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The politics of transnational student mobility: youth, education and activism in Ghana, 1957–1966

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the political agendas, practical challenges and personal aspirations that informed different forms of transnational student mobility in the 1950s and 1960s. It does so by focusing on a variety of initiatives that involved Ghana during the period of Kwame Nkrumah's rule (1957–1966). The article considers schemes that enabled Ghanaian students to attend universities in the United States and the communist bloc, but it also traces the operation of 'Freedom Fighters' scholarships that brought young people from different parts of Africa to Ghana. Moreover, it shows how involvement in student organisations connected Ghanaian student leaders to an international community of activists. Notwithstanding the importance of Cold War dynamics and Pan-African ambitions, the article argues that these multidirectional mobilities can be understood within the broader framework of internationalism. In examining this phenomenon from different perspectives, the piece traces the tensions between official designs on the one side and students' experiences, discord and contention on the other.

KEYWORDS

Youth; student mobility; scholarships; student protest; Pan-Africanism; diplomacy

During the Cold War, a growing number of scholarship programmes supported transnational student mobility. At one level, these funding arrangements reflected attempts to project 'soft power' in the face of geopolitical competition. Recent research, however, has emphasised that we must not interpret such initiatives exclusively in terms of the confrontation between two power blocs. As Ludovic Tournès and Giles Scott-Smith have stressed, scholarship initiatives built on earlier ventures in international education.[1] Moreover, while acknowledging the role of Cold War politics, Hilary Perraton has suggested that 'international proposals for student exchange' benefited from a 'renewed respect for internationalism' after 1945.[2] With a focus on African students, Eric Burton has argued that

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[1] L. Tournès and G. Scott-Smith, 'A world of exchanges: conceptualizing the history of international scholarship programs (nineteenth to twenty-first centuries)' in L. Tournès and G. Scott-Smith (eds), *Global Exchanges: Scholarships and transnational circulations in the modern world* (New York, 2018), 1–29, here 16.

[2] H. Perraton, *International Students 1860–2010: Policy and practice round the world* (Cham, 2020), 82. For the influence of Cold War politics, see Tournès and G. Scott-Smith (eds), *op. cit.*, 90 and 195–224.

'Cold War rivalries' were but one reason for the 'diversification of [study] destinations', as 'policy responses to decolonization, and the rise of educational planning as an instrument of modernization and development in the 1950s and 1960s' were important factors.[3] Moreover, Burton has stressed that African students were more than mere vessels for Cold War propaganda, as they often adopted stances and strategies that contradicted official designs.[4]

This article adds a fresh perspective to the burgeoning literature on student mobility in the 1950s and 1960s. It does so by highlighting multidirectional mobilities that involved newly independent Ghana during the years of Kwame Nkrumah's rule (1957–1966). In this period, the country was a significant target for Cold War mobility schemes. At the same time, however, Ghana actively promoted itself as a destination for students from across the African continent. The article covers fresh ground by treating mobility from and to Ghana within an overarching framework that accommodates and combines factors such as Cold War politics, postcolonial nation-building and student activism.

At one level, the Ghanaian case is important because of the country's status in the era of decolonisation. Hakim Adi has noted that Ghanaian independence in 1957 'was viewed by many throughout Africa and the diaspora as a defining moment'.[5] As prime minister and president of the newly independent nation, Nkrumah combined Pan-African visions with broader support for anti-colonial liberation struggles. The Conference of Independent African States and the All-African Peoples Conference – both held in Accra in 1958 – were early expressions of these ambitions. As Matteo Grilli has shown, Nkrumah's government 'became extremely active in Africa, by creating and maintaining bridges between the continent and the rest of the global South'.[6] The country's international image and foreign policy generated various forms of mobility, as illustrated by the activists and academics who travelled to the West African state. African American visitors were a notable part of this cohort, having been 'attracted to Ghana by the vision of freedom that Nkrumah voiced incessantly'.[7] For example, the civil rights leader and Pan-Africanist W.E.B. Du Bois spent the last years of his life in Accra, where he pursued his project of an *Encyclopaedia Africana*. While welcoming such seasoned campaigners, Ghana also

[3]E. Burton, 'Decolonization, the Cold War, and Africans' routes to higher education overseas, 1957–65', *Journal of Global History*, 15, 1 (2020), 169–91, here 170.
[4]*ibid*., for example 187 and 190.
[5]H. Adi, *Pan-Africanism: A history* (London, 2018), 143.
[6]M. Grilli, *Nkrumaism and African Nationalism: Ghana's Pan-African foreign policy in the age of decolonisation* (Cham, 2018), 2. See also W.S. Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy, 1957–1966: Diplomacy, ideology, and the new state* (Princeton, NJ, 1969).
[7]K. Gaines, *American Africans in Ghana: Black expatriates and the civil rights era* (Durham, NC, 2006), 6.

championed the transnational mobility of young people – the subject that is at the heart of this article.

Notwithstanding its special reputation, Ghana was far from exceptional in attracting visitors from abroad. The Guinean case invites comparisons, even beyond its geographical proximity, the timing of its independence (1958) and its cooperation with Ghana in the Union of African States (1958–1963). Under Sekou Touré's leadership, Guinea hosted foreign campaigners and staged international events that affirmed Pan-African principles, thus resembling – and sometimes competing with – Nkrumah's Ghana.[8] In East Africa, Julius Nyerere's efforts to establish Tanzania as a Pan-African site are worth noting.[9] Moreover, developments in Ghana, Guinea and Tanzania exemplify a wider phenomenon: at a time when Cold War dynamics generated various international ventures and mobilities, so did the ambitions of leaders and activists in the Global South. The emergence of particular 'hubs of decolonisation' was one manifestation of this development.[10]

This article examines Ghana's multidirectional student mobilities from three angles. The first principal section considers arrangements that enabled some Ghanaians to attend universities in both East and West. A second line of enquiry focuses on the way in which the Ghanaian state facilitated the arrival of African youths in Ghana under its 'Freedom Fighters' scholarship scheme. Both sections highlight the experiences of young people who participated in these ventures, in some instances leading to expressions of discontent or even protest. The final part further develops this focus on the actions of young people: it shows that Ghanaian student leaders created mobilities of their own through their participation in international student organisations. Their activism transcended Cold War binaries, and it sometimes clashed with government designs. To explore these tensions and interactions, the article draws on an array of sources, encompassing Ghanaian government archives, press reports and records from the University of Ghana, as well as material from international student organisations. However, before moving on to the three principal parts, it is necessary to outline the broader framework through which we can comprehend the relationship between different forms of mobility.

[8]For Sekou Touré's own framing, see A.S. Touré, *Expérience guinéenne et unité africaine: leaders politiques africaines* (Paris, 1962) and *L'Afrique et la révolution* (Paris, 1966). On subsequent staging of Pan-Africanism in Guinea, see Y. Hashachar, 'Guinea unbound: performing Pan-African cultural citizenship between Algiers 1969 and the Guinean national festivals', *Interventions*, 20, 2 (2017), 1003–21.

[9]S. Markle, *A Motorcycle on Hell Run: Tanzania, black power, and the uncertain future of Pan-Africanism,1964–1974* (East Lansing, MI, 2017); L. Tate, 'The Power of Pan Africanism: Tanzanian/African American linkages, 1947–1997' (PhD, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2015).

[10]E. Burton, 'Hubs of decolonization: African liberation movements and Eastern connections in Cairo, Accra, and Dar es Salaam' in L. Dallywater, H. Fonseca and C. Saunders (eds), *Southern African Liberation Movements and the Global Cold War 'East': Transnational activism 1960–1990* (Berlin, 2019), 30–40. On Algeria's role as another hub, see J.J. Byrne, *Mecca of Revolution: Algeria, decolonizaton, and the Third World order* (New York, 2016).

Ghanaian student mobilities, youth and internationalism

The role of youth in both Ghana and other newly independent nations is well known.[11] Jeffrey Ahlman has argued that to Nkrumah's Convention People's Party (CPP), education 'represented the hopes and ambitions of both the individual and the nation as a whole'.[12] With university access being confined to a small sub-section of the population, Ghanaian youth policies revolved around the Builders Brigade and the Young Pioneers, which recruited among broader segments of youth. Yet precisely because of the limited access to higher education, university students were projected to play an important part in shaping the postcolonial future. On the eve of national independence, Willie Abraham – a Ghanaian student leader and later a renowned philosopher – argued that 'to visitors from outside', it might seem 'that students in the Gold Coast should appear to take no interest in national politics'.[13] According to Abraham, however, appearances of apoliticism were 'almost completely contrary to fact'. At one level, his defence of his peers indicates the expectations directed at them. However, professions of this kind were not mere rhetoric: recent research by Emmanuel Asiedu-Acquah has highlighted the 'high degree of political consciousness and activism among Ghanaian university students'.[14] Moreover, the Ghanaian case was far from exceptional, as university students in different parts of Africa claimed a stake in the making of postcolonial societies.[15]

Despite being cast in terms of national development, youth-based ventures had several transnational dimensions. For example, Ghanaian attempts to mobilise young people in the Builders Brigade and Young Pioneers drew inspiration from initiatives in Israel, the Soviet Union and China.[16] Meanwhile, university-based efforts had their own transnational history: student mobility had been an intrinsic feature of African higher education, linked to the imperial features of the academic world.[17] It was only in the late colonial era that official efforts began to address the dearth of academic institutions in Africa. It took until 1948 before calls for

[11]For examples from Ghana, Guinea and Tanzania, see J.S. Ahlman; 'A new type of citizen: youth, gender, and generation in the Ghanaian Builders Brigade', *The Journal of African* History, 53, 1 (2012), 87–105; J. Straker, *Youth, Nationalism, and the Guinean Revolution* (Bloomington, IN, 2009); A. Ivaska, *Cultured States: Youth, gender, and modern style in 1960s Dar es Salaam* (Durham, NC, 2011).

[12]J.S. Ahlman, *Living with Nkrumahism: Nation, state, and Pan-Africanism in Ghana* (Athens, OH, 2017), 54.

[13]W.E. Abrahamson [Abraham], 'Ghana students and politics', *The Student*, 1, 6 (1957), 16 and 20, here 16.

[14]E. Asiedu-Acquah, '"And the youth are still coming": youth and popular politics in Ghana, *c.* 1900–1979' (PhD, Harvard University, 2015), 125 and 40. See also E. Asiedu-Acquah, '"We shall be outspoken": student political activism in post-independence Ghana, *c.* 1957–1966', *Journal of African and Asian Studies*, 54, 2 (2018), 169–88.

[15]D. Hodgkinson and L. Melchiorre, 'Introduction: student activism in an era of decolonization', *Africa*, 89, S1 (2019), 1–14; A. Adu Boahen (ed.), *The Role of African Student Movements in the Political and Social Evolution of Africa from 1900 to 1975* (Paris, 1994).

[16]Ahlman, *Living with Nkrumahism, op. cit.*, 91 and 97.

[17]T. Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars: Universities, networks and the British academic world, 1850–1939* (Manchester, 2013).

a designated higher education institution resulted in the creation of the University College of the Gold Coast, the forerunner of the University of Ghana.[18]

Significantly, the first generation of Ghana's leaders included several individuals who had combined study abroad with political activism. Nkrumah had completed an undergraduate degree at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania and then pursued doctoral research in London. As early as 1942, British officials noted that as 'President of the African Students Association of the US and Canada', he had given 'a very anti-British speech' at the University of Pennsylvania, proclaiming 'that the youth of Africa refuses to be exploited by outsiders'.[19] After moving to London, Nkrumah contributed to the landmark Pan-African Congress in Manchester in 1945.[20] As a mobile student and activist, Nkrumah was no solitary case. In Britain, the West African Students' Union (WASU) – which had been founded in 1925 – was a breeding ground for future political leaders.[21] Two WASU presidents, Joseph Boakye Danquah and Joe Appiah, became prominent figures on Ghana's path to decolonisation – although both subsequently became victims of political repression in Nkrumah's Ghana. Despite their contrasting trajectories, Nkrumah, Danquah and Appiah's activism shows that student mobility could help contest the very structures that had facilitated it. This point is worth bearing in mind as it also applies to the cases that this article focuses on.

As discussed later in this article, independent Ghana was a site for both outward and inbound forms of student mobility. By themselves, neither Cold War politics nor Pan-Africanism are entirely sufficient to describe these phenomena. One concept that does allow us to consider the different impulses and initiatives within a shared framework is internationalism – a term that denotes efforts to facilitate transnational contacts and forge international cooperation.[22] Internationalism was both amorphous and ambiguous: the language of international understanding and transnational cooperation did not mean that internationalism made national, cultural or ideological borders disappear; in some contexts, it even rendered them more visible.

[18]F. Agbodeka, *A History of University of Ghana: Half a century of higher education (1948–1998)* (Accra, 1998), 12. See also C.P. Emudong, 'The Gold Coast nationalist reaction to the controversy over higher education in anglophone West Africa and its impact on decision making in the Colonial Office, 1945–47', *The Journal of Negro Education*, 66, 2 (1997), 137–46.

[19]The National Archives, London, *Security Division of British Security Coordination to Security Executive*, 'Suspect individual', 31 December 1942, KV 2/1847.

[20]M. Sherwood, 'Kwame Nkrumah: the London years, 1945–47', *Immigrants & Minorities*, 12, 3 (1993), 164–94; M. Sherwood, *Kwame Nkrumah and the Dawn of the Cold War: The West African National Secretariat, 1945–48* (London, 2019).

[21]H. Adi, *West Africans in Britain, 1900–1960: Nationalism, Pan-Africanism, and communism* (London, 1998).

[22]J. Reinisch and D. Brydan (eds), *Internationalists in European History: Rethinking the twentieth century* (London, 2021); G. Sluga and P. Clavin (eds), *Internationalisms: A twentieth-century history* (Cambridge, 2017); D. Laqua, 'Internationalism', *European History Online (EGO)*, 4 May 2021, http://ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/transnational-movements-and-organisations/internationalism, accessed 12 June 2022.

For the purposes of this article, the concept of internationalism offers an appropriate analytical lens because it is sufficiently broad to accommodate multiple levels of agency, from subaltern to state-led initiatives.[23] For example, some scholars have used the term 'black internationalism' in reference to 'the Pan-African enunciation of broader trans-territorial insurgencies'.[24] Others have shown how postcolonial diplomacy intersected with grassroots solidarity in the Global South, as illustrated by 'Afro-Asian internationalisms' that went beyond the landmark Bandung Conference of 1955.[25] Moreover, as historians of East Africa have recently argued, a recognition of different internationalisms allows us to inscribe national and regional developments into a global context.[26] As a whole, this article argues that different student-oriented initiatives produced a form of internationalism that encompassed visions of foreign policy and affirmations of international solidarity, as well as practical attempts at cooperation.

Scholarships, activism and the politics of international education during the Cold War

Following Ghana's independence in 1957, the overlapping geopolitical contexts of decolonisation and the Cold War created different educational opportunities for Ghanaian students. Mobility to the former metropole remained a key factor: during the 1960s, the annual enrolment of Ghanaian students in the United Kingdom mostly remained over 300.[27] In an era when other newly independent states were joining Ghana in a decolonising world, new funding arrangements secured ties to the former metropole. One notable initiative was the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan which, as Hilary Perraton has put it, 'was set up in the afterglow of empire and at the dawn of the new Commonwealth', with the first cohort of beneficiaries embarking on study abroad in 1960.[28]

The Commonwealth scheme formed part of variegated arrangements that facilitated the outward mobility of Ghanaian students. In 1960, Ghana's government responded to this development by increasing its coordination efforts: the newly established Scholarships Secretariat dealt with Ghanaian grants – such as those by the Cocoa Marketing Board – while also

[23]On 'subaltern articulations of internationalism', see D. Featherstone, *Solidarity: Hidden histories and geographies of internationalism* (London, 2012), for example 12.
[24]C. Burden-Stelly and G. Horne, 'From Pan-Africanism to black internationalism' in R. Rabaka (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Pan-Africanism* (Abingdon, 2020), 69.
[25]S.L. Lewis and C. Stolte, 'Other Bandungs: Afro-Asian internationalisms in the early Cold War', *Journal of World History*, 30, 1 (2019), 1–19.
[26]I. Milford, G. McCann, E. Hunter and D. Branch, 'Another world? East Africa, decolonisation, and the global history of the mid-twentieth century', *The Journal of African History*, 62, 3 (2021), 394–410, here 401–04.
[27]UNESCO, *Statistics of Students Abroad 1962–1968: Where they go, where they come from, what they study* (Paris, 1971), Table 2.1.13A.
[28]H. Perraton, *Learning Abroad: A history of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan*, 2nd edn (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2015), 1.

considering offers from external sources. Some of these came from post-colonial nations such as India and Pakistan.[29] In assessing these opportunities, the Scholarships Secretariat adopted a strategic approach. For instance, a Lebanese offer met with the comment that the government would 'send students only overseas for courses which are not available in Ghana'.[30] As a whole, educational mobility was construed in terms of its national benefits – which also involved competition with other countries. For example, following Japan's offer of three scholarships for the study of rice-growing techniques, Ghanaian diplomats noted 'the need for us to accept these offers without delay in view of the growing interest of other African countries in Japan and their readiness to avail themselves of training facilities here'.[31] Embassy staff in Tokyo pointed out that seven Nigerian students were already 'studying electronics and telecommunications under Japanese Government scholarships'.[32]

Ghana's non-aligned status made it subject to overtures from both Cold War blocs, with scholarship arrangements as one component. Student mobility to the United States can be seen in this context. As Paul Kramer has noted, higher education has played an important part in promoting visions of American leadership.[33] After 1945, the United States became the world's leading recipient of students from abroad.[34] Official support in this domain was exemplified by the International Education Program that Senator J. William Fulbright had initiated in 1945.[35] Moreover, by 1961, growing American interest in provisions for African students manifested itself in the African Scholarship Program of American Universities (ASPAU). ASPAU was driven by academic institutions and foundations, and recent research has highlighted 'reciprocal transatlantic dynamics' in which African actors co-shaped and used the provisions in question.[36] That said, private agency had long been central to American cultural diplomacy, and federal interest in such ventures led the US State Department to fund the Council for Educational

[29]Public Records and Archives Administration, Accra (subsequently PRAAD), RG3/5/1516, Officer of High Commissioner for Pakistan to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 18 May 1961, Nauhria Ram, Ministry of Education, India to C.M.O. Mate, Ministry of Education, Ghana, 5 August 1961.
[30]PRAAD, RG3/5/1516, Scholarships Secretariat to Directory of Training, 15 June 1961.
[31]PRAAD, RG3/5/1516, Embassy of Ghana, Tokyo to the Principal Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 3 April 1962.
[32]*ibid*.
[33]P.A. Kramer, 'Is the world our campus? International students and US global power in the long twentieth century', *Diplomatic History*, 33, 5 (2009), 775–806.
[34]Perraton, *International Students, op. cit*., 178.
[35]S. Lebovic, 'From war junk to educational exchange: the World War II origins of the Fulbright Program and the foundations of American cultural globalism, 1945–1950', *Diplomatic History*, 37, 2 (2013), 280–312. See also L.R. Johnson, 'The Fulbright Program and the philosophy and geography of US exchange programs since World War II' in Tournès and Scott Smith (eds), *op. cit*., 173–87.
[36]A. Tarradellas, 'Pan-African networks, Cold War politics, and postcolonial opportunities: the African Scholarship Program of American Universities, 1961–75', *The Journal of African History*, 63, 1 (2022), 75–90, here 89.

Cooperation with Africa, which brought together representatives from ASPAU and other scholarship programmes.[37]

Ghanaian student mobility to the United States thus occurred within a broader context. In 1958–1959, 181 Ghanaians attended college or university in the United States; by 1966, the number had risen to 386.[38] This development was supported by different funding arrangements. For instance, in 1958–1959, the largest number of recipients were subsidised by Ghanaian sources – either the Ghana Cocoa Marketing Board (82) or the government (17) – while the Fulbright Program supported 23 individuals, of whom 8 were students.[39] Although the American government itself provided some direct support – for example, five federal scholarships in 1961 – most American funding came from independent sources.[40] All in all, the nature of, and reasons for, Ghanaian student mobility to the United States were complex. Indeed, at the launch of ASPAU in 1961, Nkrumah's government turned down the invitation to participate, citing Ghana's desire to develop its own university system, in line with the aforementioned intention to confine outward mobility to courses that were unavailable at home.[41]

While Ghana accepted ASPAU scholarships in subsequent years, its initial reservations vis-à-vis additional US-bound mobility resonated with Ghana's forging of educational ties with the socialist world. In 1960, the government proclaimed that it would match the number of students going to the West by sending an equivalent number to the Eastern bloc, seemingly reaffirming Ghana's policy of non-alignment.[42] This announcement coincided with a growing Soviet focus on Africa, with implications for educational policy. The creation of the Peoples' Friendship University in 1960 – shortly thereafter renamed in honour of the murdered Congolese leader Patrice Lumumba – seemed to align with a discourse of 'Soviet educational aid' to African nations.[43] Given Nkrumah's espousal of African socialism, Ghana was a major beneficiary of Soviet ventures. During the early 1960s, the number of Ghanaians who studied in the Soviet Union rose from 14 in 1959–1960 and 108 in 1960–1961 to 543 in 1965.[44] According to Constantin Katsakioris,

[37]Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, US Department of State, *Educational and Cultural Diplomacy – 1962* (Washington, DC, 1963), 16. On the role of private or semi-private agents in American cultural diplomacy, see M. Krenn, *The History of United States Cultural Diplomacy* (London, 2018).

[38]Bureau of International Cultural Relations, Department of State, *International Educational Exchange and Related Exchange-of-Persons Activities for Ghana, Regions of Trans Volta Togoland, French Togoland and Nigeria, Section IIII* (Washington, DC, 1959); 48; UNESCO, *op. cit*., Table 2.1.13A.

[39]Bureau of International Cultural Relations, *op. cit*., 26, 38–40 and 48.

[40]'Scholarships offered by the government of the United States of America for studies in the USA', *Ghana Gazette*, 3 February 1961, 77.

[41]Tarradellas, *op. cit*., 86.

[42]'Ghana to send students to Russia, east nations', *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 12 December 1960, 18. On Ghana's non-aligned stance in this period, see F. Gerits, '"When the bull elephants fight": Kwame Nkrumah, non-alignment, and Pan-Africanism as an interventionist ideology in the global Cold War (1957–66)', *The International History Review*, 37, 5 (2015), 951–69.

[43]C. Katsakioris, 'Creating a socialist intelligentsia: Soviet educational aid and its impact on Africa (1960–1991)', *Cahiers d'études africaines*, 226 (2017), 279.

[44]Table 2 in Katsakioris, 'Creating a socialist intelligentsia', 279.

'Ghanaians constituted the biggest and one of the most active groups of Africans studying both in the USSR and throughout the Eastern Bloc'.[45]

Other parts of the communist world also developed closer ties with African countries, with educational ventures as a key component.[46] Such efforts did not simply emulate the Soviet model: recent research has highlighted separate policy considerations by the leaders of state-socialist countries as well as the role of African actors in shaping these relationships.[47] In 1961, Nkrumah visited several Eastern European countries, resulting in various bilateral agreements that included provisions for training and education.[48] Poland was one of the countries on the itinerary, and over the subsequent decade, Ghanaians became one of the largest cohorts of African students in Poland.[49]

A report from Ghana's ambassador to Poland illustrates how Ghanaian officials cast student mobility in terms of their country's international mission. In 1962, the diplomat visited 11 Ghanaian students who were studying Polish in Łódź as part of their preparation for entry into Polish universities. Similar to other cases, their financial support came from different sources: four students had come under trade union scholarships, six were funded by the Polish government and one held a scholarship from the International Union of Students (IUS), a communist-dominated international student organisation.[50] According to the ambassador, his visit had fostered Pan-African dialogue as he met with an international cohort of 80 African students while in Łódź. The diplomat claimed that the participants had praised this meeting, which had made 'their African Students Union a reality', and had promised to 'ever remain as one body from the same stock irrespective of their nationality, for they realise that is only by that they can achieve their ultimate aim and the Unity of Africa'.[51] Evidently, such professions need to be treated with caution – but the reference to Pan-African student solidarity seemed to echo efforts elsewhere: in considering African students in the Soviet Union, Julie Hessler has noted the appeal 'to form transnational groupings on a continental basis'.[52]

[45]C. Katsakioris, 'Nkrumah's elite: Ghanaian students in the Soviet Union in the Cold War', *Paedagogica Historica*, 57, 3 (2021), 260–76, here 261.
[46]A. Alamgir, 'Mobility: education and labour' in J. Mark et al., *Socialism Goes Global: The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the age of decolonisation* (Oxford, 2022), here 299–305.
[47]P. Muehlenbeck, *Czechoslovakia in Africa* (Basingstoke, 2016); E. Burton, *In Diensten des Afrikanischen Sozialismus: Tansania und die globale Entwicklungsarbeit der beiden deutschen Staaten, 1961–1990* (Berlin, 2021); E. Burton and C. Katsakioris, 'Africans and the socialist world: aspirations, experiences, and trajectories. An introduction', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 54, 3 (2021), 269–78.
[48]On the Czechoslovak case, see Muehlenbeck, *op. cit*., 75.
[49]K. Marzęda-Młynarska, 'African migrants in Poland 1945–2019' in O. Abegunrin and S.O. Abidde (eds), *African Migrants and the Education Crisis* (Cham, 2021), 115–38, here 120–21.
[50]PRAAD, RG3/5/1516, Edmund Ako-Nai (Ambassador to Poland) to Ebenezer Ako-Adjei (Minister of Foreign Affairs), 29 March 1962.
[51]*ibid.*
[52]J. Hessler, 'Death of an African student in Moscow: race, politics and the Cold War', *Cahiers du Monde russe*, 47, 1–2 (2006), 33-63, here 43.

Moreover, the ambassador's report illustrates a broader point: diplomats from different sides sought to extol the benefits of student mobility. For instance, in 1959, a document from the US State Department asserted that 'Educational exchange and related exchange-of-persons activities' had produced 'increased mutual understanding between the United States and Ghana'.[53] In practice, however, transnational encounters generated manifold tensions. To highlight this aspect, it is worth discussing how Ghanaian students encountered and responded to racism in the countries that they visited.

Awareness of racism in the United States did not depend on direct exposure: in Ghana itself, student leaders displayed an interest in the African American freedom struggle.[54] To Ghanaians studying in the United States, however, American racism was a matter of personal concern. In September 1963, three US-based college students from Ghana were subjected to a racist attack while travelling with a mixed-race group led by Walter Trost, a Protestant minister who had previously taught in Ghana. This incident, which occurred outside Tuscaloosa, Alabama, attracted widespread notice.[55] While the police were slow to take up the issue, the attack triggered a formal apology from the State Department.[56] The incident was but one of several issues faced by African students in the United States: Hannah Higgin has highlighted the difficulties of Sam Jerry Ori, a Ghanaian who became the first Black student at Mercer University in Georgia, and has also noted experiences of discrimination in the northern US states as well as tensions between African and African American students.[57]

Likewise, African students encountered hostility in the communist bloc, notwithstanding the state-sanctioned discourse of international solidarity. According to Constantin Katsakioris, such experiences were 'very often disappointing or even traumatic'.[58] On some of these occasions, transnational mobility generated political tensions. For example, in February 1963, Ghanaian students in Bulgaria – who formed part of 'an estimated 350 to 500 African students' in the country – protested against 'racial

[53]Bureau of International Cultural Relations, *op. cit*., 3.
[54]Asiedu-Acquah, 'We shall be outspoken', *op. cit*., 181. On international linkages, see also N.Y.B. Sapong, 'Students at the barricades: the 1960s and the revival of students radicalism in Ghana' in N.Y.B. Sapong and J.O. Pohl (eds), *Replenishing History: New directions to historical research in the twenty-first century in Ghana* (Banbury, 2014), 47–64, here 53–54.
[55]'Students report beating', *New York Times*, 10 September 1963, 30; 'Racial beating probed', *Boston Globe*, 11 September 1963, 3; 'FBI probes beating of students, three from Ghana in Alabama', *Washington Post*, 11 September 1963, 7; 'Alabama police take no action on Ghanaians' beating report', *New York Times*, 13 September 1963, 14; 'Ala. whites savagely beat minister, Ghanaians', *Jet*, 26 September 1963, 49. See also 'US racists beat Ghanaian students', *Peking NCNA*, 11 September 1963, as featured in Central Intelligence Agency, Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: foreign radio broadcasts, 11 September 1963* (Washington, DC, 1963), 20.
[56]'US apologizes to Ghana envoy in beating of 3 students in South', *New York Times*, 11 September 1963, 33.
[57]H. Higgin, 'US exchange programs with Africa during the civil rights era', in Tournès and Scott-Smith (eds), *op. cit*., 216–30.
[58]Katsakioris, 'Nkrumah's elite', 12.

discrimination, political pressure and poor facilities', including the banning of an All-African Students Union.[59] The incident triggered an official Ghanaian investigation, with one diplomat suggesting 'that all Ghanaian students be brought home immediately'.[60] In the end, many students took the opportunity to return home.

The Bulgarian episode paled in comparison to events in the Soviet Union later that year. In December 1963, the Ghanaian medical student Edmund Assare-Addo died in a remote spot on the outskirts of Moscow.[61] Assare-Addo's death was significant both for the protests that it sparked and for the attention it attracted in the West. On 18 December 500 African students – mostly but not exclusively from Ghana – staged a demonstration in Red Square, where they clashed with police. They questioned the official account, which attributed Assare-Addo's death to freezing. Instead, they claimed that he had been murdered, potentially because of his relationship with a Russian girl. Julie Hessler's detailed analysis has shown how the affair reveals 'various sources of tension – racism and cultural difference, student politics, and foreign media discourse'.[62] For the purpose of this article, it is worth highlighting some of the American and British press coverage, as it shows how in an era of Cold War competition, the experiences of mobile students attracted international attention.

Much of the American reporting emphasised the extraordinary nature of a protest in such close proximity to the Kremlin. According to the *Chicago Tribune*, 'thousands of Russians … stared in amazement' at these scenes.[63] Meanwhile, the *New York Times* stressed that 'there had been no such angry mass demonstration in Red Square since the late nineteen-twenties'.[64] However, alongside the novelty of open protest in the Soviet Union, newspapers focused on accusations of racism, including claims that 'African students get beaten up every day' and that 'Soviet policemen do nothing to help an African if he is being attacked'.[65] The protesters' references to the American South seemed particularly noteworthy: many articles referenced the protesters' description of Moscow as 'a second Alabama'.[66] To the *Boston Globe*, such comparisons – as well as the students' slogan that 'It's the same thing all over the world' – seemed to prove that 'Soviet society is no

[59]'6 more Ghana students will quit Bulgaria', *Los Angeles Times*, 18 February 1963, 2. On the Kenyan students involved in this protest, see D. Branch, 'Political traffic: Kenyan students in Eastern and Central Europe, 1958–69', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 53, 4 (2018), 811–31, here 824.
[60]Thompson, *op. cit*., 278.
[61]The most detailed account is Hessler, *op. cit.*
[62]*ibid*., 34–35.
[63]'500 African students riot in Red Square', *Chicago Tribune*, 19 December 1963, 4.
[64]'500 Africans fight police in Moscow in race protest', *New York Times*, 19 December 1963, 1 and 11, here 1. For a similar point in the London *Times*, see 'Commotion in Red Square', *The Times*, 19 December 1963, 11.
[65]'500 Africans fight police', *op. cit.,* 11.
[66]See, for example, '500 African students in Moscow protest death of youth from Ghana', *Washington Post*, 19 December 1963, 1, as well as the reports from the *Chicago Tribune* and the *New York Times*, 19 December 1963, *op. cit*. For British coverage, see '700 African students fight their way to Red Square', *The Guardian*, 19 December 1963, 1; 'Moscow riot by African students, *The Times*, 19 December 1963, 10.

more unbiased than any other'.[67] The newspaper also highlighted similarities with previous protests, including the Bulgarian incident at the start of the year.[68] Such coverage reinforced existing media narratives that had previously focused on African student discontent at the Peoples' Friendship University.[69] Moreover, although public attention peaked in 1963, further protests occurred in subsequent years. In 1965, 29 Kenyan students in Baku staged a strike after the death of another Ghanaian student, with American newspapers citing complaints about 'unbearable ... racial discrimination'.[70]

While such accounts underscored the limits of Soviet internationalism, they also caused complications for the leadership in Ghana. In the early 1960s, Nkrumah's policy of closer relations with the Soviet Union was subject to internal criticism.[71] These circumstances help to explain Ghanaian attempts to downplay student discontent in the Eastern bloc. Nkrumah complained that the Bulgarian incident of February 1963 'had been exploited in the West' and objected to comparisons 'with the sustained discrimination against Africans in America'.[72] Following the events in Moscow, the *Evening News* – an Accra-based newspaper closely linked to Nkrumah's CPP – argued that comparisons between the Soviet Union and the American South were unjustified as the Soviet Union was 'obviously not' Alabama.[73] It accused British and American papers of amplifying the case in an effort to 'unleash cold-war "racial discrimination" propaganda against the Soviet Union'. While conceding Soviet flaws in other domains ('After all, we are non-aligned'), the paper echoed the CPP's commitment to African socialism by describing racism as 'deeply entrenched in the system of capitalism-imperialism', thus being 'the rule rather than the exception' in the West.[74] To the British *Guardian*, this response seemed to be a case of 'papering over the cracks'.[75]

These incidents and their coverage show that the actions of Ghanaian students abroad could potentially inconvenience the government at home. However, protest directed at the host country was but one dimension, as students could also criticise their own government from abroad. After gaining independence, Ghanaian officials therefore took an interest in

[67]'"Moscow like Alabama" indicates depth of bias', *Boston Globe*, 26 December 1963, 4. For similar points, see V. Zorza, 'Russians not without prejudice', *The Guardian*, 19 December 1963, 9.
[68]Direct references to the Bulgarian events also featured in coverage by the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, 19 December 1963, *op. cit*., and in C. Dunn, 'Why African students staged Moscow revolt', *The Observer*, 22 December 1963, 3.
[69]Hessler, *op. cit*., 45–50. For an example of the wider narrative, see E. Conine, 'Soviet lose face in African protest', *Los Angeles Times*, 29 December 1963, k1.
[70]'Ghana students report Soviet discrimination', *Los Angeles Times*, 7 April 1965, 6. See also Branch, *op. cit*., 824–25.
[71]Thompson, *op. cit*., 279.
[72]*ibid*., 288.
[73]'Da yie, Edmund Asare Addo!', *Evening News*, 20 December 1963, 1.
[74]*ibid.*
[75]'Ghana papers over the cracks', *The Guardian*, 21 December 1963, 7.

monitoring the activities of Ghanaian students in Britain.[76] Concerns about their political activity were not unfounded, especially at a time when Nkrumah steered an increasingly authoritarian course. In 1961, Ghanaian students in Britain founded an association that attacked political imprisonment and other 'totalitarian practices' in Ghana – a remarkable step as the activists were largely funded by government grants.[77] Likewise, in 1964, a US Senate Sub-Committee heard evidence from two leaders of the Ghana Students Association, a body that connected Ghanaian students in the Americas. Attacking Nkrumah's government, the student activists urged US politicians to reduce foreign aid to their country.[78]

Such protests suggest growing student opposition to Nkrumah. Yet the coup that ended his rule in 1966 negatively affected some students. The National Liberation Council (which replaced Nkrumah's rule) terminated many scholarships and called home large numbers of grant holders from Britain and the United States.[79] At one level, these measures were presented in terms of efficiency and budgetary claims, but they went hand in hand with claims regarding scholarship practice under Nkrumah: a review by the new government alleged that grants for medical study in the Soviet Union had gone to individuals 'with definitely inadequate or doubtful academic background'.[80] Meanwhile, in attacking the coup and the new leadership, Nkrumah listed 'scholarship students at home and abroad [who] have been deprived of their scholarships' as one of the 'tragic confusions, contradictions, and hardships which now beset Ghanaians everywhere'.[81] Such comments indicate the role that scholarship provision had played for Nkrumah's political system and its representation. The next section will examine this aspect further by exploring Ghanaian support for inbound mobility.

Student mobility towards Ghana and the 'Freedom Fighters' scholarships

Ghana had a diversified tertiary sector that made it a potential study destination in its own right. In 1961, the University College of Ghana (formerly the University College of the Gold Coast) and the Kumasi

[76]PRAAD, RG/17/1/140, note by A.K. Barden, 6 June 1959.
[77]'Ghana students protest', *The Guardian*, 19 October 1961, 1. See also '"Lip service" to Dr Nkrumah: students' view of recent arrests', *The Guardian*, 1 September 1962, 4; 'Students accuse Nkrumah', *The Guardian*, 1 September 1964, 9.
[78]Sub-Committee of the US Senate Committee on the Judiciary, *Ghana Students in United States Oppose US Aid to Nkrumah, 29 August 1963 to 11 January 1964* (Washington, DC, 1964).
[79]O.A. Asamoah, *The Political History of Ghana (1950–2013): The experience of a non-conformist* (Bloomington, IN, 2014), 139; 'Ghana students are called home', *Washington Post*, 16 March 1967, 25; B.S. George, *Education in Ghana* (Washington, DC, 1976), 84.
[80]George, *Education in Ghana, op. cit.*, 58.
[81]'Nkrumah says hour of redemption is near', speech originally broadcasted by the Guinea Domestic Service on 12 June 1966, featured in *Daily Report: Foreign policy broadcasts, 14 June 1966* (Washington, DC, 1966), section I.3.

College of Technology (founded in 1952) received degree-awarding powers, marking the institutions' transformation into the University of Ghana and the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, respectively. One year later, the foundation of the University of Cape Coast further boosted educational provision. While Ghana sent a growing number of students abroad during the 1960s, the domestic higher education sector expanded accordingly: in 1962, 852 Ghanaians studied abroad, compared to 1928 who were enrolled in Ghana. By 1965, numbers had risen to 1466 and 4100, respectively.[82] These developments were significant, as higher education in West Africa was closely entwined with ideas about development and self-rule.[83]

After independence, Ghanaian officials actively promoted inbound student mobility. Discussions about a government-sponsored scheme for foreign students started after the Conference of Independent African States in 1958.[84] George Padmore – the Trinidadian Pan-Africanist and former head of the African Service Bureau in London – had helped to stage this event, having been appointed Nkrumah's Special Advisor on African Affairs in the preceding year.[85] Following Padmore's death in 1959, his former assistant Aloysius K. Barden became head of the Bureau of African Affairs. In this capacity, Barden 'played a decisive role in the execution of Ghana's foreign policy, especially in managing the relationship between the Pan-African institutions of Ghana and the liberation movements hosted in the country'.[86]

The Bureau of African Affairs contributed to the development of a new institution, the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute (KNII), which opened in Winneba in 1962. At one level, KNII was conceived as a training ground for future CPP cadres and as 'the institutional site where the task of constructing an official ideology was most closely connected with teaching in the social sciences'.[87] Yet KNII's mission was also international, as it offered short courses for foreign guests. Prior to its opening, Barden announced that it would 'not be long when the Institute will be in a position to offer scholarships to African nationalists abroad'.[88] Observers hostile to Nkrumah's brand of African socialism subsequently likened the training at KNII to the provision within communist countries.

[82]UNESCO, *op. cit*., Table 2.1.13A.
[83]T. Livsey, *Nigeria's University Age: Reframing decolonisation and development* (London, 2017).
[84]Grilli, *op. cit*., 138–39.
[85]On Padmore's years in Ghana, see L. James, *George Padmore and Decolonisation from Below: Pan-Africanism, the Cold War, and the end of empire* (Basingstoke, 2014), 164–90.
[86]Grilli, *op. cit*., 7. See also Ahlman, *Living with Nkrumahism*, *op. cit*., 160–62 and, in rather critical terms, Thompson, *op. cit*., 107 and 222.
[87]G. Serra and F. Gerits, 'The politics of socialist education in Ghana: the Kwame Nkumah Ideological Institute, 1961–1966', *Journal of African History*, 60, 3 (2019), 407–28. See also Ahlmann, *Living with Nkrumahism*, *op. cit*., 127 and 158.
[88]George Padmore Research Library, Accra (subsequently GPRL), folder 423 ('Kwamke Nkrumah Institute, Winneba'), A.K. Barden to T.K. Ipraim (Office of the President).

One Ghanaian student sarcastically noted that Africans would not have to 'travel all the way to Moscow and Peking for the usual communist stuff' as such provision existed at Winneba.[89] Matteo Grilli has demonstrated that matters were more complex as the KNII soon dropped socialist instruction for visitors from abroad.[90] Similarly, Gerardo Serra and Frank Gerits have argued that 'in practice the "creation" of Ghanaian socialist citizens and foreign Pan-African militants could follow parallel routes'.[91]

KNII-based scholarships were but one element within a wider set of initiatives to welcome students during the early 1960s. These efforts deserve closer scrutiny as they illustrate the limitations of student mobility as a political tool. One instructive case is provided by a group from Somalia. Grilli has noted an abortive attempt in November 1961 to enrol Somali students at KNII, forming part of Ghana's competition with Nasser's Egypt to influence the newly independent East African state.[92] The records of the Scholarships Secretariat and the Bureau of African Affairs suggest a subsequent shift towards other routes for fostering educational ties with Somalia. By December 1961, officials faced the imminent arrival of several sponsored Somali students, expressing uncertainty as to whether the guests would meet the 'minimum educational requirements' set by 'our various universities and training institutions'.[93] Staff at the Scholarships Secretariat therefore suggested 'to arrange *ad hoc* courses for them', based on 'the standard of their education and English generally' as well as their agreed study requirements.[94]

Preparations for the arrival of the Somali cohort were coordinated by the African Affairs Secretariat at the Office of the President, yet the hosting of these students involved multiple bodies and officials, with Barden representing the Bureau of African Affairs.[95] Subsequent discussions covered a variety of issues: the recruitment of teachers via both the Bureau of African Affairs and the Ghanaian ambassador in Mogadishu; the supplies of books and stationery from the Ministry of Education; and arrangements to support five female students via the Council of Women's Organisations.[96] In the end, 29 Somalis received a special training programme at the University of Science and Technology in Kumasi, comprising pre-university education, language instruction and a 'programme of interesting activities' that encompassed 'excursions to interesting places both in

[89]'A Ghana student looks at Nkrumah', *Chicago Tribune*, 2 December 1964, 16.
[90]Grilli, *op. cit*., 232–33.
[91]Serra and Gerits, *op. cit*., 417.
[92]Grilli, *op. cit*., 235.
[93]PRAAD, RG3/5/1516, I.R.O. Neequaye (Scholarships Secretariat) to the Ghanaian Embassy in Mogadishu, 11 December 1961.
[94]*ibid*.
[95]GPRL, folder 838 ('Somali Students'), letter to A.K. Barden, 4 January 1962.
[96]GPRL, folder 838, 'Minutes of the meeting of the committee charged with the responsibility of dealing with all problems affecting the welfare of the Somali students', c. February 1962.

Ashanti and outside Ashanti'.[97] Such examples highlight the considerable institutional capacities invested in such programmes.

In May 1962, Ghana's educational diplomacy received further stimuli through the government-hosted Freedom Fighters Conference at KNII. At this international gathering, Nkrumah promised support for the Kenya African National Union (KANU) and its endeavours on the road to independence 'by way of granting awards of scholarship to enable their youth to train for future leadership'.[98] This offer was entwined with the notion that such provision would 'demonstrate practically and more effectively the declared African Policy of the Ghana Government to help consolidate the efforts of nationalist organizations in other African Countries and finally to establish firmly Ghana's stand in the African Liberation Struggle'.[99] The anticipated scholarship support was broad, covering residence at the African Affairs Centre in Accra, maintenance, and education at different levels.

By early 1963, Kenyan students started arriving in Accra as part of a group that Ghanaian officials referred as the 'Njiri batch'.[100] This was a reference to Kariuki Karanja Njiri, a KANU politician. Njiri had himself benefited from transnational educational mobility, having been schooled in India and then studied at Lincoln University during the 1950s – the very same American institution at which Nkrumah himself had been an undergraduate in the 1930s. Following his return to Kenya, Njiri engaged in efforts 'to raise funds, secure scholarships, and place Kenyan students in colleges and universities in America'.[101] Jim Harper has argued that 'he was instrumental in that monumental task of building university educated manpower that Kenya sorely needed in the wake of independence'.[102]

From January 1963 onwards, Ghanaian officials were addressing the practical implications of the students' arrival from Kenya. An initial cohort – comprising three male and two female students – reached Accra on 11 January.[103] By 17 March, the group had grown to 11 members.[104] In many instances, applicants landed at Accra airport without prior notice for the Bureau of African Affairs – which, as an official remarked, 'in a way, created some sort of inconvenience'. A report stressed that 'We have written to KANU about this embarrassing way of sending students and stopped them from sending any more'.[105] Such appeals only

[97]GPRL, folder 838, note from the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development, 10 February 1962.
[98]GPRL, folder 861 ('Kenya Students: Special File'), Principal Welfare Officer, Bureau of African Affairs, 'Application or Scholarships to Kenya Students' (c. March 1963).
[99]GPRL, folder 864 ('Kenya Students'), handwritten note 'Bureau of African Affairs Scholarship Scheme'.
[100]GPRL, folder 861, 'Kenya Students' file, note from c. 18 March 1863.
[101]J.C. Harper, II, *Western-Educated Elites in Ghana, 1900–1963: The African American factor* (Abingdon, 2006), 65.
[102]*ibid*., 66. Njiri's role in KANU's scholarship work is also mentioned in Burton, 'Decolonization', *op. cit*., 183. On KANU's involvement in transnational student mobility, see Branch, *op. cit.*
[103]GPRL, folder 861, 'Kenya Students' file, entry for 11 January 1963.
[104]GPRL, folder 861, 'Kenya Students' file, entry for 17 March 1963.
[105]GPRL, folder 861 ('Kenya Students: Special File'), Principal Welfare Officer, Bureau of African Affairs, 'Application or Scholarships to Kenya Students' (c. March 1963).

had a limited effect: in the autumn, further students arrived in batches of three, 15 and then four – in some cases taking officials by surprise.[106]

While these visitors caused logistical challenges, so did the absence of accurate information on the anticipated educational provision. The guests ranged in age from 14 to 24 years, and group members had different expectations regarding their stay in Ghana. They hardly fitted the template of 'Freedom Fighters' eager to advance their ideological training: initial conversations with them revealed that most had come for secondary schooling.[107] Ghanaian officials noted that 'by academic standards only one would probably qualify for the Winneba course [at KNII]'.[108] Moreover, one of the students due to attend KNII protested as 'he was not prepared to accept anything short of secondary school education'.[109] Similar dissent became evident among three students who, according to prior correspondence with KANU, were to enrol on a stenography course at the Government Secretarial School. According to an official from the Bureau of African Affairs, they 'expressed utter surprise because according to their leaders at home in Kenya they had come for secondary school education'.[110] Students largely insisted on their preferred courses, as exemplified by two students who rejected secretarial training and stressed their intention to undertake teacher training in one case and study public administration in the other.[111] Such negotiations indicate that for many, travelling to Ghana was not an expression of Pan-African solidarity but an opportunity to obtain the educational qualifications that they desired.

Miscommunication was not peculiar to the relationship with KANU. In 1964, the Bureau of African Affairs was tasked with welcoming students who arrived following a scholarship invitation to the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO).[112] In this context, Barden complained that the students from South West Africa – present-day Namibia – 'arrived without any previous information about their educational background' and critically commented that 'up till date no such documents have been received from the SWAPO headquarters'.[113] As with the Kenyan guests, the Bureau of African Affairs did secure provision for these students, but such complaints highlighted the challenges in making Pan-African educational cooperation work in practice.

[106]GPRL, folder 861, 'Kenya Students' file, entries for 20 October, 6 November and 23 November 1963.
[107]GPRL, folder 861, 'Kenya Students' file, entries for 11 and 12 January 1963.
[108]GPRL, folder 861, 'Kenya Students' file, note from 1 March 1963.
[109]GPRL, folder 851, 'Kenya Students' file, entry for 11 November 1963.
[110]GPRL, folder 861, 'Kenya Students' file, entry for 7 November 1963. Something similar happened with another group, as noted in the entry for 18 November 1963.
[111]GPRL, folder 861, letter from 22 January 1964.
[112]GPRL, folder 936 ('South West African Students'), A.K. Barden to the Principal Education Officer for Secondary Schools, Ministry of Education, 24 July 1964.
[113]GPRL, folder 936, 'Government Scholarship Awards to Noah Niyumah and Joseph Haiminca (South West African Students)'.

Nonetheless, records from the Bureau of African Affairs indicate its efforts to accommodate student requests. For instance, as the Kenyans arrived before the start of the academic year, officials planned a class at the African Affairs Centre, with a programme of 'preparatory tuition under the auspices of the Institute of Public Education of the University of Ghana'.[114] Alongside such provision, officials contacted schools and other educational establishments to secure student placements.[115] Repeatedly, the visitors were granted an increase in their pocket money.[116] There were limits to heeding such requests, however: when a Kenyan student suggested that her 'clothing allowances in cash and my box' had been stolen at her secondary school, the headmaster contradicted the account, thus stalling her demand for additional funds.[117]

Most members of the Kenyan student cohort were placed in secondary schools. The surviving school records suggest that, at least initially, many of them struggled academically.[118] Several school reports also cited negative attitudes, potentially reflecting prejudices on both sides. In other instances, language was an issue. This was the case for Somali scholarship recipients, as noted by the principal of the Government Secretarial School. While the students had made 'very satisfactory progress' in typewriting, their 'very weak background in English' meant that their typing from manuscripts was 'not at all satisfactory' and that they were 'not at all suitable to undergo training in stenography'. The principal therefore suggested their return to Somalia while predicting that they would 'work well as copy typists in their own country where language will not be a drawback or major problem'.[119]

Even beyond educational attainment, the presence of foreign students generated tensions. Although officials were careful not to label the visitors as ungrateful, their internal correspondence contained various complaints, for instance regarding their behaviour at the African Affairs Centre, which housed the Kenyan students alongside other foreign guests. Officials complained that the students left the premises in poor conditions, including 'vomiting on the floor of the bath and toilet'. When the relevant Welfare Office described 'the block in which the students stay' as being 'the most untidy place', the residents in question 'poured abuses' on him.[120]

[114]GPRL, folder 861, note by the Principal Welfare Officer, 30 March 1963.
[115]GPRL, folder 864, e.g. letter by the Principal Welfare Officer, 7 January 1964.
[116]GPRL, folder 861, 'Kenya Students' file, entry for 24 April 1965 as well as subsequent notes. Likewise, officials raised pocket money for Somali students based on their demand: GPRL, folder 838, 'Minutes of meeting', 27 February 1962.
[117]GPRL, folder 365 ('Refugee Students [Freedom Fighters] School Reports file), note in response to letter from 15 April 1965.
[118]See the different reports in GPRL, folder 365.
[119]GPRL, folder 838, report by the Principal of the Government Secretarial School, 'Training of special students from the Republic of Somalia: progress report', 18 March 1964.
[120]GPRL, folder 365, Welfare Officer, African Affairs Centre, to Principal Welfare Officer, Bureau of African Affairs, 8 June 1964 (letter entitled 'Kenya students – behaviour of').

At times, relations between officials and guests broke down beyond repair. One example concerned members of the Somali cohort that had arrived in December 1961. In the words of the officials, several 'irresponsible and disgruntled students' were 'repatriated to Somalia, at their own request'.[121] The students' apparent spokesperson subsequently summarised his complaints in the *Daily Nation*, a Nairobi-based newspaper with wider influence in East Africa. He said that a group of four students, himself included, had launched a 'hunger strike' to ensure their transfer home as the living conditions and educational provision in Ghana had been inadequate: 'We are grown men, and objected to being put in classrooms with a lot of children, mere beginners'.[122] The coverage provoked concern within the Ghanaian High Commission in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanganyika.[123] It also triggered a forceful rebuttal from the Ghanaian embassy in Mogadishu. The diplomats argued that the 54-year-old Somali student 'should have known that there were no separate schools for people of his age group'. Moreover, it described 'educational facilities in Ghana' as 'without doubt . . . second to none in Africa'.[124] The response reveals sensitivities vis-à-vis accusations that could undermine images of Ghana as a model of African progress. At the same time, the embassy's response was striking in that it articulated a sense of superiority: it contrasted the student's domestic living conditions 'in a ramshackle kerosene-tin house in the worst slum district of Mogadishu' with the hosts' decision to place him in 'a luxury air-conditioned flat in the luxurious Ambassador Hotel on his arrival in Accra'.[125]

At a subsequent meeting, officials described most of the remaining Somali students as being 'in a very happy mood' but suggested sending two of them home as 'their unhealthy influence might poison the goodwill of the other students'.[126] The committee also returned to the earlier case of the repatriated student, who had published another article, this time in a Somali newspaper, which included 'abuses on our ambassador' and seemingly 'aimed at bringing the government of Ghana into disrepute'. While the meeting concluded that the newspaper piece 'should not be taken up seriously', such incidents illustrate how educational diplomacy could backfire. Moreover, the age of the students' apparent spokesperson indicated that the scholarships could attract individuals well outside the age range anticipated by officials. It thus illustrates the misunderstandings and contrasting expectations that manifested themselves in such ventures.

[121]GPRL, folder 838, 'Minutes of meeting of executive committee charged with the affairs of the Somali students, now in Ghana, under Ghana Government Scholarship', early February 1962.
[122]'"Fed up" students get out of Accra', *Daily Nation*, 2 February 1962, 5.
[123]GPRL, folder 838, 'Minutes of meeting of executive committee charged with the affairs of the Somali students, now in Ghana, under Ghana Government Scholarship', early February 1962.
[124]'Ghana replies to Somali students', *Daily Nation*, 7 February 1962, 7.
[125]*ibid.*
[126]GPRL, folder 838, 'Minutes of meeting of executive committee charged with the welfare of the Somali students, held at the Flagstaff House on 27 February 1962'.

The limits to official hospitality also became evident on later occasions. One such case was the response to a Kenyan student who, in November 1963, rejected his designated course at the Secretariat School, insisted on a place at the Institute of Education and made financial demands that appeared 'unreasonable and fantastic' to staff at the Bureau of African Affairs.[127] By April 1964, the bureau's Senior Welfare Officer had recorded the student's general disinterest and his apparent indifference as to whether or not he might be sent home. Owing to the student's 'unbecoming attitude during his stay in Ghana', the official recommended his repatriation, arguing that the student's ongoing presence would undermine Nkrumah's efforts 'to cement the bond of friendship between Ghana and Kenya and thereby promote African Unity'.[128] Such examples indicate awareness of the clash between internationalist designs and practice.

In the end, the 'Freedom Fighters' scholarship scheme remained inchoate. Shortly after the coup that deposed Nkrumah in 1966, the former KNII site in Winneba was committed to alternative uses, with a focus on teacher training rather than ideological instruction.[129] On the whole, the ventures in question had depended on the political leadership, and their impact in boosting internationalism at the grassroots level seemed limited. Yet, as the final part of this article shows, there were other mobilities and transnational interactions, driven by university students and the associations that they were involved in.

An international student community?

Ghanaian universities were sites of transnational encounters – even beyond the fact that a large proportion of the academic staff was comprised of British and American expatriates.[130] In some instances, foreign students organised themselves locally. For instance, in October 1960, students from the British Cameroons established a Ghana branch of the National Union of Kamerun Students, and in 1965, Malawi students founded a society at the University of Ghana.[131] Such ventures remained limited in scope: the association of students from Cameroon counted 10 members, while the number of Ghana-based students from Malawi consistently remained below

[127]GPRL, folder 365, 'Repatriation of Kenya student' (note by the Principal Welfare Officer, Bureau of African Affairs, 1964).
[128]*ibid*.
[129]PRAAD, RG3/6/1535, Memorandum to the National Liberation Council by the Ministry of Education, 27 May 1966. On the end of KNII, see also Serra and Gerits, *op. cit*., 426–27.
[130]Asiedu-Acquah, 'And the youth are still coming', *op. cit*., 154–56 also notes attempts to attract staff from the Eastern bloc, with mixed results. On international staff at KNII, see Serra and Gerits, *op. cit*., 422–25.
[131]On students from Cameroon, see University of Ghana Archives, Legon (subsequently UG Archives), UG1/3/7/4/5, letters by S.N. Shu on 20 October 1960 and the positive response from the College Principal, Raymond Henry Stoughton, on 28 October 1960. On Malawi students, see UG Archives UG1/3/7/4/6, letters by Bright Nyondo to the university's Vice-Chancellor, 4 December 1964 and 18 January 1965.

20 in this period.[132] The largest cohort of foreign students in Ghana came from Nigeria, averaging over 80 in the 1960s.[133] While there is limited material on the experiences of these students, or their interactions with their Ghanaian peers, some available documentation from the end of the decade suggests that the University of Ghana's Student Representative Council organised welcoming activities for students from abroad.[134]

Among Ghanaian student leaders, the question of international travel attracted substantial interest. In 1962, a student magazine at the University of Ghana welcomed an initiative to enable visits to universities abroad, arguing that 'The Pan-African Age calls for such travels so that students can feel the pulses of the various societies and states of the continent and acquaint themselves with the social and political problems of modern Africa'.[135] At the national level, student representatives considered the creation of a student travel bureau and sought to gain travel discounts.[136] In 1962, organisers secured a subsidy that enabled 40 students from the universities in Accra and Kumasi to embark on a tour to Nigeria.[137] Sporting activities were a particular form of mobility, and in this context, Ghanaian student leaders discussed the idea of a West African Inter-Varsity Games.[138] Plans for an international sporting tournament culminated in the creation of the West African University Games, first held at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria in 1965 and hosted by the University of Ghana two years later.[139]

These examples indicate that, well beyond scholarships and study abroad, some forms of student mobility were driven by active participation in student life. This aspect was also evident in the response to a travel grant scheme for youth leaders by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). In 1963, these grants were 'intended to assist youth and student leaders to obtain international experience in countries distant from their own, which will not only contribute to their broader education but increase the effectiveness of their work among youth in their own countries'.[140]

[132]UG Archives, UG1/3/7/4/5, letter from S.N. Shu, 25 October 1960, listing Cameroon students. On the number of Malawi students in Ghana, see UNESCO, *op. cit*., Table 2.1.21A.
[133]UNESCO, *op. cit*., Table 2.1.27A. From 1961, this included the northern parts of the former British Cameroons.
[134]UG Archives, UG1/3/7/4/11A, S.B. Mfodwo, 'Reception of foreign students entering the university at the beginning of the academic year', 12 February 1968.
[135]'Exchange programme', *The S.R.C. News Magazine*, 1, 10 (1962), 2, as preserved in UG Archives, UG/1/3/7/4/11.
[136]UG Archives, UG1/3/8/4/21, National Union of Ghana Students, 'Communiqué: National Seminar, 1962, 23rd–28th March', in UG Archives, UG/13/3/8/4/21.
[137]UG Archives, UG1/3/8/4/21, exchanges between the National Union of Ghana Students and officials at the University of Ghana, e.g. 23 February, 5 April and 29 November 1962 as well as 23 January 1963.
[138]*ibid*. See also A. Cato, 'The national seminar of the National Union of Ghana Students', *The S.R.C. News Magazine*, 1, 10 (1962), 3.
[139]D. Bell, *Encyclopaedia of International Games* (Jefferson, NC, 2003), 376.
[140]UG Archives, UG1/3/5/5/21, William D. Carter (chief, International Exchange Section, UNESCO) to Ghana's National Commission for UNESCO, early 1963.

The scheme solicited a substantial response at the University of Ghana, with 34 applications, from which the officials selected four candidates who had shown outstanding commitments, for instance through involvement in the Student Representative Council, the International Relations Club and the United Nations Student Association.[141] In the end, Ghana gained one place for a member of the International Association of Students in Economics and Commercial Sciences (AIESEC).[142]

While such examples testify to localised transnational interactions, Ghanaian students interacted with an international community of student leaders. In this period, a variety of international student organisations forged links based on ideology, gender, religion or humanitarian objectives. By the 1950s, such bodies had developed an increasingly global conception of their activism.[143] In their turn, as Emmanuel Asiedu-Acquah has argued, Ghanaian student leaders considered themselves to be 'part of a global movement of students and substantiated this by pursuing and maintaining connections with the major international student organizations of the period'.[144] One early example concerned the field of Christian student internationalism. In 1955, Catholic students founded a national organisation in what was then the Gold Coast colony. Their newly formed association joined Pax Romana, the International Movement of Catholic Students. Pax Romana concluded that one way of supporting such new affiliates would be through 'leadership training'.[145] Putting these ideas into practice, the organisation staged its first 'African seminar' in December 1957. Held in newly independent Ghana, the event sought 'to bring together the best Catholic student leaders from Ghana, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Belgian Congo, South Africa, Kenya, Uganda and the Sudan'. The 60 participants considered 'the civic responsibility of the Africa student', in particular on matters of national development.[146] Such examples highlight the hopes invested in students, with Nkrumah's message to the delegates stressing that 'Universities have a vital role to play in the Africa that is now emerging'.[147]

Pax Romana's 'leadership seminar' is one example of how involvement in international student organisations could resonate with the diplomatic

[141]The letters, including applications, are featured in the folder 'Travel Grants for Youth and Student Leaders', UG Archives, UG1/3/5/5/21.
[142]UG Archives, UG1/3/5/5/21, R. Bellamy to E.A.K. Edzii (University Registrar), 25 April 1964.
[143]D. Laqua, 'Student activists and international cooperation in a changing world, 1919–60' in Brydan and Reinisch (eds), *op. cit*., 161–81.
[144]Asiedu-Acquah, 'We shall be outspoken', *op. cit*., 180.
[145]PRAAD, RG3/5/1684, Memorandum by the Reverend Dr John Koster, forwarded by the Principal of the University College to the Ministry of Education, 31 October 1957.
[146]PRAAD, RG3/5/1684, Thom Kerstiens (General Secretary of Pax Romana) to Kwame Nkrumah, 16 September 1957.
[147]PRAAD, RG3/5/1684, draft letter from Nkrumah to Kerstiens, c. November 1957. See also 'Catholic students in Ghana', *Catholic Herald*, 10 January 1958.

agenda previously discussed: it promoted Ghana as a destination for young leaders from different African countries. In other instances, participation in student organisations enabled student leaders from Ghana to represent their country abroad. Accordingly, the Ministry of Education took an interest in the youth leaders who would receive funding for foreign travel. One official insisted on precautions to 'ensure that our human exports do Ghana credit', arguing that 'The ill-bred, gauche or emotionally unstable do us more harm than good and are more likely to create hostility than friendship if not contempt'.[148]

Importantly, student leaders seemed to mirror Ghana's foreign policy by maintaining ties with two Cold War 'student internationals': the Soviet-backed IUS and its Western counterpart, the International Student Conference (ISC).[149] As Asiedu-Acquah has noted, this approach allowed Ghanaian student leaders 'to toe the path of nonalignment'.[150] Student participation in the IUS and ISC was conducted through the National Union of Ghana Students (NUGS), which cast its engagement with international student structures in ways that echoed government discourse: for instance, in 1962, NUGS affirmed both 'the struggle for Pan-African unity' and 'the responsibility of the students of Ghana to play a positive role in the achievements of the peoples of Africa'.[151] In March 1962, NUGS hosted an ISC delegation that stayed in Ghana as part of a fact-finding mission that took the student leaders to a total of 16 African nations.[152] The ISC report on this continent-wide tour noted both the strength of Pan-African sentiment and its compatibility with internationalism: it concluded that 'the interest in Pan-African unity is not a parochial one, in the sense of excluding the possibility or desire for closer ties with student groups in other parts of the world'.[153] The delegation also acknowledged that African student representatives had expressed their hopes that divisions between the ISC and IUS might be overcome.[154]

NUGS exemplified the desire to work with both camps. For example, in 1963, Ghanaian student leaders invited IUS representatives to attend the foundation of a West African Students' Confederation.[155] The latter's creation reflected 'the vital importance' that NUGS ascribed to the 'regional co-operation of African Students'.[156] Importantly, the maintenance of relations

[148]PRAAD, RG3/5/1685, internal handwritten note (Ministry of Education, Ghana), 30 October 1961.
[149]J. Kotek, *Students and the Cold War*, trans. R. Blumenau (New York, 1996).
[150]Asiedu-Acquah, 'We shall be outspoken', *op. cit*., 180.
[151]UG Archives, National Union of Ghana Students, 'Communiqué'.
[152]UG Archives, UG1/3/8/4/21, Lovermore Mutambanengue (ISC) to the Ministry of External Affairs, 22 December 1961. For the report and itinerary, see ISC, *Report of the International Student Delegation to Africa* (Leiden: COSEC, 1962).
[153]ISC, *Report of the International Student Delegation to Africa, op. cit.,* 37.
[154]*ibid*., 38.
[155]Adi, *Pan-Africanism*, 141. The federation's foundation is noted in 'New international organisations', *International Associations*, 16, 5 (1964), 278.
[156]UG Archives, National Union of Ghana Students, 'Communiqué'. See also Cato, *op. cit*., 3.

with two international student organisations created further opportunities for mobility – and the need to fund travel to international student events, as exemplified by NUGS's funding requests that tended to be framed in terms of 'the immense educational value in travelling and student exchange'.[157]

From July to October 1963, NUGS president A.K.P. Kludze embarked on an extensive international tour, with an itinerary that included the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia but also West Germany, the United States and an ISC meeting in the Netherlands.[158] In the United States, Kludze visited the headquarters of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), reflecting Ghanaian interest in the African American freedom struggle. To some extent, the interest was reciprocated: one year later, SNCC leaders John Lewis and Donald Harris travelled to Ghana as part of a wider African visit. The historian Fanon Che Wilkins has stressed the positive reception given to the civil rights activists in Ghana, while noting that they were probed about US foreign policy and Malcolm X, who had visited the West African country shortly before them.[159]

Kludze himself was unable to meet Lewis and Harris on their visit: he was arrested in early 1964 as part of a crackdown on university-based dissent. According to Asiedu-Acquah, the government viewed Kludze 'as one of the central figures in anti-government student politics'.[160] Student criticisms of Nkrumah's measures against the judiciary were a key aspect in this regard. However, the *New York Times* also highlighted an international dimension to Kludze's arrest: it noted that under his leadership, NUGS had contradicted official policy by passing a resolution 'deploring discrimination against African students in Communist universities'.[161] Indeed, in December 1963, NGUS had proclaimed its support for the ISC's work on 'the problem of overseas students in Europe'. In doing so, NUGS singled out the aforementioned incidents in Bulgaria and the Soviet Union, warning of 'creeping colour segregation in the Eastern Socialist Countries' and affirming its 'solidarity with the protest demonstrations of the African Youths in Moscow'.[162] In this respect,

[157]UG1/3/8/4/21, A.K.P. Kludze to the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ghana, 27 April 1963.
[158]UG1/3/8/4/21, letter from A.K.P. Kludze, 13 July 1963. Kludze's trip is also mentioned in Asiedu-Acquah, 'We shall be outspoken', *op. cit*., 181.
[159]F.C. Wilkins, 'The making of black internationalists: SNCC and Africa before the launching of Black Power, 1960–1965', *Journal of African American History*, 92, 4 (2007), 477 (on Kludze in the US) and 479–82 (on SNCC activists in Ghana). See also J. Lewis and D. Harris, 'The Trip' in C. Carson (ed.), *The Eyes on the Prize Civil Rights Reader: Documents, speeches, and firsthand accounts from the black freedom struggle, 1954–1960* (New York, 1991), 195–200. On Malcom X's visit to Ghana, see Gaines, *op. cit*., 179–209.
[160]Asiedu-Acquah, 'We shall be outspoken', *op. cit*., 179. On the government's repressive action against student leaders, see Asiedu-Acquah, 'And youth are still coming', *op. cit*., 166–70.
[161]'Portrait of Nkrumah as dictator', *New York Times*, 3 May 1964, SM15.
[162]UG Archives, UG1/3/8/4/21, Second annual NUGS congress, 'Resolutions on international affairs', December 1963.

the internationalism of NUGS clashed with Nkrumah's promotion of educational ties with the Eastern bloc, exacerbating the growing tensions between student activists and the regime.

However, Kludze's case also illustrates how internationalism could be a positive argument. Asking for his release, student representatives at the University of Ghana explicitly noted his international work. In a letter to Nkrumah – addressed to him in his capacity as chancellor of the university – they praised Kludze's 'energetic and dedicated leadership', which had helped create the Confederation of West African Students 'as our humble contribution to the realization and consolidation of African Unity'. They also claimed that his 'able representation at many international conferences has earned for Ghana and Africa as a whole an enviable reputation'.[163] Furthermore, students mobilised transnational contacts in appealing to the UK's National Union of Students to take up Kludze's case.[164] After his release from prison, Kludze moved to Britain where he continued his activism and became the first president of the Association of Commonwealth Students.

Conclusion

Kludze's arrest coincided with the temporary prohibition of NUGS, but after the end of Nkrumah's rule in 1966, the reincarnated organisation resumed some of its international activities. In 1967, revelations about the Central Intelligence Agency's covert funding for the ISC struck a terminal blow to the latter's reputation and thus changed the institutional landscape for international student politics.[165] Meanwhile, the domestic political setting resulted in declining government backing for cooperation with socialist countries or involvement in Third World liberation struggles. All this, however, did not diminish the dedication of Ghanaian student activists to one core activity, namely support for travel and international student exchanges, as demonstrated by further travel ventures in the late 1960s and 1970s.

Richard Ivan Jobs has argued that a consideration of 'transnational youth travel enables us to emphasize the horizontal dimensions of integration emerging from social activity, rather than just the vertical dimensions descending from the political activity of diplomats negotiating international

[163]UG Archives, UG1/3/7/4/11A, letter from the officers of the Students' Representative Council, University of Ghana, as well as the presidents of the university's five halls of residence, 'Re. the detention of Mr. A.K.P. Kludze, the deportation of certain lecturers and other matters affecting the University of Ghana', 6 February 1964.
[164]'Ghana students seek help', *The Observer*, 16 February 1964, 2.
[165]For the wider context, see K. Paget, *Patriotic Betrayal: The inside story of the CIA's secret campaign to enrol American students in the crusade against communism* (New Haven, NC, 2015). See also the analysis in the aftermath of the affair: P. Altbach and N.T. Uphoff, *The Student Internationals* (Metuchen, NJ, 1973).

treaties'.[166] While Jobs has focused on Europe and Europeanisation, his observations can be applied to other contexts. At times, the promotion of internationalism 'from above' was more notable for the protests it triggered than for the bonds it fostered. By contrast, this article has highlighted various forms of integration 'from below' – for instance, Ghanaian students forging ties with African students in the face of racist discrimination or participation in international student organisations. The term 'Black internationalism' – rather than Pan-Africanism – proves useful in this context as it encompasses 'histories of intellectual and cultural exchange that extended beyond narrow definitions of political struggle'.[167]

The article has discussed ways in which mobility schemes generated different forms of action. In this respect, it is worth noting Gerardo Serra and Frank Gerits's characterisation of KNII as 'an important node in a series of transnational encounters that, under the veil of adherence to the Nkrumahist revolution, hid very different individual motivations, attributes, and strategies'.[168] Although their comments apply to a specific institution, they could easily describe some of the patterns traced in this article. For instance, in the implementation of Ghana's 'Freedom Fighters' scholarships, ideology was relegated to the background: officials were concerned with practical solutions while the guests themselves were primarily interested in advancing their own education. That said, things could also work the other way round: as Eric Burton has noted, 'pragmatic strategies of seeking access to higher education did not rule out political goals'.[169] Accordingly, the article has stressed the political concerns of internationally mobile students.

As a whole, the interrelated examples from this article show how the actions and experiences of students – both at home and abroad – often challenged official rhetoric, be it American, Soviet or Pan-African. The factors that produced such tensions all had international(ist) dimensions: Ghana's role in a decolonising world, the forging of closer regional ties in West Africa, the appeal of Pan-African principles, and Cold War competition for students as well as enthusiasm for different forms of student-based cooperation.

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[166]R.I. Jobs, *Backpack Ambassadors: How youth travel integrated Europe* (Chicago, IL, 2017), 4.
[167]K. Thurman in 'AHR conversation: Black internationalism', *The American Historical Review*, 125, 5 (2020), 1727.
[168]Serra and Gerits, *op. cit*., 425.
[169]Burton, 'Decolonization', *op. cit*., 190.

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