed that Ghana was changing from a "corrupted system of society like colonialism to a progressive system – socialism." Appiah called on Ghanaians to "debunk the colonialist superstructure of society."[105] Ghana's socialist circles echoed Appiah's ideas. In December 1963, at a conference for the northern sector of the Eastern Regional branch of the Institute of Public Education, Hagan argued that socialism "is the only answer to the centuries of economic exploitation and cultural degradation" that Africans had endured.[106] While Nkrumah's Ghana was one of the first socialist African states to address concerns of morality and social degradation, others would follow suit. Historian Benedito Machava eloquently explored how the socialist program of Mozambique from 1968 to 1990 focused heavily on these issues.[107]

While Ghana's socialists linked "corruption" and "moral decay" to British colonialism and its legacies, they also criticized those who used "socialism" to enrich or politically advance themselves and their families. On September 3, 1962, Kofi Baako complained to Nkrumah that

[102] "Peoples of Africa, Unite Against Imperialism!," *The Spark*, April 26, 1963.
[103] Hagan, *Seminar Report on "Nkrumaism,"* 11. [104] Ibid., 24.
[105] J. Ofosu Appiah, "From Colonialism to Socialism," *Nkrumaist*, January/Febeuary 1965, 26.
[106] "Socialism Can Bring Happiness to Africa," *Evening News*, December 9, 1963.
[107] Benedito Machava, "The Morality of Revolution: Reeducation Camps and the Politics of Punishment in Socialist Mozambique (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2024).

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the UK-NASSO branch "was a breeding ground for professional opportunists who believed that by their mere membership . . . the road was clear for a job of high remuneration at home."[108] On July 17, 1963, writers of the CPP's *The Party Chronicle* worried that "violent political enemies" were circumventing background checks by bribing "long standing members." The authors called on "all Branch Executives [to] do their duty . . . and . . . prevent 'ex-omos' [sic] from holding any key posts . . . in the Party and . . . Government." The writers chastised the rise of "indiscipline" amongst CPP members, and of individuals seeking positions to enrich themselves. These "schemes," which the paper characterized as "shameful" and "selfish," were undermining the party's socialist goals.[109] On April 17, 1964, another writer in *The Party Chronicle* cautioned that party members must shun "bribery and corruption,"[110] and for the central government to stymie such activities. Three years prior, Nkrumah had delivered his famous Dawn Broadcast speech to the nation, urging all party members and government officials to shun corruption and work hard to develop the nation. While some had certainly heeded those calls, others had completely disregarded them. Thus, the complaints, memorialized in *The Party Chronicle* and other public and private channels, underscored that Nkrumah's words had certainly fallen on barren soil (more on this in Chapter 6). Yet, some continued to have faith that a socialist reorientation could stop this ongoing societal problem.

Indeed, some still noted that socialism would lead the people toward postcolonial nirvana – a society free of "social evils." These were defined as illness, illiteracy, insecurity, laziness, corruption, and foreign domination. To do so, socialism had to penetrate every sphere of public and private life. It was only socialism, Hagan argued, "that could bring the basic amenities of a good life to the whole people of Africa within the shortest possible time."[111] The CPP activist M. K. Akomeah distinguished the travails of colonialism from the marvels of socialism. "Under colonialism we lived over a century, in hardship," but in socialism, he argued, people would establish "a happy life," and "generations yet unborn"

[108] PRAAD-Accra, RG 17/1/203, September 3, 1962, Kofi Baako to Kwame Nkrumah.
[109] "Towards Qualitative Membership (2)," *The Party Chronicle*, Vol. 1, No. 16, July 13, 193; "Councillors and Discipline," *The Party Chronicle*, Vol. 1, No. 16, July 13, 193.
[110] "Party Loyalty and Discipline," *The Party Chronicle*, Vol. 1, No 4, April 17, 1964.
[111] "Socialism Can Bring Happiness to Africa."

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would "enjoy" it.[112] In a letter to the editor of the *Nkrumaist*, George Kwaku Duah, from Benin-Mampong Ashanti, praised the country's socialist agenda in part for the "great strides in industrial development, education, health, communication, and living standards."[113] In the *Evening News* on July 19, 1963, Mama Gonja from Dodowa praised Nkrumah's "admonition on the lowering moral standards among the youth in the schools, offices and workshops." It was through socialism, she argued, that "youth must be saved to ensure that the nation's future leaders become unimpeachable and reliable."[114] In his welcome speech to Anastas Mikoyan, the first deputy prime minister of the Soviet Union, on January 16, 1962, Hagan argued that Ghana's socialism would "banish fear, mistrust, disease, ignorance, and suspicion, ... the legac[ies] of imperialism and colonialism."[115] Others agreed, claiming that "illiteracy creates ignorance and ignorance is a disease," but that socialism stood to "eradicate disease, poverty, and squalor." The thinkers continued, "Socialism can only triumph in Ghana if nepotism and laziness are completely eradicated in the country."[116] Comrade J. J. Mensah-Kane, the headmaster of Ghana National College in Cape Coast, summed up the virtues of socialism: "Freedom from disease, Freedom from ignorance, Freedom from poverty, unemployment, and tribulations."[117] Horace M. Lashley's poem, "The Revolution's On," in *The Spark* on November 1, 1963, captured the multiple hopes socialist theorists in Ghana had:

Like starved lions
Oppressed proletariat's loose.
Hungered by oppression's reign
Poor man fights for Freedom.
Sickness, illiteracy, hunger
'Tis the fate of oppressed man.
The revolution's on
Once dumb now speaks,
Diseased cured, all men

[112] M. K. Akomeah, "The Referendum and its Aftermath," *Nkrumaist*, January/February 1965, 28.
[113] George Kwaku Duah, "Letter to the Editor," *Nkrumaist*, January/February 1965, 42.
[114] Mama Gonja, "Socialist Reformation in Ghana," *Evening News*, July 19, 1963.
[115] The State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF), f. 5446, op. 120, d. 1726, A Welcome Address by Hon. J. E. Hagan, Regional Commissioner in Honor of Anastas Mikoyan, First Deputy Prime Minister of the Soviet Union, January 16, 1962.
[116] Group 1, *Seminar Report on "Nkrumaism,"* 13.
[117] J. J. Mensah-Kane, *Seminar Report on "Nkrumaism"* (Cape Coast, Ghana: Mfantsiman Press, 1962), 39.

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Live in love for Freedom.
The fruitless labour of man
Has hope, fields grow plenty
Communes produce masses' needs.
The revolution's on
Once illiterate now reads,
Cultured masses move on
Socialism's road to Freedom,
Hunger is no more,
Health is all man's
'Tis the glory of a new life;' For the revolution's on.[118]

For others and Lashley, socialism was the harbinger of culture and the cure for hunger, disability, and illiteracy. Socialism could change the "fate of the oppressed" and "poor." It was their carriage toward a glorious new life. Socialism then was not simply a political or economic project or ideology, but a miraculous substance that could cure and heal all. To save Ghana and Africa, the people simply had to swallow the medicine, then, laziness, illness, poverty, illiteracy, disease, hardship, corruption, foreign domination, and insecurity would disappear.

SOCIALISM, MORALITY, AND CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM

Unlike the Soviet Bolsheviks and the Chinese Maoists, who denounced or distanced themselves from religion or considered it a form of bourgeois alienation, the socialist theorists in Ghana saw no contradiction between religious belief and Marxist-Socialism. Religious belief was intertwined with their own existence. Religion was a vehicle through which expressions of socialism could be mobilized, refined, and debated.[119] Alongside socialist educational institutions, African-American sociologist St. Clair Drake noted that in the socialist de-colony churches were being built at a rapid pace for worship and leisure.[120] Despite the tremendous religious plurality in Ghana, knowledge of socialism grew with or perhaps because of Christian imagery, metaphors, and symbols. Even in Africa, this was unique. Historian Emma Hunter argues that "direct discussion of

[118] Horace M. Lashley, "The Revolution's On," *The Spark*, November 1, 1963.
[119] Historian Robin D. G. Kelley argues that missionary-educated Africans in South Africa evoked and appropriated Christian concepts and signa in their articulation of Marxist thought. See "The Religious Odyssey of African Radicals: Notes on the Communist Party of South Africa, 1921–34," *Radical History Review*, Vol. 51 (1991): 5–24.
[120] See Schomburg, St. Clair Drake Papers, box 70 – "The People Who Build a City" part II.

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religion" in socialist Tanzania was "explicitly banned."[121] In Ghana, however, Christian ontologies were employed to strengthen, translate, and domesticate socialism, ensuring that socialist construction and the growth of Christianity were co-constitutive.[122]

Many socialists in Ghana could not envision themselves or their society embodying atheist Marxist-Socialist traditions or becoming hostile toward religious belief and practice. In 1962, CPP socialist theorists reminded each other that "freedom of religious worship [wa]s ensured by the State and there is every indication that the state has no intention of interfering in religious practices …. The Ghanaian is by nature highly religious and has practiced religion for ages free from controversy."[123] Ghana's socialists foregrounded Kenyan philosopher John Mbiti's claims that no African could be an atheist as their religion permeates all "departments of [their] life."[124] In 1964, Sir John Howard, an influential British businessman and negotiator with the Ghanaian government to sell British fish trawlers to Ghana, relayed "a long conversation" he had had with Kofi Baako to British officials. Baako, one of Nkrumah's chief supporters, stressed that he was "a devout Roman Catholic" and that socialism in Ghana would never jeopardize religious belief.[125] How socialism was practiced in Ghana supported Baako's private words to Howard. At the two-day seminar on socialism in Ghana, a church service opened proceedings and the participants sung four Methodist hymns, including Rudyard Kipling's "Land of Our Birth." They received a benediction while listening to two religious lessons and a sermon.[126] Batsa, the radical socialist leader of *The Spark*, admitted that he loved "singing hymns" to himself while driving.[127] He would comfort himself with the Anglican hymn, "Lord, It Belongs Not To My Care" and the British hymn, "God is Working His Purpose."[128]

[121] Hunter, *Political Thought and the Public Sphere in Tanzania*, 30.

[122] Emma Hunter reminds us, other African socialists, such as Mali's president Modibo Keita, impressed upon religion's importance to their socialist beliefs. Hunter, "African Socialism," 461–462. Similarly, Benedito Machava shows how Mozambique's socialist thinkers discourses employed Christian ideology for their purposes. See, Machava, *The Morality of Revolution*.

[123] Group 6, *Seminar Report on "Nkrumaism"*, 40.

[124] John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 2nd revised version (Johannesburg, 1969), 2.

[125] TNA, DO 221/19, February 12, 1964, W. N. Wenban-Smith to J. Chadwick.

[126] *Seminar Report on 'Nkrumaism,'* 3–5.

[127] Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*, 1–2.

[128] Ibid., 2.

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More than devices of self and spiritual care, the architects of Ghana's socialist project employed the rhetorical flourishes and imagery of Abrahamic religious traditions to explain their socialist ideas to a population steeped primarily in Christian missionary education.[129] "We must be born anew," Hagan asserted, "and become socialist individuals possessed of an entirely new outlook of a new moral and political type."[130] He echoed Jesus' call for his disciples to be born again to embrace and see the new kingdom fully.[131] People in Ghana were called to die figuratively in order to leave the colonial world behind and to arise as new, holy socialist beings. It was only through that could they enter and partake in the new economic and geopolitical order and kingdom its leaders were fashioning. Even Lashley's poem borrowed from the cultural capital of the Abrahamic faiths. Lashley mirrored the lyrics of John Newton's hymn, "Amazing Grace," "was blind but now I see," with, "Once illiterate now reads." In 1965, Akomeah referenced the wanderings of the Israelites in the desert under Moses to argue that Ghanaian socialism would be the "gigantic tree" from which fruit would "drop like manna" to "feed generations yet unborn."[132] In the biblical story of Moses, the Israelites escaped slavery in Egypt and wandered in the desert for forty years looking for the promised land. During those moments, God sent "manna," a bread-like substance from the sky, to feed the starving Israelites. Moreover, God transformed Himself into a cloud to protect the Israelites from the scorching sun. Similarly, for Ghana's socialists, colonial rule represented bondage, a dark period in their history where a foreign power ruled over them and social ills were incubated and had grown. Now, Ghanaians were leading themselves into the promised land. It was not God but socialism that had to protect them from the desert's heat and provide manna for them. Socialism would provide for them until they reached their promised land, Black liberation. But, like the cautionary tale of the Israelites, would this generation enter the promised land?

[129] For a longer history of religious schools in precolonial and Colonial Ghana, see Stephan F. Miescher, "The Challenges of Presbyterian Masculinity in Colonial Ghana," *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, No. 9 (2005): 75–101; and Paul Jenkins, "The Anglican Church in Ghana, 1905-24 (I)," *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (1974): 23–39. There is also a history and tradition of Islamic education in Ghana. See David E. Skinner, "Conversion to Islam and the Promotion of 'Modern' Islamic Schools in Ghana," *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. 43, No. 4 (January 2013): 426–450.

[130] Hagan, *Seminar Report on "Nkrumaism,"* 11.

[131] *Holy Bible*, English Standard Version (ESV), John 3:1–21.

[132] Akomeah, "The Referendum and Its Aftermath," 28.

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Not all in Ghana were raptured by the coalescing of religion and socialism, however.

A minority disagreed on whether religion and socialism could coexist, arguing that the coexistence of *genuine* socialism and religion was an imperial construct. On April 19, 1963, a week after one of the most important Christian calendar days, Good Friday, an anonymous University of Ghana lecturer wrote that attempts to reconcile one's religious convictions and socialism was "revisionism."[133] For this individual, the ongoing existence of religious belief fundamentally undermined the obtainment of socialism. However, these figures occupied a distinctly marginal position. Indeed, for many in Ghana, religion and socialism *had* to coexist. Many Ghanaians remained suspicious of atheist societies.

Even the perception of Soviet atheism was dangerous to Ghana–Soviet relations. For instance, in early January 1964, in the Volta Region, a Ghanaian asked a few Soviets whether they believed in God? One of the Soviets responded: "We believe in science, youth and the future." The Ghanaian listeners subsequently "booed" the speakers "out of the place."[134] Such reactions in Ghana nudged the Soviets to allay Ghanaian concerns about Soviet atheism. At the Ghana–Soviet Friendship Society in Ghana, George Barabaschev, a law professor from Moscow State University, tried to reassure Ghanaians that "churches in the Soviet Union . . . were a private organ and had nothing to do with the state but freedom of worship was allowed [sic]."[135] The Soviets sought to counter Ghanaian skepticism that they were a godless society and American efforts to paint them as religiously intolerant.[136] Soviet intellectuals in Ghana publicly rejected assertions that they had outlawed religion, understanding that it was diplomatically and politically unwise in the socialist decolony.

For the politically ambitious in Ghana, embracing atheism (or being cast as an unbeliever) was political suicide. As historians Sean Hanretta and Dennis Austin have shown, the CPP battled with other explicitly

[133] Ghana University Lecturer, "African Socialism."

[134] Hoover Archives, Eddie Smith Diary Extracts, box 1, folder VIII, Eddie Smith, January 8, 1964, p. 288.

[135] "State of Affairs in Russia," *The Ashanti Pioneer*, July 19, 1962.

[136] Ofra Friesel, "Race versus Religion in the Making of the International Convention against Racial Discrimination, 1965," *Law and History Review*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (May 2014): 351–383.

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religiously affiliated parties to co-opt religion and their adherents into their fold. Indeed, one of the most damaging CPP attacks against their opponents, like the former CPP socialist stalwart, Bankole Awooner, was that he was an unbeliever.[137] Rather than denouncing religion, the state co-opted the Abrahamic faiths, particularly Christianity, and others into its socialist project. Socialism and Christian nationalism were cultivating and reproducing each other in Nkrumah's Ghana. In unique ways, the two became intertwined.

CONCLUSION

The socialists in Ghana were creating something fundamentally new; they were not simply dreaming about a socialist utopia. Never before had there been a systematic program in Ghanaian history to teach Marxist-Socialism. Nor had its philosophy been acceptable or tolerated in Ghana's history until the Nkrumah era (and some could argue not since). The new schools, lectures, classes, magazines, journals, and newspaper articles created and devoted to the study and discussion of socialism, Leninism, and Marxism, and the histories, lives, and political-economies of the broader socialist world during the Nkrumah-era were revolutionary. For the everyday socialist thinkers, Ghana "[wa]s living in an intensely socialist revolutionary era."[138] Through education, debates, and policy measures, socialists in Ghana were making socialism a concrete reality. They were building the socialist de-colony.

Yet, the socialist-decolony was an intellectually contested place. A plethora of global socialist theories and histories were being published, circulated, and debated within Ghana. As the NASSO hymn underscored, these ideas and histories were heavily scrutinized to determine which ones were most useful for Black liberation. While the socialist intellectuals strove to ensure that the nation's inhabitants knew about Global Northern and Eastern articulations of socialism, they ensured that their compatriots would also appreciate the specificities of their material and historical conditions and locate an African, Ghanaian brand of socialism. They reversed the colonial and neocolonial economic and intellectual vectors of exchange between Africa and the Global North. Whereas Africa transmitted raw materials to the Global North for refinement, these intellectuals imported the raw materials of Global Northern and

[137] Hanretta, "'Kaffir' Renner's Conversion," 205–208, 212.
[138] Kofi Batsa, "The Issue Is Joined," *The Spark*, December 11, 1963.

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Eastern socialism and transformed it. In so doing, they were domesticating and rescuing socialism from its European centricity.

These radical socialists in Ghana dismissed the idea of the mythical, classless African society, insisting that Africans were neither outside world history nor Hegel's global human spirit. Even if an egalitarian African society had existed before European contact, they doubted that Africans could return to it. Only through an honest reappraisal of the African past, they argued, could Africans construct a new present and future, the socialist de-colony. Anything short of this invited reproachment and societal stagnation. They also repudiated the idea that religious belief and socialism were incompatible. Instead, religious metaphors and incantations played a key role in domesticating socialism to the people, leading to the rise of a Christian nationalist state through socialist discourses.

Last, these socialists denounced the label and concept of African Socialism, dismissing it as a Western, neocolonial construct that undermined the "real" socialist ideas emanating from Africa. Yet, it is ironic that popular memories of and the historical literature on global socialism has generally labeled or associated Ghana's socialist experiment with the idea of African Socialism.

The socialist theorists in Ghana were creating and offering a new template for the socialist and Black world to use. As the Caribbean Marxist C. L. R. James explained, they were part of an extraordinary state and private effort to revolutionize Ghanaian society and the world. They were remaking socialism nationally and globally.

While this chapter has been interested in the attempts to bring socialist ideas, people, and histories to Ghana, Chapter 6 explores the lives of workers, those whom the state tasked literally with building the socialist utopia, the socialist de-colony.

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