INTRODUCTION

Watching the World from Ghana

This is not just a change in attitude which denotes an increase in privilege. It is a fundamental change in attitude even to privilege which could have been claimed five years before. It permeates everything Ghanaians do or say. And here one saw the psychological significance of freedom. It does something to a man; it changes the way of seeing the world. It is an experience that is not gained by education or any other form of knowledge. It is not just an instinctive re-evaluation of your place in the world, an attitude that is the result of political action. And again one felt, the full demonstration of human personality which is contained in the word: colonial.

One felt that the West Indian of my generation was truly backward... For he was not only without this experience of freedom won; it was not even a vital force or need in his way of seeing himself and the world which impressed him.

—George Lamming,

The Pleasures of Exile (1960)

The truth of the matter is that for most Negro intellectuals, the integration of the Negro means... the emptying of his life of meaningful content and vitiating him of all Negro identification. For them, integration and eventual assimilation meant the annihilation of the Negro—physically, culturally and spiritually.

—E. Franklin Frazier,

"The Failure of the Negro Intellectual" (1942)

Near midnight on March 5, 1957, Kwame Nkrumah and his senior ministers mounted the platform at the Old Polo Grounds in Accra, greeting along with the thousands assembled the end of British colonial rule and the birth of the new nation of Ghana, its name taken from an ancient West African kingdom. "Everybody was happy," recalled Kurla
Gold Coast successfully / get her independence officially," Kirchner sang over a lilting arrangement that evoked the hybrid rhythms of Caribbean calypso, West African highlife, and African American jazz. Kirchner proudly situated Ghana and Nkrumah within a history of pan-Africanism, reference the mass movement led by Marcus Garvey as well as Ethiopia's Haile Selassie, legendary among peoples of African descent for his resistance to fascist Italy's 1935 invasion and conquest of his nation. A male background chorus sang the name of the new nation in unison as Kirchner supplied the rest of the refrain: "Ghana! Ghana is the name—Ghana! We wish to proclaim—we'll be jolly, merry and gay, on the 6th of March, Independence Day!"

Nkrumah would have approved of the song's evocation of a diasporic community of celebration. With his constant references to Ghana's leadership in the struggle to rid the entire African continent of colonialism, he encouraged the view that Ghana's triumph was to be shared throughout Africa and among peoples of African descent. A year before independence, Nkrumah wrote, "We believe that the constitutional advance of the Gold Coast has a significance far beyond the borders of our own country. It pro-
more and C. L. R. James, both London-based, Trinidad-born pan-Africanist intellectuals; Norman Manley, the future prime minister of Jamaica; Harlem Congressman Adam Clayton Powell; United Nations official and Nobel laureate Ralph Bunche; and Lucille Armstrong, representing her husband, jazz trumpeter and vocalist Louis Armstrong, beloved in Ghana since his visit to the Gold Coast the year before but unable to attend the independence festivities. The list of African American PMGs also included labor leaders A. Philip Randolph and Maida Springer, educators Mordecai Johnson of Howard University and Herace Mann Bond of Lincoln University (the alma mater of Nkrumah and other African leaders), and Martin Luther King Jr., leader of the recent successful bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama. There was, however, a noteworthy absence among the list of black dignitaries from the New World. Widely considered the movement, eighty-nine-year-old W. E. B. Du Bois had been denied a visa by U.S. authorities on the presumption that his leftist views posed a national security risk.

Nkrumah was not the only person overcome by emotion at the raising of the Ghana colors. But while similarly moved by the occasion, the African Americans present, particularly King, also saw in Ghana’s victory reminders of the long, perilous struggle African Americans were waging back in the United States. The poignancy of the moment for African Americans is suggested by a perhaps apocryphal story. During the official festivities, Nixon reportedly asked several bystanders, “How does it feel to be free?”, only to be taken aback at their response: “We wouldn’t know. We’re from Alabama.” While the story of Nixon’s faux pas captures the bittersweet meaning of the occasion for African Americans, it also suggests the impossibility of confining the problem of racial oppression to the United States. On Ghanaian soil, Nixon was compelled to meet with King, who had vainly sought to engage an apathetic Eisenhower administration on the issue of civil rights. The story of Nixon’s failed attempt at small talk with African Americans he had mistaken for Ghanaians points to the transformative significance Ghana’s independence held for black Americans. The fulfillment of Ghanaian and African demands for national independence formed many African Americans’ struggles for equal citizenship. The simultaneous upheavals touched off by decolonization in Africa and civil rights demonstrations in the U.S. South shaped the political outlook of black intellectuals and activists in northern cities. While supportive of black struggles for equality in the Jim Crow South, many northern African Americans remote from the southern desegregation
campaigns also championed the cause of African freedom and called themselves "Afro-American," challenging dominant assumptions that the Negro was primarily, if not exclusively, an American.

For all its euphoria, the moment of independence itself did not constitute unalloyed triumph, and African Americans were not the only people to experience something less than unqualified joy at Ghana's achievement. For Barbadian writer George Lamming, Ghana's achievement provided a barometer by which the prospects for West Indian self-determination—or the lack thereof—could be assessed. As the epigraph to this introduction suggests, Lamming bailed the transformation of Gold Coast colonialism to self-determining Ghanaian citizens as a way of articulating his sense of what was lacking in a Caribbean culture defined by dependency. For Lamming and many others, Ghana's independence did not call for a celebration. In Lamming's eyes, the Ghanaians' self-determination and confidence contrasted painfully with the parochialism of a West Indian culture still enthralled by colonial models and mentalities.

At the height of the civil rights movement, from the late 1950s to 1966, scores of African Americans, including intellectuals, technicians, teachers, artists, professionals, entrepreneurs, and trade unionists, left the United States for Ghana. Ghana was a haven for a range of activists working at the intersection of anticolonial, civil rights, leftist, and pacifist movements. Expatriates and visitors of African and indeed non-African descent were attracted to Ghana by the vision of freedom that Nkrumah voiced incessantly.

How did Ghana become the destination for African Americans and peoples of African descent at the same moment that multitudes of African Americans demanded an end to segregation in the U.S. South? As Ghanaians and others celebrated their newly won independence, many African Americans' discontent at the persistence of institutionalized racism in the North as well as the South found expression in the writings of such commentators as sociologist E. Franklin Frazier.

Frazier, who had studied the effects of urbanization on African Americans in Chicago and elsewhere, viewed racial integration as a poor substitute for the wartime progressive mobilizations for racial and social justice, a movement for equal rights that was vanquished by Cold War repression. Although Frazier did not emigrate to Ghana, his support for African nationalism was inseparable from his indictment of U.S. society during the 1940s. Frazier would have agreed with several recent accounts of the long civil rights movement by Martha Biondi, Robert Korstad, and Matthew Countryman. These studies emphasize the failure of postwar liberalism as they chronicle the rise and fall of wartime national agitation for civil rights that demanded an end to racial discrimination in the workplace, housing, and public accommodations. That wartime movement for integration, focused in northern cities on struggles for equality in housing and the workplace and defined in the South by struggles for voting rights and economic justice, was derailed by federal policies that reinforced residential segregation, Cold War loyalty programs, and the 1946 repeal of the Federal Employment Practices Committee, which had been instituted to oppose discrimination in wartime industries. At war's end, violence against returned black veterans in uniform and the persistence of segregation mocked wartime appeals for victory against Jim Crow at home and fascism abroad. The intensification of racial hostilities on the home front eclipsed wartime efforts to integrate neighborhoods, polling places, unions, and the workplace. As the Cold War came to dominate the nation's domestic politics, the progressive wartime agenda of integration was co-opted by a federal government that promoted racial liberalism as a gradualist and largely symbolic legal and legislative process of racial change managed by the courts, Congress, and policy makers.

To Frazier's dismay, many African American civil rights leaders, politicians, and intellectuals assented to this top-down redefinition of integration bounded by Cold War considerations. This agenda was incapable of addressing the socioeconomic inequalities from which African Americans disproportionately suffered. Equally disturbing to Frazier was that integrationism under Cold War auspices seemed to require that African American citizenship was predicated on the renunciation of an independent group consciousness. Frazier's black popular front sensibility, including support for African anticolonial movements, fueled his impatience at the parochialism of the American scene. For him and other African American radicals, it was not so much a matter of choosing Ghana and Africa over the promise of integration and the U.S. civil rights movement. Rather, Ghana's progressive vision of freedom placed in sharper relief Frazier's critique of postwar American liberalism compromised by antilabor and segregationist reaction and the stifling of dissent. For African Americans, American liberalism failed to practice the freedom it preached.

As historian Nikhil Singh has argued, during the early Cold War years, Frazier and other black American progressives risked official censure by articulating a vision of global democracy as a critical alternative to an American liberalism unwilling to interrogate the racism that belied its universalist claims and aspirations. Frazier remained unperturbed for his associations
were also political exiles but of a different sort. King, a political scientist, was convicted of defying his Georgia draft board after it refused his request to cease the demeaning racist practice of referring to him by his first name only. Facing incarceration on his return to the United States, King remained in exile until he received a presidential pardon in 2000. Like King, Mayfield, a writer, actor and former community activist, did not choose exile in Ghana. That nation was merely the terminus of his flight from a federal marsh, in connection with his involvement with black activists engaged in armed self-defense in North Carolina. However, on their trajectories, the common plight of these dissenters suggested that the U.S. government was more committed to containing black activism than to implementing desegregation and protecting civil liberties.

African American emigration to Ghana (or a general support for African independence) was not an either/or proposition rooted in a rejection of the American nation or the African American freedom movement. Frazier’s critique of American liberalism was shared by such leftist exiles as Du Bois, Houston, and Mayfield as well as by notommunist pacificists Bayard Rustin, Bill Sutherland, and St. Clair Drake, whose support for African independence movements went hand in hand with their advocacy of racial and economic justice in the United States. The perception that African Americans faced an irreconcilable choice between America and Africa—between the U.S.-based civil rights movement and African national independence movements—helped the transnational outlook of such figures as Rustin, Sutherland, and Drake. Indeed, that presumption of a zero-sum “choice” between Africa and America suggests the persistence of the dominant view that the African Negro was strictly American, an assertion whose political intensity was the delegitimization of Afro-diasporic solidarities. In espousing a global democratic and anti-imperialist vision that informed their struggles for justice in the United States and abroad, African American emigrants in Ghana and such renowned figures as Paul Robeson, Lorraine Hansberry, and Malcolm X disputed declarations of their “essential Americanism.” These black radicals refused to accept the Cold War assumption that solidarity with African peoples and their struggles for independence was tantamount to disloyalty. The lingering cloud of official suspicion that plagued African American intellectuals and the depth of resistance to desegregation by southern white political and civic leaders informed attempts by African American civil rights leaders to appropriate the rhetoric of anticolonialism and national security.
for their own purposes. After returning from Ghana's independence festivities, Martin Luther King Jr. navigated the treacherous straits of acceptable African American political expression, downplaying his interest in the transnational pan-African movement and seeking to legitimize his appeal for civil rights as essential to the national interest. King's subsequent decision to rhetorically situate the cause of civil rights within the American dream, muting the implications of his understanding of the socialist political economy of African nationalism, represented no small effort on the part of the African American leadership to which he and others had been refined, linking racism, imperialism, and materialism in its indictment of American foreign policy, he became a pariah from the standpoint of the civil rights establishment and American officialdom.

Whether or not they were literally pushed by the repressive policies of the U.S. state and the apartheid regime of South Africa, many of those who emigrated to Ghana were attracted by the boldness of Kwame Nkrumah's vision of pan-African emancipation. Nkrumah spoke of asserting the "African personality," which meant that Africans would exert military, political, and diplomatic leadership in world affairs and take the initiative in resolving conflicts on the African continent. Ghana served as the political base for Nkrumah's agenda of African union government and West Indian federation. State power in Ghana provided the vehicle for Nkrumah's pursuit of the inter-African political, economic, and military cooperation central to his strategy for the liberation and development of Africa. Ghana was envied among African nations in its willingness to provide sanctuary to black (and nonblack) radicals from the United States, the Caribbean, Africa, and Europe unable to function politically in their countries of origin. For many of these exiles, Nkrumah's leadership gave them a political point of entry and a sense of direction.

Nkrumah reinforced that image by his willingness to provide political asylum for exiled freedom fighters from southern Africa and to extend material and political support to nationalist movements and parties still fighting to oust white minority regimes. While Ghana's appeal to black American radicals was inscrutable to a great extent from their view of an American liberalism distorted by white supremacy, that small nation of some 45 million inspired black intellectuals and leaders across the political spectrum and throughout the black world. In the years 1950s until Nkrumah's overthrow by a military coup in 1966, a number of prominent African Americans and West Indian advisers and heads of state visited or resided in the West African nation, including those mentioned previously as well as Richard Wright; Martinique-born intellectual and activist Frantz Fanon; West Indian economist W. Arthur Lewis; Jamaican novelist Neville Dawes; Trinidad's prime minister, Eric Williams; African American civil rights leader James Farmer; newly crowned heavyweight boxing champion Muhammad Ali; and numerous others.

The story of the African American expatriate community in Nkrumah's Ghana illuminates the challenges and contradictions posed by Cold War liberalism and American hegemony during the 1960s. The American nation's declared support for desegregation, formal equality, and decolonization masked the repression of black radicals. As several scholars have established, the period was defined by comprehensive official attempts at the manipulation of black politics, public culture, and group consciousness, from clandestine Federal Bureau of Investigation surveillance and counterintelligence against black intellectuals and civil rights organizations and leadership to covert government funding of the American Society for African Culture, an organization that fostered dialogue between African American and African intellectuals, to domestic and international propaganda that sought to mitigate the pan-African solidarity pursued by Nkrumah's regime. The African American intelligentsia's forays into African and foreign affairs risked official censure throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Even as such critics as Du Bois and Frazier claimed that the Negro American leadership remained blind to the struggles of African peoples, Ghana's independence, along with the nonaligned movement, fueled a black nationalist awakening among northern urban African American writers, artists, musicians, and activists. Their outspoken condemnations of white supremacy at home and in U.S. policy toward Africa animated the transformed outlook of Malcolm X after his departure from the Nation of Islam. But in response to Malcolm's emergence as a radical voice on African affairs and more cautious attempts by mainstream civil rights leaders to formalize their support for African liberation struggles, U.S. officials discouraged an independent African American perspective on the nation's foreign policy toward Africa. Silencing African American leadership on African and foreign affairs was a major priority, particularly amid the nation's escalating war in Vietnam and continued U.S. political and military support for neocolonial and white minority regimes in central and southern Africa, where the stakes included substantial American financial investments and control of strategic resources. Although black radicals in Ghana represented a small segment of African
American opinion, the potential that their assaults on the legitimacy of U.S. liberalism would spread, whether domestically or internationally to other African nations, led to concerted strategies of containment.

An account of African American expatriates’ engagement with African national liberation struggles and a global nonaligned movement restates the history of the U.S. civil rights movement within one of the most important, if neglected, developments in twentieth-century international politics—that is, the challenge to the bipolar vision of postwar global order posed by the emergence of new African and Asian states. Cold War rivalry with the Soviet Union heightened the significance of racial discrimination against African Americans. The all-too-frequent incidents of antiblack brutality throughout the postwar era imperiled U.S. attempts to secure the allegiance of this global majority of nonwhite nations. Thus, for African Americans to criticize U.S. racism from abroad was certain to provoke an ire response from U.S. officials. U.S. policy makers feared a counter such criticism by sending African American spokespersons and civic officials abroad to defend the nation by asserting that atavistic outbursts of racism were giving way to the essential rectitude and perfection of American institutions.24 When African American radicals and dissenter such as Du Bois, Robeson, and others diverged from the official script, they were accused of disloyalty and their passports were seized, cutting them off from overseas audiences.

Although Du Bois and Robeson were scapegoated, their accusers conflating the two men’s advocacy for African anticolonial movements with their pro-Soviet leanings in a manner that demonized the cause of decolonization (just as segregationists used the Red Scare to discredit demands for civil rights), Cold War anticomunists in and of itself does not explain the disciplining of black American radicals. In Ghana, despite the fact that such advocates of African freedom as Richard Wright and George Padmore were staunch anticomunists, U.S. officials considered these men subversive because of their opposition to American and Western systems of racial and colonial oppression. Frazier’s criticisms notwithstanding, not all African American intellectuals caved in to political pressure. The same can be said of African American expatriates in Ghana, whose presence, while numerically small, points to the broadly contested issue of African American political consciousness during an era of escalating challenges to the legitimacy of U.S. power around the world. During the early 1960s, Ghana provided an independent forum for black American radicals largely unavailable in their country of origin, offering them the opportunity to participate in a transnational culture of opposition to a Western culture seeking the preservation of colonial and neocolonial dominance over the majority of the world’s peoples. Watching the world from the vantage point of Ghana, as did the expatriates and such intellectuals as Frazier and Lamming, these commentators articulated a nationalism resistant to the dictates of both the United States and the Soviet Union. While the parties leading individuals to Ghana varied, these distinct trajectories add up to a larger account of a nascent African diasporic political culture in confrontation with the active engagement of U.S. and Western power in Africa’s affairs from the late 1940s to the 1960s.

The 1950s, as the U.S. federal government embraced desegregation partly to counter international criticism of American racism and as African Americans in the South quickened the pace of their demands for full citizenship, the birth of Ghana along with other emergent African and Asian states led intellectuals of African descent to reflect anew on the relation of black peoples to Western culture. The image of Africans on the march to freedom and modernity, sloughing off almost a century of European colonial rule, energized African American, Caribbean, and African intellectuals, many of whom had recourse to histories of transnational black solidarity and resistance against racial and colonial oppression.

The pan-African movement and its historical precursors informed a lengthening shelf of scholarly and popular writings by blacks on the historical agency of black peoples, anticolonialism, and the varieties of systemic racial discrimination around the world.25 These writings comprised a collective assessment of the place of peoples of African descent in Western culture. At such international meetings as the First World Congress of Negro Writers and Artists, held in Paris in 1956, African and African diaspora intellectuals articulated demands for political and cultural emancipation, elucidating the transformation of colonial subjects to self-determining citizens. Energized by the watershed moment linking Ghana’s independence and African freedom, the decline of European empires, and the rise of African America’s demands for equality in the postwar world, these writers built on the work of their predecessors. Ralph Ellison, speaking of Richard Wright, aptly characterized their shared project as the dual endeavor of depicting the meaning of black experience while disclosing to blacks and whites the psychological and emotional problems that arise between the two groups when they strive for mutual understanding. Ellison and Wright anticipated and shared the work of Frazier, Lamming, and such contemporaries as Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, and other writers of African descent: articulating the racialized condition of black and African peoples in Western culture with the ultimate

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objective of democratizing Western and metropolitan cultures through the exposure and eradication of racist and colonial habits of thinking. As civil rights leaders, activists, and their supporters in the United States struggled to maintain hope against violence and resistance and faced a federal government hesitant to enforce and implement desegregation measures, black radicals in Ghana, in tandem with their allies in the United States, articulated criticisms of American liberalism that could not be articulated within black movement circles in the United States. Black American expatriates in Ghana occupied a front-row seat for the consolidation of U.S. neocolonial influence on the continent, a process that was perhaps facilitated by the American nation's halting progress toward racial integration and formal equality. By contrasting an American officialdom's intent on manipulating black political expression, the expatriates engaged in a struggle over the meaning and content of the American citizenship being extended to African Americans. For African American radicals in Ghana and their state-side allies, the official project of integration was deeply flawed insofar as it demanded conformity to an America whose undemocratic policies at home and abroad had, in their view, undermined the nation's legitimacy. Although the expatriates raved in the utopian and revolutionary potential of Nkrumah's Ghana, their sojourn was clouded by the tension between their radical hopes and the imperatives of a Ghanaian state whose stability and survival came increasingly under siege by internal and external opposition. From 1961 on, Nkrumah relied heavily on his senior ministers and leftist expatriate sympathizers to promote his socialist and anti-imperialist objectives and to counter U.S. efforts to blunt the African continent with propa
ganda asserting progress in U.S. black-white race relations. The Ghana gov
ernment and its ruling Convention People's Party (CPP), like any political organization, contained progressive and conservative factions, a conflict that increasingly found expression in the tension between states and pan-
African goals. Expediency and compromise defined Nkrumah's relation
ship to the CPP and its conservative elements. He relied on patronage to secure the allegiance of Ghanaian professionals and chiefs and tolerated opportunism and corruption on the part of ministers and party loyalists. Younger leftists within the Ghana government were the closest allies of the African American expatriates. In addition to promoting Nkrumah's political goals, including African unity, nuclear disarmament, an all-African military force, and the government's economic development policy, the expatriates and their Ghanaian allies espoused a militant anti-American agenda that occasionally clashed with Nkrumah's pragmatic objectives. These tensions surfaced most prominently with Nkrumah's reluctance to lend official sanction to the visit of Malcolm X, who had come to Ghana at the behest of the African American expatriates.

For Nkrumah, positive nonalignment in practice meant playing the superpower rivals against each other, just as he found it necessary to mediate between rival political factions in his party, taking sides as the political situation warranted. Such a delicate balancing act was vital, for Nkrumah both faced the limitations of the CPP and issued his powerful ideological challenge to the West from a weak strategic position. Ghana had little of strategic or military value to offer to the West. Moreover, Ghana remained dependent on foreign investments for its industrial development and the expansion of its infrastructure. The pilgrimage of radicals and progressives to Ghana was more than matched by the migration of foreign business executives and investors seeking to capitalize on the new nation's promises of development. The centerpiece of Ghana's plan for industrialization was the Volta River project, a hydroelectric dam that British colonial officials had ini
tially proposed but that Nkrumah championed on symbolic as well as prag
matic grounds. The dam would provide the power necessary for the nation's fledgling industries, and Ghana planned to sell electricity to its neighbors, illuminating the region. Just as important, the Volta River project would demonstrate Ghana's rapid progress in emulating the West's large-scale industrial might and modernity. Yet Ghana's lack of bargaining power and Nkrumah's attachment to the symbolism of the project ultimately worked to the exclusive benefit of the American-based Kaiser Corporation, which had imposed on Ghana neocolonial terms and conditions that mocked Nku
mah's initial vision of economic development. Ghana's other partner in the Volta River project, the U.S. government, rationalized its support on the likelihood that the Soviet Union would gain a crucial foothold by providing financial and technical assistance if the United States did not. Nkrumah's strongest hand may have been playing the superpowers against each other, but this strategy subjected Ghana and its leaders to intense political and diplomatic pressures.

The contradictions and vulnerabilities of the regime humpered the Afri
can American expatriates who had envisioned themselves in partnership with Nkrumah. Even as they shared Nkrumah's revolutionary aims, some may have perceived in Ghana a vivid manifestation of the bourgeois na
tionalism that Frantz Fanon condemned in The Wretched of the Earth, much of which he wrote while in Ghana immediately after the debacle of the Congo Crisis. As early as 1960, Fanon and C. L. R. James understood that...
emergence of Ghana. Chapter 1 considers the interwoven diasporic and anti-colonial routes of passage that influenced the political formation of pan-African nationalist leaders and intellectuals, including Kwame Nkrumah, George Padmore, and St. Clair Drake. The intertwined formations and movements of international communism, Garveyism, and pacifism, the cosmopolitan spaces of African American colleges, and wartime social and political ferment all helped align the struggle against segregation in the United States with the African political renaissance of nationalism and anticolonialism. These converging tributaries of political formation brought these and other individuals from the United States, the West Indies, and the African continent together within Gold Coast nationalism and independence.

Ghana. Chapter 2 situates Richard Wright’s travel narrative on nationalism in the Gold Coast, Black Power (1954), within the broader phenomenon of the anticolonial critique of Western culture of such black intellectuals as George Lamming and E. Franklin Frazier. Chapter 3 examines the moment of Ghana’s independence and its impact on Martin Luther King Jr., whose exposure to a wider world of transnational anticolonial radicalism was mediated by the imperatives of the Cold War understanding of civil rights as a national security imperative. The chapter also chronicles Ghana’s post-independence projections of what Nkrumah and other contemporaries termed the African personality as exemplified by such initiatives as the All African People’s Conference (1958) and Ghana’s sponsorship of the protest campaign against French nuclear testing in the Sahara (1959). Such expatriate and visitors as Padmore, Drake, Bill Sutherland, and Bayard Rustin were instrumental in these attempts to assert the African personality. The chapter concludes with the death of Padmore, Nkrumah’s adviser and confidante.

The second part of this book examines the deepening confrontation between Ghana and the West led by the United States. Chapter 4 marks a pivotal juncture, focusing on the short-lived expatriate status of African American civil rights attorney Pauli Murray, whose time in Ghana was complicated by the Congo Crisis (1960) and by Nkrumah’s political offensive against opposition attempts to destabilize the Ghanaian government. This chapter marks a turning point in the relationship between Ghana and the United States, as 1960 was widely heralded as the Year of Africa, when the prospect of more than thirty nations achieving independence sparked widespread expectations of peaceful political change on the continent. But such hopes of an orderly transition were dashed by secessionist threats to the independent Congo and the assassination of its democratically elected leader, Patrice Lumumba. African American outrage at Lumumba’s death was followed by
journalistic assertions debunking solidarity between African Americans and Africans as illusory, a discourse Murray played an inadvertent though hardly insignificant role in formulating.

The Congo Crisis abruptly curtailed the idealism fueled by liberatory struggles and hopes for peaceful political change. It also marked Nkrumah's shift from a pro-Western and American stance to open appeals for assistance from the Soviet bloc in addition to the ongoing appeals for U.S. aid. The period also saw Nkrumah's use of increasingly autocratic power to banish his opposition from the processes of parliamentary government. To counter U.S. propaganda and the conservatism of the Ghanaian elite, Nkrumah relied increasingly on leftist sympathizers from America, the West Indies, and other parts of the African continent in tandem with Ghanaian officials to promote his independent ideological blueprint for socialist transformation and development (Nkrumahism). The arrival of W. E. B. and Shirley Graham Du Bois in Ghana helped attract such black leftist as A. Philip Randolph, Julian Mayfield, Victoria Garvin, and others. Chapter 5 surveys this development, focusing on the arrival in Ghana of Mayfield, whose political activism hastened his flight from the United States.

With the ouster of Malcolm X from the Nation of Islam in 1964, the militant Muslim leader was free to pursue the activism and radical internationalism that had been somewhat demeaned as the Nation of Islam's national spokesman. Chapter 6 concerns Malcolm's visit to Ghana as part of his extensive tour of Africa and the Middle East. Invited by Mayfield to update African American expatriates on the accelerating struggle back in America, Malcolm welcomed the company of like-minded Afro-Americans and sought to transcend the constraints and limitations of the U.S. movement by soliciting African governments' political support for the 22 million African Americans, including those brutalized in the South for demanding full citizenship. Malcolm's visit exposed the tensions between his and the expatriates' pan-African radicalism and a Ghanaian state wary of further antagonizing the United States by openly endorsing the controversial Muslim leader. Malcolm's visit energized Nkrumah to anticipate a new tendency in the U.S. black movement that reflected their radical internationalism. Such hopes would be all but dashed by Malcolm's assassination in February 1965.

Chapter 7 explores the tensions leading up to Nkrumah's ouster in 1966. As Nkrumah faced a host of challenges to his government, African American expatriate高等学校 found themselves subject to the vicissitudes of Ghanaian politics. With the regime weakened by corruption and declining revenues from a precipitous decline in the price of cocoa, Ghana's main source of foreign exchange, Mayfield, although disillusioned by these developments and by Malcolm's death, soldiered on as editor of the African Review, a journal of political economy that represented the major intellectual artifact of the black expatriate presence in Ghana. As Nkrumah pushed for an African union government and threatened to deploy Ghanaian troops in the fight against colonialism in southern Africa, conspirators in the police and army plotted his overthrow. Ironically, by driving his opposition underground or into exile, Nkrumah left political violence as the only means of challenge to his rule. While warning signs had been evident, Nkrumah's ouster while on a peace mission to North Vietnam dealt a devastating blow to the revolutionary hopes of Mayfield and other expatriates. The depth and intensity of their support for Nkrumah and their commitment to an emancipatory African politics led them to engage in soul-searching and painful criticism of what had gone wrong.

The concluding chapters consider the aftermath of the coup and the legacies of the black expatriates' experiences in Ghana. Chapter 8 discusses the post-Ghana careers of Nkrumah, Mayfield, Drake, and others. Chapter 8 and the epilogue consider the transnational dimension of African American citizenship through the legacy of Nkrumah's pan-African project and through the lens of the contemporary memory of the slave trade.

This book builds on recent scholarship that has reframed the study of U.S. race relations and the civil rights movement within an international perspective. It also builds on an important body of scholarship on transnational black politics and radicalism. But while much of this valuable work has taken the form of literary, intellectual, or cultural histories that have illuminated transnational routes of migration, communication, intellectual and cultural production, and movement activism, American Africans in Ghana analyzes how transnational black subjectivities inspired by Ghana and African struggles for national independence sparked political contests in both the United States and Africa over the image of the African American nation and the formation of modern black and African subjects. What is most at stake in this study is not so much the image or legacy of Nkrumah himself or the extent to which the expatriates succeeded or failed to integrate themselves into Ghanaian life and culture. While these are important issues, what is most significant about the story of black expatriates in Ghana is their involvement in a transnational political struggle waged both within and beyond the boundaries of the United States over the content and parameters of African American citizenship and consciousness, which, at the nexus of U.S. and African freedom struggles and during the Cold War, had profound consequences for
U.S. domestic and foreign policy makers. Citizenship, as Frederick Cooper reminds us, is a dynamic concept, whose meanings are not intrinsic to the construct but are shaped in political, social, and cultural debate and confrontation." This understanding of citizenship informs my account of how the political struggle over the meaning of African American citizenship was informed not solely within the national terrain of the civil rights movement but by global issues of nonalignment, the Cold War, anticolonialism, and African decolonization. If Nkrumah is remembered at all, it is primarily as an icon of anti-imperialist resistance by those of the global South and their allies engaged in contemporary struggles against Western hegemony and militarism. He, his times, and the struggle over African American consciousness that he inspired have been largely airbrushed from public memory. Who remembers Nkrumah and the "African personality" or recalls the images of African diplomats holding forth at the United Nations when African Americans were still violently barred from voting throughout the South? Perhaps such memories still stir within a few Americans of a certain age. It is as if the appearance of new African nations on the world stage never happened.

Of course, fragments persist, remnants of this largely forgotten history. But such artifacts often fail to convey the intensity of the moment and the passions that generated them. Some sense of that period can be retrieved from microfilms of major newspapers or gleaned inadvertently from the dusty shelves of used bookstores or library stacks. As with the handful of surviving veterans of a war concluded generations ago, only a dwindling few can testify to the depths of joy, admiration, and hatred generated by Nkrumah and Ghana or even Martin Luther King Jr.

Two examples of inscribed texts from the period will suffice in recalling the passions of that era. My personal copy of Nkrumah's autobiography is inscribed by the author to John Wesley Dobbs, an African American civic leader from Atlanta. Dobbs attended the Ghanaian independence ceremonies, and his heavily underlined copy bespeaks an avid interest in Ghana and Africa (which consisted of an equal commitment to the cause of desegregation). The book contains several inlaid sheets of paper with jottings reflecting that interest, perhaps written after a personal interview with Nkrumah, including the statement, "they never had government[ed] by outsiders—to walk, crawl." Contrast this with a copy of a sympathetic political biography of Nkrumah by British journalist Douglas Rogers located in the Harvard Firestone Library at Princeton University. On the title page, near the author's name, is written an
vision of black modernity and the prominence of Africa in global affairs it symbolized, and the hope and enthusiasm it inspired. Today, it is a commonplace in the West that Nkrumah undermined his own cause and helped obliterate that memory with his own mistakes and authoritarian rule. While Nkrumah is hardly blameless, I believe that such a focus on his flaws merely rehashes the vilification of his leadership while he was in power. At a deeper level, such condemnations of Nkrumah, while pro-American dictators—euphemistically referred to as "strongmen"—such as Mobutu Seke Soko of Zaire were absolved of their criminal theft and brutality as long as political expediency was served, suggest an underlying contempt for African liberation. This preoccupation with flawed "charismatic" African leadership obscures the independent challenge waged by new Asian and African states to the bipolar Cold War vision of global order. The era of the Afro-Asian nonaligned project and the vanishing of its revolutionary aspirations by the dominant Cold War paradigm is not just a matter of historiographic neglect. Both U.S. policy makers and subsequent Americanist historians of the postwar era have been ill served by their willingness to subordinate the interests of a majority of the world's peoples to bipolar Cold War strategic rivalries and frameworks. These failures of political vision and historical imagination have had dire potential consequences for national and global security.

The story of the destruction of Ghana's radical vision is more than an account of the destruction of the radical hopes of Ghana's sympathizers. It is also ultimately the story of the hollow triumph of American hegemony during and after the Cold War. Such an engagement with the unfulfilled aspirations of the formerly colonized world helps us understand what is obscured by predictable denunciations of Nkrumah: the sense of optimism and resolve with which many black radicals, Ghanaisans, and former colonials elsewhere surveyed the world and sought meaningful change. Their belief that the world's oppressed peoples could fulfill their human potential helped define an era that is dismissed or forgotten at our peril. The neglect of this history virtually abounds us to the cynicism of a U.S. foreign policy locked in the unsustainable pursuit of a neoimperial military crusade against fundamentalist extremists whom the United States once supported as part of its misguided and cynical Cold War containment policies and proxy wars and who now ominously occupy the political vacuum created by U.S. policies' removal of secular nationalist governments. Within the space of two generations, we have seen the chilling transmutation of the former colonized world's dreams of freedom and modernity, their memory now eclipsed by
had concept for the new self-consciousness of American blacks, which he felt was driving misguided pro-African policies. "Though few of them had ever been to Africa or even thought much about it, sociologists and social workers were busily urging black Americans to seek 'identity' by attention to their African roots." This was a mistake, not only "politically distracting" but also a "cruel" joke on black Americans, who were "after all, American, and their problem was to cope effectively in American society."*90

Tally's remarks reveal a remarkable snapshot of the liberal ideology that held sway among U.S. officials. One might begin with his assertion that blacks could "cope effectively in American society" only as Americans, implying that ethnic consciousness posed a disadvantage toward that end. One is tempted to argue to the contrary, that ethnic consciousness has been and remains a crucial resource of mobility for many groups in American society, including African Americans. Then there is Bull's paternalistic claim that black Americans' identification with Africa was instigated by experts from the academy and the helping professions. That assertion evokes the widespread speculation in public discourse on the sources of black activism during the early 1960s, speculation that often revealed an inability to imagine an independent political tradition and historical understanding of group interests among black Americans independent of external organization.

Paradoxically, then, despite its adherence to color-blind ideals in its anti-discrimination agenda, U.S. officials and its media auxiliaries arrogated to themselves the role of prescribings normative Negro American civic identities, seeking to delegitimze and discourage transnational solidarities for black Americans. The official opposition to an African American citizenship and activism guided by solidarities with black and African peoples epitomized the racially circumscribed nature of the citizenship extended to African Americans during the 1960s.

The story of the expatriates' presence in Ghana thus sheds revealing light on an articulation of American liberal ideology that, far from being a neutral abstraction, was formulated in direct response to an oppositional black politics skeptical of integration and anitiated by anticolonialism. Nkrumah's global leadership from Ghana of a radical anticolonial movement inspired many African Americans to assert a global citizenship in solidarity with African liberation struggles. Nkrumah provided a haven and a platform for African American radicals silenced by the combined repressive forces of the Cold War and Jim Crow segregation. While their numbers were by no means large, their experience suggests that restrictions on black political expression were far more pervasive than is suggested by the fate of such
proscribed individuals as Robeson and Du Bois. Even as it focused its concern on a minority of African Americans, the U.S. government's interest in curbing this particular form of black political and activist expression provided a revealing glimpse at the extent to which dominant American citizenship and liberal ideology were, in fact, racially inflected, marked by the suppression of independent black solidarities. This history belies the claims of some scholars who assert that the United States had an exemplary civic national culture into which African Americans ought to have sought integration.21 That assumption drastically underestimates the extent of massive resistance in the South and institutionalized racism in the North, factors that led to a significant number of African Americans to resist the rhetoric of integration. Some of them found greater possibilities and hope for a truly desegregated existence in Nkrumah’s Ghana.

As a beacon for the black world’s liberatory aspirations and a political sanctuary for exiles from American and colonial racial oppression, Ghana was the product of generations of struggle waged from the margins of segregated black institutions and global radical and anticolonial movements. The political awakening that united peoples of African descent within anticolonial and antiracist movements throughout the twentieth century is the subject of the next chapter.

I

MAPPING THE ROUTES TO GHANA

Black Modernity, Subjecthood, and Demands for Full Citizenship

Six years before Ghana’s independence, a biographical account of George Padmore published by a radical West Indian newspaper illustrated the convergence of multiple histories of slavery and colonization in the life and career of the journalist and leading publicist of African anticolonial movements. Born in Trinidad, educated in African American universities, based in London, and now, as the article reported, bound for the Gold Coast colony to assist the nationalist movement there, Padmore symbolized a renascent black world overcoming the fragmentation of enslavement. On this occasion, the narrative of Padmore’s life story consciously evoked the shared historical origins of peoples of African descent residing in the United States, Brazil, Latin America, and the West Indies whose genesis could be traced to what had been known as the Slave Coast of West Africa. According to this account by L. H. A. Scotland, Padmore’s great-grandfather had been an Ashanti warrior who was taken prisoner and sold into slavery on Barbados, where his grandfather had labored on a sugar plantation. The genealogy of Padmore’s slave origins reminded readers of the metropolitan foundations of slavery and colonization. Duly noting the slave-owning origins of members of British royalty and nobility, Scotland laid waste to the mystique of primordial Englishness and royalty. The sugar plantation on which Padmore’s grandfather toiled was “owned by the ancestors of the present Earl of Harewood, the son of the Princess Royal, sister of King George VI.” Padmore’s grandfather had migrated to Trinidad after the abolition of slavery in 1834, working