

Opening the Semi-Periphery: Hungary and Decolonisation

Research Report for the Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives

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Zoltán Ginelli

Introduction

The research conducted at Open Society Archives (OSA) looked at how the turbulent period between WWII and the early Cold War era changed the relations between Eastern Europe and colonial regions in the context of decolonization. The project raises the question of how and why Eastern Bloc semi-peripheral states, specifically Hungary, opened towards decolonizing states and maneuvered their foreign economic relations in the geopolitical context of the early Cold War.¹ For the sake of this report, my aim here is to present my initial findings reinforced by OSA materials in the form of a working paper, which focuses on a part of this wider project, namely the evolving relations between Hungary and newly independent West African states, particularly Ghana. My decision to narrow the analysis to the case study of Ghana was manifold. It was the first “Black African” and West African country to gain independence (1957) after a long process of political struggle and negotiation.² It was also the wealthiest region on the West Coast, and its first president, Kwame Nkrumah rose as an ambitious leader of great international recognition who not only directed Ghana on the road to modernization, but was also the key driver of Pan-Africanism. Nkrumah’s Ghana was a strong advocate of the Non-Aligned Movement, which aimed to foster decolonization and horizontal relations between “Third World” countries, and the African country used this intermediary position to open towards socialist countries in order to loosen its Western dependency. In turn, countries of the socialist Eastern Bloc strove to build relations with Ghana partly due to Soviet expansionist politics in “Third World,” but more importantly because of their individual interests in gaining trade benefits and better positions in the world economy (direct access to raw materials and foreign currency), and developing internal and international legitimacy through advantageous bartering positions,

¹ The detailed summary of my research project is available on my personal blog: <https://kritikaifoldrajz.hu/2017/04/27/opening-the-semi-periphery-decolonisation-and-socialist-hungary>. Another overlapping project, prepared for an application to University College London, is also available online: <https://kritikaifoldrajz.hu/2017/02/25/speaking-from-the-semi-periphery-decolonizing-geographical-knowledge-production-in-socialist-hungary-1960s-and-1980s>.

² The chronological list of decolonized African states is as follows: Libya 1951, Eritrea 1952, Morocco 1956, Sudan 1956, Tunisia 1956, Ghana 1957, Guinea 1958, Burkina Faso 1960, Cameroon 1960, Central African Republic 1960, Chad 1960, Congo 1960, Cote D’Ivoire 1960, Gabon 1960, Madagascar 1960, Mali 1960, Mauritania 1960, Niger 1960, Nigeria 1960, Senegal 1960, Somalia 1960, Sierra Leone 1961, Tanganyika (Tanzania) 1961, Algeria 1962, Burundi 1962, Rwanda 1962, Uganda 1962, Kenya 1963, Zanzibar 1963, Malawi 1964, Zambia 1964, Gambia 1965, Botswana 1966, Lesotho 1966, Swaziland 1968, Guinea-Bissau 1974.

national prestige, and anti-colonialist ideological discourse. In this geopolitical context, Nkrumah consciously maneuvered between “East” and “West,” and Ghana could be conceptualized as a prime site of organizing transnational networks, and a development laboratory for an emerging global arena of development advocacy experts. In light of this, my research looks at how Hungarian contacts, negotiations, and political discourse of decolonization developed with West African countries, specifically Ghana, and how Cold War tensions, Eastern European semi-peripheral ambitions, and African peripheral development trajectories played out in intensive international maneuvering. This concrete case study presents how the Ghanaian relationship summoned the development advocacy of József Bognár in drafting the country’s First Seven-Year Plan, and how this led to establishing the Center for Afro-Asian Research, a think tank of the Hungarian Foreign Ministry and a Hungarian hub of global development knowledge and development advocacy for “underdeveloped countries” in the “Third World.”

This research was designed to supplement materials already collected from numerous archives and interviews. The interviews consist of the former staff of the Center for Afro-Asian Research (1963/5–1973, CAAR), later known as the Institute of World Economy (IWE) at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (HAS). Materials on this institution were collected from the HAS Archives and several libraries, while materials on foreign economic and diplomatic relations were retrieved from the Hungarian National Archives at Lángliliom utca. Due to the closure of the national archives in the castle area at Hess András tér in June 2016, the most important materials for this research, specifically of the Ministry of Foreign Trade, are yet inaccessible. The OSA materials supplement these in the following ways: first, they provide a media coverage of relevant events; second, offer an insight into the Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute’s (RLRI) monitoring work, research, and information flow; and third, enable the progress of the research project in spite of the inaccessibility to core materials. After the processing of materials, a comparison will be possible of RLRI’s research and official Foreign Ministry materials in order to evaluate Western positions regarding the foreign economic maneuvering of Hungary and other Eastern Bloc countries in the “Third World.” Materials were collected on trade and diplomatic relations between socialist Eastern European countries and decolonized “Third World” countries in Africa and Asia between the end of the 1950s and the 1970s, on Hungary’s participation in international conferences (such as of the United Nations), and also biographical and interview materials on key representatives. Apart from this concrete research project, other supplementary projects included collecting materials on the GATT negotiations of Hungary, and on Hungarian relations with Chile, especially in light of Salvador Allende’s socialist political regime. An additional body of literature was retrieved in connection with my PhD project, focusing on Sovietization, Soviet and Western exploitation of German and Eastern European resources, science and technology, and technology transfer between “East” and “West” under the Cold War.

Eastern Europe, decolonization, and the rise of Nkrumah

With the destabilization of imperial hegemony structures due to WWII, the turbulent period of the 1950s was the global scene of intense colonial power struggles.³ Unfortunately, due to the Soviet communist hegemonic breach into the European scene and the trauma of WWII, the previous global colonial and imperialist ties of Eastern Europe, including Hungary, were forgotten. Although postwar developmentism and modernizationism, the world economic boom leading to *détente*, anti-imperialist solidarity and communist-internationalist ideology led to expanding relations with postcolonial countries from the early 1960s, the Euro-Atlantic and neoliberal hegemonic shift during the 1980s and the system change of European socialist countries in 1989/91 resulted in turning away from the former “Third World,” and thus concealed not only previous connections, but also the long-term continuities between prewar and postwar post/colonial relations and dependency structures. A good example of local amnesia is the fetishizing of the 1956 revolution by the rivaling discourses of anti-communist political elites in order to legitimize their visions of democratic change, which greatly contributed to white-washing much of the 1950s global context,⁴ including the Kádárist shift from autarchic Stalinism to opening up foreign relations from the fear of isolation due to the international condemnation of 1956.⁵ Today, the dominant public and academic discourse prevailing in Hungary and fellow Eastern European countries is that we had no colonial and imperial history, thus any kind of global solidarity or responsibility towards postcolonial states is neglected, while political discourses “localize” global processes (e.g. global economic crisis, global migration crisis) through either “liberal” European integration or “illiberal” neo-nationalist sentiments. All these processes have inevitably led to the prevalence of Eurocentric or Westcentric assumptions and the simultaneous disregarding of previously accumulated global knowledge in development studies, international relations, area studies, postcolonial theory, world-systems analysis, etc., which could form the basis of global comparative analyses of Hungarian development.⁶ Thus the transnational history of Eastern European connections to decolonization, or in other words, the connections between the “Second World” and the “Third World,” remains a field largely undiscovered, and calls for countering present Eurocentric narratives in order to reveal the global economic integration and long-term development of Hungary and other Eastern European countries.

After WWII, due to the strong protectionism of Western countries including trade and technology embargos, most of the historical trade partners of Eastern

³ See Melegh (2015).

⁴ Fink et al. (2006) and Melegh (2015).

⁵ Péteri (2012), Mark and Apor (2015), cf. Éber et al. (2014). I have collected materials of the changing international opinions and negotiations of the Hungarian revolution in 1956, and supplemented it with the OSA materials retrieved by Gábor Danyi.

⁶ For an overview of the origins and development of Polish and Hungarian African studies, see e.g. Czernichowsky et al. (2012) and Biernaczky (2014).

European countries in the prewar period (e.g. Germany) were partially blocked, and they had to find additional markets for exports, while simultaneously finance their indebtedness and technological development with foreign currency. Due to decolonization, a viable option was to approach newly independent postcolonial states in order to bypass Western dealers and access raw materials directly (reducing foreign currency spending), since most of the trade went through Western, predominantly British and French, transmitter companies. However, most trade with “developing countries” proved not to be so profitable due to their low financial reserves and bartering capabilities because of the generally strong demand on foreign currency. Nevertheless, “Third World” countries remained an important channel through which Western currency could be acquired due to postcolonial relations (most former colonies maintained the currencies of their imperial countries), and thus anticipated Eastern Bloc countries to develop long-term strategic relationships with their regimes.⁷ Equally important for Eastern European countries was the symbolic and political benefits of legitimating their own local regimes by diplomatic prestige-building, exporting their own models of development and expertise, a sense of civilizational superiority in disseminating socialist humanist principles through solidarity, and reinforcing a common enemy through anti-imperialist struggle.

Due to the significant international exposure of the West African country in the early Cold War period, the international literature on the Ghanaian story and the figure of Kwame Nkrumah is vast, but today in Hungary this history is practically unknown.⁸ In international scholarship, detailed research studies based on archival literature documenting infrastructural development and international knowledge exchange have emerged only in the past decade. Much more analysis focused on political theory, as Pan-Africanism put Ghana in the forefront of African affairs, while “Nkrumahism” became identical with Pan-Africanism, but dictatorship. From Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah traveled to attend Lincoln University in the USA, a university open only for “people of color,” and here racial discrimination left a mark on his views. He was also influenced by the American civil rights activist of Jamaican origin, Marcus Garvey (1887–1940), the founder of the “Return to Africa” movement, and a strong proponent of black freedom and Rastafarianism. Another important influence was George Padmore, the radical black civil rights activist from Trinidad, who became his closest advisor after Ghana’s independence, until his death in 1959.⁹ Nkrumah was a great admirer of and even spoke to W. du Bois, and as a social thinker he drew on both Marx and Weber, at one point admitting to be a “Marxist socialist.” In 1945 in Manchester (UK), he participated in the 5th Pan-African Congress to celebrate the struggle of freedom for Africa. In Ghana, he opted for progressive

⁷ Gárdos Emil (1961): Magyar gyárak Ghanában. *Külkereskedelmi Szemle*, július-augusztus. 33–35. HU OSA 300-40-1: 713.

⁸ See e.g. Botwe-Asamoah (2005), Poe (2003). The biography of Nkrumah has recently been covered by Gábor Búr (2009). Interestingly, the author misses out the Hungarian connections to Ghana’s First Seven-Year Plan. See also the short overview of Hungarian African studies by Biernaczky (2014).

⁹ See Padmore (1956). George Padmore’s Pan-Africanism was a historical alternative of communism, although remained a Marxist but anti-Russian.

reforms, such as voting rights for women, and established the Convention People's Party (CPP) in June 1949. Colonial powers regarded African colonies as the base of their postwar reconstruction, in this case British after losing India in 1947. The strikes in the end of January paralyzed the colony, Nkrumah and almost 200 representatives of the CPP were arrested, but while in prison he won the local governmental elections, and was released. Ghana was steadily converted into a "dominium," which was consequently granted to other colonies (Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Gambia). But through his political efforts with the CPP, in 6th March 1957 Ghana gained independence as a republic, becoming the first Black African country to be free, and Nkrumah the first black African prime minister. But after gaining independence, in order to secure the political legitimacy of the huge investments in Ghana's modernization project, Nkrumah gradually created an authoritarian dictatorship based on his personal cult, later explicitly aiming to build a one-party state, a "people's parliamentary democracy," and a centralized state economy.

From the perspective of world economic development and global development hierarchies, the story of decolonized Ghana is interesting because it presented a potential model for other countries on the global periphery (especially in Africa), as under Nkrumah's political guidance it aimed to ambitiously integrate into the international scene to raise its bargaining power in the Cold War conflict in order to "take off" and modernize. Independence provided Nkrumah to negotiate in a far better position development deals with the UK, the USA, and the World Bank, such as the most crucial element of his modernization project, the building of a huge hydroelectric plant in the Volta River Project (VRP). Ghana already joined the 13th Session of the UN General Assembly in September 1957 as a sovereign independent state, which gave opportunity to develop contacts with the USA, Canada, India, the Soviet Union, and Eastern European countries. Ghana's active presence and prestige at the UN was shown by that Alex Quaison-Sackey was elected president of the General Assembly for the 1964–1965 term.¹⁰ In 1961, Nkrumah joined the Non-Aligned Movement together with countries such as India, Egypt, Yugoslavia, and a range of African and Asian countries, and his politics of "positive neutralism" aimed not to involve African countries into the Cold War, but to pragmatically develop relations with countries on both sides of the global conflict.¹¹ In order to distance Ghana from the West (UK and USA), he gradually developed a flexible and pragmatic concept of socialism, more attached to local tradition and culture, against universalist Soviet socialism by combining Marxism and African nationalism. But

¹⁰ The RLRI reported in an encrypted message about the personal conflicts between Quaison-Sackey, first ambassador of Ghana, and president Nkrumah in the context of the former's trip to Eastern Europe (Romania, Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia) in May 1965. Quaison-Sackey's lecture tour in the UN and the latter trip was to extend his diplomatic prestige against Nkrumah's curtailing of his powers in the context of the president's rising unpopularity. This incident shows some of the power struggles of individual actors behind formal diplomatic arrangements. HU OSA 298-1-2-34-1559. NYC-35 May Crypto Message, 7 May 1965.

¹¹ See Nkrumah (1961: 143). Today, except for South Sudan, every African country is a member of the Non-Aligned Movement.

due to the huge investment needs of his ambitious modernization project, the fate of Ghana remained strongly tied to Western interests.

Nkrumah's growing dissatisfaction with the West materialized gradually during the first years of independence. The turn of tide in Soviet support came with the Congo crisis (1960–1965; Belgian Congo declared independence on 30 June 1960), a truly nasty scene of decolonization. Nkrumah pulled away from the West due to the American government's alleged involvement in assassinating Congo's Prime Minister, Patrice Lumumba in 1961, who called for the support of the Soviet Union amidst civil war. With Soviet aid, Nkrumah invested troops and prestige in the Congo crisis, while Western powers supported his opponents there. Nkrumah argued at the extraordinary UN session in 1960 for a Congo policy based on African (Ghanaian) interests, and Khrushchev in turn removed Congo from the Cold War arena. Meanwhile, in the early years of Ghanaian independence, failing development policies based on Western advisors opened the scene for Tawia Adamafio, a former leader of the National Association of Socialist Students Organizations, and a self-proclaimed supporter of the Soviet Union, who was appointed general secretary of the CPP in June 1959.¹² Due to Adamafio, the CPP became radically socialist, and consequently the government shifted towards the Soviet Union. Nkrumah gave the Dawn Broadcast on 8 April, in which he promised to weed out pro-capitalist corruption in CPP and purge its conservative wing. Between July and September 1961, Nkrumah visited the Soviet Union, Eastern Bloc and China with a large delegation, that included most of the CPP's left wing, and convinced Nkrumah to adapt scientific socialism.¹³ He believed that the Soviet model of bringing together a large number of various ethnic groups could be used as a model for a Pan-African Federation of socialist republics: "the 'Leninization' or the combination of anti-imperialism and the Soviet model of nationalism in his future vision of Africa."¹⁴

But Soviet relations with Ghana developed much earlier. The Russian interest in the Pan-African drive in Sub-Saharan Africa coincided with the expanding radicalism of the Ghanaian regime, while Soviet foreign policy became more pragmatic in this era. Thompson divides the development of Soviet and Eastern Bloc foreign relations with Ghana into three phases: probing in 1957–1960, the tipping of support in 1960–1964, and gradual decline in 1964–1966.¹⁵ A number of scientific missions into Ghana and academic institutionalization efforts developed in the context of a turn towards the "Afro-Asian problem" already from the mid-1950s, which I shall return to later. But the first Soviet official to visit Ghana was the Minister of State Farms on the day of independence (6 March 1957). An RLRI report also mentions the visit of D. F. Safonov, First Secretary of the Soviet Embassy in London and J. J. Smirnov, its

¹² Grischow and Weiss (2015).

¹³ Grischow and Weiss (2015: 228).

¹⁴ Nkrumah quoted in Mazov (204; quoted in Grischow and Weiss 2015: 229).

¹⁵ At this point I find it important to raise the topic of Westerners interpreting Soviet foreign policy as imperialist and neocolonialist. I have found an interesting report of RLRI comparing British and Russian "colonial policies": Colonial Policies of Great Britain and the USSR, 12 February 1962. HU OSA 300-8-3-13302.

Deputy Trade Representative, on 23 November in Accra to discuss Soviet-Ghanaian relations, as the Soviet Union was interested in buying cocoa and other products.¹⁶ In April 1960, Kojo Botsio, the Ghanaian Minister of Economic Affairs led an impressive parliamentary delegation to Moscow. During 1960, two Ghanaian delegations visited the Soviet Union in May and August, and received promises of Soviet aid. Nkrumah and Khrushchev first met at the UN General Assembly in New York in September 1960.¹⁷ All these negotiations led to a rapid change in Ghana's foreign and domestic policy during the summer, culminating in a Ghana-Soviet agreement in December 1960. The Russian share of trade increased dramatically, with imports 5.4% and exports 4.7% in 1961, while 26.3% and 21.3% in 1965, respectively. The number of visits also increased rapidly: 2 Russians visited Ghana in 1956, but 19 people in 1958, 341 in 1960, and 927 in 1962. The Soviet Union deployed a huge airbase by early 1964, and increased its presence in Ghana's security and intelligence system from 1961 on, after the first assassination attempt towards the Ghanaian president. During Nkrumah's visit to Moscow, the Soviets promised to erect an atomic reactor in Ghana: a contract signed in October 1963, £842,000, nearing completion was abandoned after the 1966 coup. Ghana purchased eight Ilyushin 18 type planes, which were underused and thus caused a total loss of £870,000 per year. The Ghanaians complained that the Russians held little responsibility for the actual implementation and realization of constructions and transferred technologies, and seemed to only follow their export drive of machinery. Meanwhile, civil engineering and labor costs reached around two-thirds of total project costs. According to Thompson, the socialist states used Ghana as a cheap source of foreign exchange.¹⁸ After Nkrumah's regime started deteriorating in the end of 1964, Soviet support declined and as the coup against Nkrumah, neared, on 24 February 1966, Russian diplomats burned their files and fled, and the new Western-oriented Ghanaian regime drew out Soviet influence. Trade agreements were renegotiated and a new ambassador sent from Moscow in 1968.¹⁹

The African West Coast and the Eastern Bloc

The sudden expansion of contract relations between the Eastern Bloc and African countries in the 1960s was realized by the RLRI. Already in 1958, a dense report was written on the "Communist Drive into Africa" that monitored Soviet activities, but focusing only on Russia.²⁰ The RLRI's research department published a detailed situation report on this issue in April 1962, and the Hungarian Monitoring also

¹⁶ HU OSA 300-8-3-18103. The Communist Drive into Africa, 7 March 1958. p. 10.

¹⁷ Brezhnev, as Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, also visited Ghana in February 1961, and participated in the opening ceremony of Nkrumah's new ideological school, the Winneba Institute.

¹⁸ Thompson (1970).

¹⁹ Thompson (1970: 85–87).

²⁰ HU OSA 300-8-3-18103. The Communist Drive into Africa, 7 March 1958.

analyzed the media.²¹ A number of even denser situation reports were again published in 1979 with the particular focus on “Black Africa”.²² A report by RLRI in 1965 summarized some of the differences between Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc foreign policies:

But while the Russians, with their relatively self-sufficient economy, regard political returns as the touchstone of success, the East European countries attach greater significance to the possible economic benefits and display an increasing reluctance to sacrifice these to purely political ends. ... In establishing relations with newly-independent African States East European countries were aided by the fact that they never had been colonial powers and were spurred on by their own desire (particularly strong in the case of East Germany) to achieve wider recognition. A limiting factor, however, has been their lack of surplus economic resources and the need to pay more attention to consumer demands at home. ... But while the Soviet Union’s trade with African countries is as a whole uneconomic and is largely politically inspired, that of Eastern Europe appears to have increasingly greater commercial justification.²³

The fact that European socialist countries did not have a united foreign policy towards Africa (despite the propaganda accentuated by the West), is mirrored in their established diplomatic relations with African countries: Czechoslovakia 24, Poland 20, Bulgaria 20, Hungary 14, Romania 13, East Germany 1 (Zanzibar), and Non-Aligned Yugoslavia 28 (more than the Soviet Union). The RLRI report suggests that these numbers do not represent the actual volume of activities, and some of these missions “may have been set up as cloaks for direct Soviet activity.” For the Eastern Bloc, perhaps important technical assistance was most important, and while economic aid to Africa was considerable less than in the case of the Soviet Union, it was more closely connected to trade, and mainly directed towards Ghana, Guinea, and Mali. Eastern European links were established early on by international trade unions, for example, the World Federation of Trade Unions opened a trade union school in Budapest in 1953, which a number of African trade unionists had attended. An international training center for journalists opened in Budapest in February 1964. The number of full-time African students in Eastern Europe equaled that of the Soviet Union (around 3000 people). In a special case following the Russian example, Czechoslovakia set up a university – mainly offering political training – exclusively for students from developing countries in 1961, “to give support to the just struggle of the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America for political, cultural and economic independence.” The RLRI report lists a range of further cultural, sports, and educational relations.²⁴

²¹ HU OSA 300-8-3-15704. The East European Presence in Africa, April 1962.; Hungarian Monitoring, 21.7./61. – m. 980 – 981. HU OSA 300-40-1: 713.

²² HU OSA 300-8-3-13779. Romania's Presence in Black Africa, 23 May 1979.; HU OSA 300-8-3-13781. Bulgaria's Presence in Black Africa, 20 April 1979.; HU OSA 300-8-3-13786. Hungary's Presence in Black Africa, 2 April 1979.; HU OSA 300-8-3-13787. Czechoslovakia's Presence in Black Africa, 19 March 1979.; HU OSA 300-8-3-13788. Poland's Presence in Black Africa, 1 March 1979.; HU OSA 300-8-3-15149. Eastern Europe's Presence in Black Africa, 21 June 1979.

²³ See HU OSA 300-8-3-18075. East Europe's Role in Africa, 12 June 1965. p. 1, 4.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

Since Ghana aimed to organize and exert its influence on the whole region, its case can only be properly understood in the wider context of West Africa. The decolonization of the West Coast led to the Ghana-Guinea-Mali state union and a trade union between Ghana and Upper Volta (Burkina Faso). Guinea was pointed out as a model country of anti-imperialists because of breaking away from the imperialism of France (1958), and Hungary was among the first countries to recognize it and provide aid.²⁵ In early 1960, *Népszabadság* sent to Guinea the foreign affairs expert István Kende, who interviewed the president Sekou Touré, and published afterwards 12 articles in the journal from 1 to 14 May 1960 on his experiences there.²⁶ In Guinea, the Hungarian firm Ferrunion organized an exposition presenting industrial iron goods, glassware, and synthetic articles, and in turn Hungary received goods. As an article in *Népszabadság* exclaimed:

Great confidence is shown by Guinea's capital, Conakry, 'Ikarusz' buses only are used, the police is equipped with 'Pannonia' motorcycles. The full equipment of a mill is being delivered now. 'Mogurt' has mechanics stationed in Conakry. 'Modex' exports sports articles to Guinea, the quality of which, however, is not faultless.²⁷

Between January and February, the pharmaceutical firm Chinoin organized an exhibition in Conakry presenting Hungarian products, and provided medical and hygienic expertise. Perhaps more importantly, a delegation of the Ministry of Heavy Industry visited Guinea to prospect bauxite resources, a common European interest in the area.²⁸ The analysis of RLRI explains that apart from Nkrumah's visit, Sekou Touré (September 1960) and Nasser (April 1958) only paid short visits at Ferihegy Airport on their ways to Moscow.

After Mali gained independence in September 1960, the country was soon visited by István Rudnyánszky, a foreign affairs expert and former correspondent of *Népszabadság* in Paris (much of the Hungarian diplomatic arrangements in the region were directed from Paris). He reported about his experiences in 8 press articles between 24 September and 4 October 1961. The ruling Party's Secretary-General, Idrissa Diarra declared to him that "our Party wants to proceed along the road of socialism so that the liberation of Africa may be followed by the liberation of the African man."²⁹ The case of Togo was different from other West African states: after becoming an independent state in April 1960, it quickly responded with interest to Hungarian relations probably due to its border issues with Ghana.³⁰ Diplomatic relations were established in Ghana in August 1961, which was decided on Nkrumah's visit to Hungary a month before.³¹ Hungary had three first ambassadors managing six African countries: Péter Kós was appointed to Ghana, László Gyáros to

²⁵ *Népszabadság*, 1961. december 24. HU OSA 300-8-3-15704.

²⁶ *Népszava*, 1960. február 11. HU OSA 300-8-3-15704.

²⁷ *Népszabadság*, 1962. január 20. HU OSA 300-8-3-15704.

²⁸ *Népszabadság*, 1962. január 3. HU OSA 300-8-3-15704.

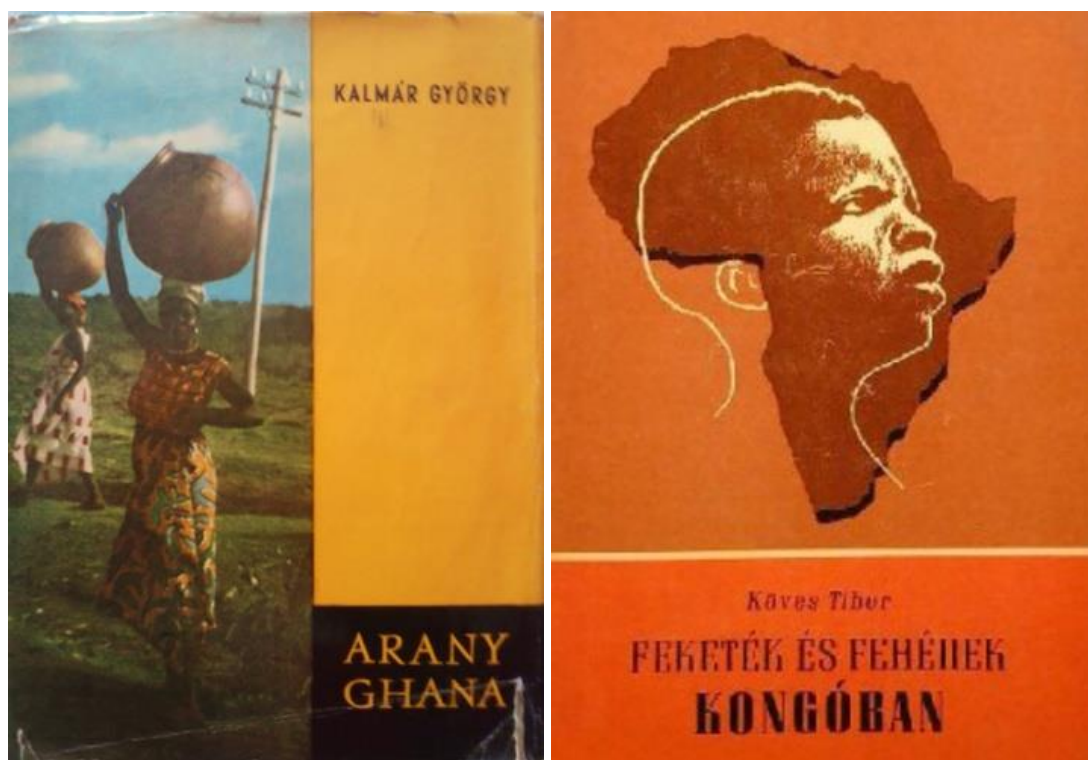
²⁹ *Népszabadság*, 1961. október 4. HU OSA 300-8-3-15704.

³⁰ The disputed territory of "British Togo" was annexed by a UN directed poll on 9 May 1956 to Ghana.

³¹ *Népszava*, 1961. augusztus 1. HU OSA 300-8-3-15704.

Guinea (and also to Mali), and Lajos Szijártó to UAR (Egypt, and also to Sudan and Ethiopia).³²

Fig. 1. “Golden Ghana” by Kalmár and “Blacks and Whites in Congo” by Köves



Source: www.antikvarium.hu

Here the important role of Hungarian journalists, travel reports and documentary studies should be noted. The two main figures in this respect were György Kalmár and Tibor Köves. Köves was the correspondent of the Hungarian Radio in Leopoldville, Congo, but due to the civil war was expelled in September 1960 by Mobutu just as other “citizens of socialist countries.” Köves (1962) published his local experiences in Hungarian, including about the civil war and Lumumba, in his book, *Blacks and Whites in Congo* [Feketék és fehérek Kongóban]. The first Hungarian media organization of Africa was founded in Ghana, 1961, where the “star” correspondent György Kalmár worked for the Hungarian Radion and Népszabadság from April. Kalmár was known to have flanked the ambassador with information, and later also worked part-time for the Center for Afro-Asian Research (formally established as a research group in 1963 in Budapest). He was perhaps the most important Hungarian publicist on African issues at the time, and his documentary book, “Golden Ghana” (1964) was disseminated in two editions and a hundreds of copies, and was also read internationally.³³ In sum, the report suggests that ambassadors and correspondents in West and North Africa were ideologically

³² HU OSA 300-8-3-15704.

³³ See the lecture of Böröcz József on 12 October 2016 at Corvinus University, Budapest, entitled “Socialist Modernizationism Encounters World History: Hungarian Journalist Crosses the ‘Color Line’ and Stumbles on Class Structure in Ghana, 1961–64.”

motivated and reliable Moscovite communists, who were expected to work in local propaganda. Kós, Gyáros, Szijártó, and Kalmár were all close to the Soviet Union or often even Soviet citizens, having been dismissed by the Revolutionary Council during the October 1956 uprising, and the Kádárist regime practically “exported” them (the influence of Moscow in these decisions is unknown). However, the accounts of the RLRI may have been exaggerated in imposing a homogeneous picture of communist ideologues over very personal opinions and motivations, for example, Kalmár acknowledged and endorsed the non-capitalist and non-socialist, independent development trajectory of Ghana, emphasizing in an article “the reality is this: Ghana is following its own road.”³⁴

Foreign relations between Hungary and Ghana in 1959–1963

An overview of the foreign relations between Hungary and Ghana in the early period of contacts reveals the rapid growth of exchange between Hungary and Ghana between 1960 and 1961, which grew gradually stronger after Nkrumah’s Eastern European trip in 1961. An article of *Magyar Nemzet* entitled “Expanding world” (1961) evaluated the development of diplomatic relations with Ghana as “opening a new gate into the wide world for our homeland,” and demonstrating the failure of the imperialists’ aim to isolate Hungary from the non-socialist world.³⁵ Hungary used these negotiations to bypass Western intermediaries in accessing products from African countries.³⁶ The aim of Hungary was to use Ghana to penetrate other African markets, such as Nigeria, Guinea, or Mali. Thus the main gains of the Ghana relation for Hungary was not to make short-term deals, but to establish long-term diplomatic relations in order to secure a wider market and resource base in the future. A confidential report of RLRI analyzed that Hungary sought to penetrate non-communist markets to compensate for Eastern Bloc and Soviet trade deficits.³⁷ The report covers that Hungary’s efforts to intensify trade with capitalist countries surfaced in the press, and trade intensified after the “New Course” since July 1953, even after “degrading” Imre Nagy.³⁸

The Hungarian governments makes efforts to develop her foreign trade relations with non-communist states, firstly because to provide her industry with raw materials, half-finished products, and equipment, etc. not accessible from Soviet Bloc countries, and secondly because to – at least in part – compensate for her great trade deficit in goods exchange with the Soviet Union and ‘people’s democracies.’ ... From non-communist states Hungary can trade on world prices and the actual consumer parity of currencies.

³⁴ Kalmár (1962: 110). HU OSA 300-40-1: 848. *Külkapcsolatok, Ghana, 1958–1964.*

³⁵ Zala, Tamás (1961): *Táguló világ. Magyar Nemzet, augusztus 3.* HU OSA 300-40-1: 713.

³⁶ Gárdos Emil (1961): *Magyar gyárak Ghanában. Külkereskedelmi Szemle, július-augusztus.* 33–35. HU OSA 300-40-1: 713.

³⁷ Item No. 3348/56. *Hungary seeks to penetrate non-communist markets to compensate Eastern Bloc trading losses.* 29 March 1956. HU OSA 300-40-4: 15/3. 751.1 *Foreign Trade: Egypt, 1954–1956.*

³⁸ *Szabad Nép, 14(85), 25 March 1956.*

Due to the differences in purchasing prices and wages, the nominal price of currencies differed greatly from their actual value (how much one can consume for the same price), and it was calculated that Hungary pays thrice as much for Soviet products and sells her own at third of prices, while the case is similar in GDR–Hungary relations. The search for non-communist markets started from mid-1953, when Hungarian trade experts were sent to Arab countries, India, and Indonesia. A notable case was Hungarian lobbying for and winning a contract to supply bridge-building over the Nile near Heluan in Egypt, under the competition of other Eastern Bloc countries.³⁹ Hungary exported engineering expertise and hydrotechnological parts in exchange of cotton imports, after domestic cotton production in the “transformation of nature” program miserably failed. Another confidential report suggested that Hungary intended to investigate the possibilities of secret trade relations with the Union of South Africa, despite the international embargo due to apartheid.⁴⁰ These materials reinforce my hypothesis that the decolonization of African countries offered widening opportunities for semi-peripheral Hungary in an already realized strategy of opening foreign trade relations. This intensified in the context of the postwar crisis in Western Europe, which led to the establishment of the European Economic Community (25 March 1957), with strengthening policies of protecting Western European markets against Eastern Bloc imports and maintaining markets in Africa.

The first official Hungarian trade delegation to Ghana arrived in 8–15 August 1959, and decided on building mutual relations.⁴¹ A colleague of Hungarotex Foreign Trade Company, dr. Arisztid Boks, visited Ghana as the first trade delegate from Hungary, to build personal relations in order to understand market demands and expand influence, as Hungarotex supplied some goods before (paper and cloth).⁴² Due to these efforts, a Hungarian trade agency was soon established in Accra in October 1960. On 11 December 1960, Ayeh Kumi, the Ghanaian Minister of Industrial Development and diplomat spent three days in Budapest to survey potential factories to be shipped to the West African country. He was invited by the Hungarian Minister of Foreign Trade, Jenő Incze, and negotiated with Ferenc Münnich, President of the Council of Ministers (Fig. 2).⁴³ He inspected the Kőbánya Pharmaceutical Factory, which stimulated the Ghanaian government to build a similar facility by Hungarian

³⁹ Item No. 476/54. Closer Economic Links Between Hungary And Egypt. 20 January 1954.; Item No. 792/54. Egypt Signs Trade And Payments Agreement With Rumania on 18 January 1954. Trade Talks With Hungary, Poland To Commence Shortly. 28 January 1954. Item No. 6818/55. Hungary hopes to get a contract to build Egyptian Bridge. 12 August 1955.; HU OSA 300-40-4: 15/3. 751.1 Foreign Trade: Egypt, 1954–1956.

⁴⁰ Item No. 3772/60. Hungarian regime investigating possibilities of promoting trade connections with the Union of South Africa. 18 October 1960.

⁴¹ Népszabadság (1959): Magyar kereskedelmi küldöttség látogatása Ghanában. Augusztus 20. HU OSA 300-40-1: 713.

Népszava (1959): Magyar kereskedelmi küldöttség utazott Ghanába. Augusztus 6. HU OSA 300-40-1: 713.

⁴² Hungarian Monitoring 14.1./59. – E. 510. HU OSA 300-40-1: 713.

⁴³ Népszabadság (1960): Hazánkba érkezett a ghanai iparfejlesztési bizottság elnöke. December 11. HU OSA 300-40-1: 713.; Népszabadság (1960): Dr. Münnich Ferenc fogadta a ghanai iparfejlesztési bizottság elnökét. December 13. HU OSA 300-40-1: 713.

aid. Consequently a Hungarian technical delegation visited Ghana between 25 January and 19 February 1961.⁴⁴ Afterwards the plans were made for a complete pharmaceutical factory.⁴⁵ In the meantime, the hydroelectric prospectors Tibor Szécsei and Gyula Szalay worked for several months in Ghana, and wrote a plan document for the planned hydroelectric dams on the Densu and Pra rivers in 1960.⁴⁶ A hydrobiologist, Béla Entz worked from 1966 to 1969 for the Ghana Scientific Institute Aquatic Biology in Accra as Principal Research Officer on Lake Volta. The Ghanaian job paved his international career, and he specialized on surveying artificial lakes in Africa, such as Lake Nasser from 1970–1974 as Project Manager for UN FAO.⁴⁷ The first cargo of goods to Ghana were sent in January 1961.⁴⁸

Fig. 2. The meeting of Ferenc Münnich and Ayeh Kumi



⁴⁴ Gárdos Emil (1961): Magyar gyárok Ghanában. *Külkereskedelmi Szemle*, július-augusztus. 33–35. HU OSA 300-40-1: 713.

⁴⁵ Magyar Nemzet (1961): Magyar szakemberek elkészítették az első ghanai gyógyszerüzem terveit. Szeptember 28.; Népszava (1961): Ghanától Bordeaux-ig. Szeptember 28. HU OSA 300-40-1: 713.

⁴⁶ Népszabadság (1960): A ghanai kormány elismerése két magyar mérnöknek. December 3. HU OSA 300-40-1: 713.

⁴⁷ See Biernaczky (2014) and Veszprém Megyei Életrajzi Lexikon. <http://www.ekmk.hu/lexikon/talalatok3.php?beture=ENTZ%20B%C3%A9la>

⁴⁸ Esti Hírlap (1961): Útnak indultak az év első exportszállítmányai. Január 7. HU OSA 300-40-1: 713. Here I must note, that although I have retrieved statistical data on exports and imports between Eastern Bloc countries and African countries, particularly Ghana, I have found these very much unreliable, therefore I decided not to include them. Thus a thorough analysis of data on trade is still needed.

Table 1. Ghana-Hungary exchanges according to media reports⁴⁹

March 24	1959	The Ghanaian journalist D. Buckle visited Budapest and delivered a lecture on the conditions of his country at the Club of the People's Front.	Magyar Nemzet, 24 March 1959.
August 8–15	1959	Hungarian economic delegation visits Ghana.	Népszabadság, 20 August 1959.
July	1960	Two trade union leaders arrive from Ghana.	Népszabadság, 10 July 1960.
October	1960	A journalist from Ghana who attended the International Congress of Journalists held at Baden (Austria), paid a short visit together with a group of other foreign journalists.	Népszabadság, 27 October 1960.
December 10–13	1960	Ayeh Kumi, President of the Industrial Development Committee of Ghana, discusses the extension of economic relations.	Népszabadság, 11, 14 December 1960.
April	1961	Hungarian commercial and scientific government delegation, led by Béla Sulyok, President of the Hungarian National Bank, visits Ghana. Investment, credit, foreign trade and technical aid agreements signed.	Magyar Nemzet, 14 April; Népszabadság, 24, 26 April 1961.
June	1961	Representatives of Hungarian export firms sign agreement in Ghana concerning the export of the equipment of three complete factories.	Népszabadság, 23 June 1961.
July 28–31	1961	President Nkrumah paid official visit to Hungary.	Népszava, 1 August 1961.
October	1961	K. Edusei, Minister of Light and Heavy Industry, leads an economic delegation to Hungary. Long-term trade and payments agreement is signed.	Népszabadság, 21, 25 October 1961.
June 2	1962	Hungarian technical delegation in Accra signed an agreement to export technical devices and production instruments.	Népszava, 6 June 1962.
November 26 – December 16	1962	The Hungarian Chamber of Commerce organized the first Hungarian industrial expo in Africa in Accra.	Népszabadság, 24 October 1962, 25 August 1962.
January	1962	MEDIMPEX Pharmaceutical Trade Company held an expo in Conakry and Accra.	Népszabadság, 20 January 1962.

Preceding Nkrumah's visit, in 21 April 1961 the two countries signed a trade and credit agreement, a treaty on technological-scientific aid, and a cultural treaty.⁵⁰ The two major investment deals: the first worth £2.5 million, prospected to be extended up

⁴⁹ Based on: HU OSA 300-8-3-15704. The East European Presence in Africa, April 1962. 55–56.

⁵⁰ Népszava (1961): Magyar-ghanai közös nyilatkozat a két ország képviselőinek tárgyalásairól. Augusztus 1. HU OSA 300-40-1: 713., HU OSA 300-40-1: 848.

to 5 million, and to be paid back in 7 years, while a second on technical assistance, exchange and training. Persuasion was guaranteed as socialist loans were generally given at a very low interest rate of 2% or 2.5%.⁵¹ A trade deal was also signed on 25 April 1961 in Accra.⁵² In 1960, a deal was signed on exporting three factories net worth 2 million dollars: a steel-aluminum cable factory, an electric bulb and photo-electric tube factory, and a pharmaceutical factory.⁵³ The pharmaceutical factory was to use Hungarian raw materials, while the cable factory was needed for Ghana's electrification project.⁵⁴ Trade agreement and treaty signed in June 1961 to build a complete, modern pharmaceutical factory, and train 9 pharmacists, developed by the medicine company Chinoin and planned by György Stverteczky (office head), the first such facility among decolonized African countries.⁵⁵ The electric light bulb factory was to be exported by Komplex company, and located in Cape Coast, production was to be started in 1964 and 1965.⁵⁶ However, the RLRI report questioned the efficiency and actual realization of these investments.⁵⁷ Perhaps one of the most important export opportunities of Hungary was hydrotechnology and water management expertise, and grew in importance until the end of the 1970s. The most important destinations were North African regions such as Algeria, Libya, and Egypt, but also Iraq, Guinea, Mali, China, Mongolia, and Brazil.⁵⁸ Székesfehérvár's Mechanical Machinery Factory exported small buses to Ghana and a number of other African countries during the early 1960s. Hungarian technical delegation in Accra signed an agreement to export technical devices and production instruments on 2 June 1962.⁵⁹ Organizing expositions were also crucial in establishing economic and trade ties, and to build local markets for Hungarian goods. The Hungarian Chamber of Commerce organized what was to be known as the first industrial expo in Africa, in Accra in 26 November 1962 (until 16 December), in which 21 Hungarian foreign trade companies participated, with a delegation of 25 technical and trade experts.⁶⁰ Further delegations arrived in Accra during May. The MEDIMPEX Pharmaceutical Foreign Trade Company also held an expo in Conakry and Accra in 1962.⁶¹

⁵¹ Hungarian Monitoring, 21.7./61. – m. 980 – 981. HU OSA 300-40-1: 713.

⁵² Népszabadság (1961): Megállapodást írt alá a Ghanában tartózkodó magyar kormányküldöttség. Április 23. HU OSA 300-40-1: 713.; Népszabadság (1961): Aláírták a ghanai-magyar kereskedelmi megállapodást. Április 26. HU OSA 300-40-1: 713.

⁵³ Népszabadság (1960): Kereskedelmi egyezmény Ghana és Magyarország között. Június 23. HU OSA 300-40-1: 713.

⁵⁴ Hungarian Monitoring, 21.7./61. – m. 980 – 981. HU OSA 300-40-1: 713.

⁵⁵ Esti Hírlap (1962): Gyógyszergyárat szállít Ghanának a magyar ipar. Október 22. HU OSA 300-40-1: 713. Népszabadság (1962): Százmillió tablettá és egymillió ampulla kapacitású gyógyszergyár Ghanának, magyar segítséggel. Augusztus 26. HU OSA 300-40-1: 713.

⁵⁶ Kisalföld (1961): Mit építünk Ghanában? Július 28. HU OSA 300-40-1: 713.

⁵⁷ HU OSA 300-8-3-15704. The East European Presence in Africa, April 1962.

⁵⁸ Ruzskai Endre (1963): Vízellátási exportlehetőségeink Ghanában. HU OSA 300-40-1: 713.

⁵⁹ Népszava (1962): Magyar-ghanai áruszállítási jegyzőkönyvet írtak alá. Június 6. HU OSA 300-40-1: 713.

⁶⁰ Népszabadság (1962): Magyar ipari kiállítás Ghanában. Népszabadság, Október 24.; Népszabadság (1962): Nagyszabású magyar ipari kiállítás nyílik Accrában, Ghana fővárosában. Augusztus 25. HU OSA 300-40-1: 713.

⁶¹ Népszabadság (1962): Magyar gyógyszerkiállítás nyílik Guineában és Ghanában. Január 20. HU OSA 300-40-1: 713.

Foreign trade and economic relations gradually grew into cultural relations. A Hungarian group of music teachers consisting of Frigyes Róna, Erzsébet Pártos, and Judit Dományi established a department in musicology in 1963 headed by Róna, maestro and composer, which taught European classical music and organized philharmonic concerts and theatre plays.⁶² They held a music festival in Sunyani, where Hungarian musical pedagogues performed their “Bartók and Kodály” show.⁶³ Concerning postcolonial relations, a revealing interview was published with Frigyes Róna in *Magyar Nemzet*:

He has been living out there for a year with his wife. But you can see on him how much he changed. One who returns from the tropics, thinks in very different prospects. His Pestian cynicism broke down, speechlessness disappeared, and he became brown, young, and motivated. His blue eyes stare far.⁶⁴

Fig. 3. Hungarian music in Africa: A Ghanaian man reads Zoltán Kodály⁶⁵



⁶² Népszabadság (1964): Magyar zeneest Accrában. Március 21. Hajdú-Bihari Napló (1964): Ghanai vendégek látogatása a debreceni MÁV Filharmonikus Zenekarnál. Szeptember 5. Új Ember (1964): A ghanai egyetem magyar származású zenei tanszékvezetőjéről... Szeptember 6. HU OSA 300-40-1: 848.

⁶³ Esti Hírlap (1964): Magyar zene Afrikában. Március 10. HU OSA 300-40-1: 848.

⁶⁴ Magyar Nemzet (1964): Magyar operaalapító Accrában: Beszélgetés Rona Frigyessel, az accrai egyetem zenei tanszékvezetőjével. Augusztus 13. HU OSA 300-40-1: 848.

⁶⁵ Esti Hírlap (1964): Magyar zene Afrikában. Március 10. HU OSA 300-40-1: 848.

The optimist preservationism of Róna can be captured by his call, „record the jungle!” [*magnetofonnal a dzsungelbe!*], emphasizing that „we must understand: the dark-skinned man is not uncultured.” During the period of 1963–1964, a number of news snippets were published about Hungarian education programs, book donations to the Nkrumah Institute in Winneba, traveling educational and cultural exhibitions reaching out to the Ghanaian countryside, Hungarian-Ghanaian friendship eves in Hungarian cities (e.g. Sátoraljaújhely), or the Africana band performing in Győr.⁶⁶ A representative celebration was held on the occasion of Nkrumah’s 55th birthday.⁶⁷ Cultural relations reached its peak when Péter Kós signed a cultural work plan between Hungary and Ghana for the 1964–65 period.⁶⁸

I found an interesting English transcript of an interview published in the Hungarian weekly of the Writers’ Union, *Life and Literature* [*Élet és Irodalom*] with a Ghanaian student living in Hungary.⁶⁹ He came to Budapest in November 1961 for a six-month study term with their volley-ball team, but three of them stayed and applied successfully to the University of Technology in Budapest:

I read in a periodical at home that the Technical University of Budapest is very famous and that the engineers who qualify from this University are on a European level. The second reason was that this University costs much less than an English or French University. So I wrote to the Rector of the Budapest University, telling him I was a sixteen-year old boy from Ghana who wanted to be an electrical engineer. Six months later – it was in 1960 – he answered my letter and said I would be admitted... Well, I didn’t know much about Hungary at the time, I’m sorry to say. I knew that there was a rebellion in 1956 which all but turned into a war. But later on I read a lot about Hungary... (p. 2)

The interviewee’s father was a wealthy merchant, as he explained, a member of the “national bourgeoisie” loyal to Nkrumah.

“Are there students among the foreigners whom you do not like?”

“No,” he says after a long pause. “Though there are some with whom we are not on friendly terms. Anyway, Ghana wants to be on good terms with all countries.”

“Do you identify yourself with your country in everything?”

“I don’t understand what you mean. I was authorized by my government to study in Hungary. President Nkrumah signed the letter which is still jealously guarded by my father at home. I must study well in order to be able to pay back, in gratitude, the five long years at this University, which my country pays for. I must behave here to be worthy of the trust placed in me.” (p. 3)

Later, he explained his engagement with a Hungarian girl, who was a medical student, and they planned to return together to Ghana. This story provides insight into the issue of identities constructed in relation to the new modernizing state, and how

⁶⁶ Kisalföld (1963): Győrbe érkezett az Africana. Július 7. HU OSA 300-40-1: 848.

⁶⁷ Népszabadság (1964): A ghánai nagykövet filmbemutatója és fogadása. Szeptember 20. HU OSA 300-40-1: 848.

⁶⁸ Népszabadság (1964): Aláírták a magyar–ghanai kulturális munkaterv jegyzőkönyvét. Július 12. HU OSA 300-40-1: 848.

⁶⁹ “Gregory from Ghana” Sükösd M. (1962): Gergő Ghánából. *Élet és Irodalom*, December 22. HU OSA 300-40-1: 848.

Hungary anticipated very early with Ghana to strengthen a local bourgeoisie loyal to Nkrumah. It also shows the personal relations, emotions, and love interweaving official foreign policies, and how media tried to build on these emotions to present the absence of racial prejudice and socialist humanism.

Postcolonial narratives are also evident in some press materials and travel reports. The economist, Tamás Bácskai, member of an economic delegation in Accra (see later), reported in the popular scientific magazine of *Life and Science* [*Élet és Tudomány*] on his Ghanaian experiences in 1962.⁷⁰ While reporting on some economic achievements (e.g. the building of the Volta dam), his strong modernizationist narrative accentuated inner cultural aspects such as traditionalism and tribalism as the greatest barriers to socio-economic development, individualism, and the nuclear family.

Only after overweighing the prejudices, superstitions, and narrow tribal nationalisms rooted in people's minds and hearts can we really understand the huge political difficulties the central government has to fight. (p. 1383)

He argued that due to these many diverging forces of traditionalism, only a uniform, modern central state could allow socio-economic progress. In other words, the unorganized “natives” needed control, only now coming from the socialist state. While most press materials presented the newly built, modern architecture, the media heavily built on the contrasting image of tradition versus modernization in framing the Ghanaian experiment (Fig. 4). Through this, stereotypical images of tropical Africa were often mobilized, in some cases even an imperialist masculine gaze, such as in György Kalmár's special article in the weekly of the Association for Hungarian-Soviet Friendship, *Nation and World* [*Ország-Világ*], in which a picture showing a local woman entitled “Accraian beauty” [*Accrai szépség*] (Fig. 5).⁷¹ The Hungarian aestheticizing of the African people is also an interesting issue, for example, there was the case of a Hungarian painter, Ilona Urszenyiné Breznay (1908–1988), who fled from WWII to live in Kumasi in Ghana and built her career on depicting portraits and the everyday lives of locals (she moved to London in 1970).⁷²

⁷⁰ Bácskai, Tamás (1962): Ghana a tegnap és a holnap között. *Élet és Tudomány*, (4, 16 November) 17(44): 1379–1383, 1452–1458. HU OSA 300-40-1: 848.

⁷¹ Kalmár György (1962): Kalmár György bemutatja Ghanát. Accrai séta. *Ország-Világ*, szeptember 6. HU OSA 300-40-1: 848.

⁷² Kalmár György (1962): Kalmár György bemutatja Ghanát. Magyar festő az ashantik földjén. *Ország-Világ*, szeptember 6. HU OSA 300-40-1: 848.

Fig. 4. “...and some drops of the human sea”

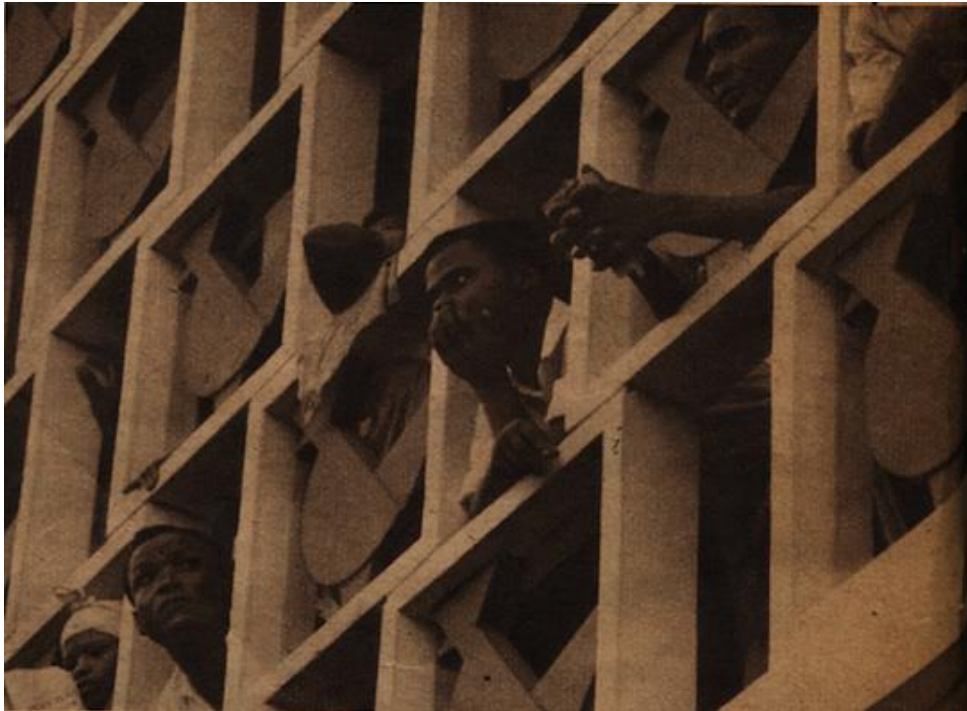
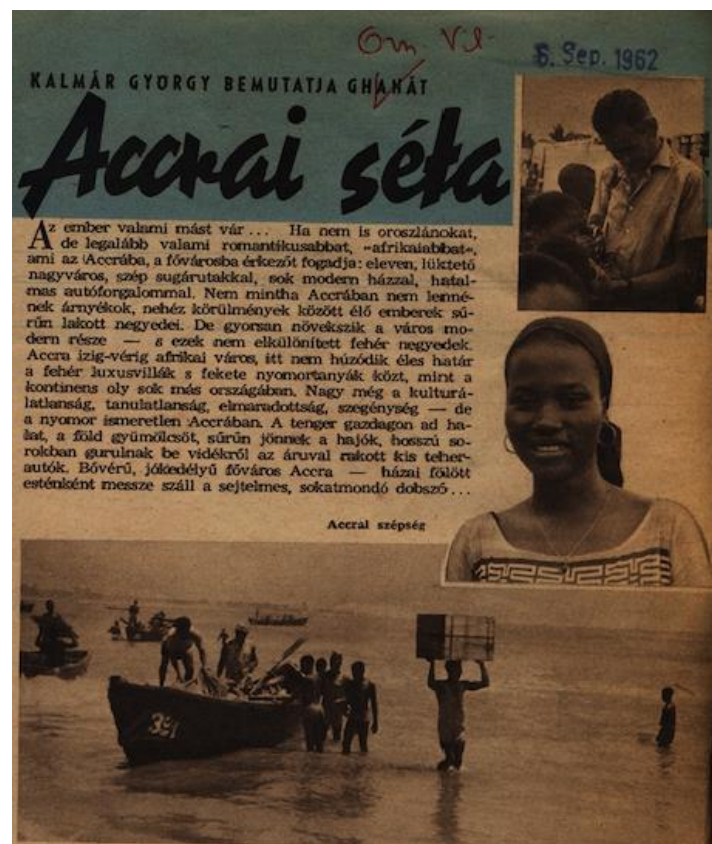


Photo source: The National Library of Accra.⁷³

Fig. 5. “A walk in Accra” article by György Kalmár



⁷³ Kalmár György (1962): Kalmár György bemutatja Ghanát. Accrai séta. *Ország-Világ*, szeptember 6. HU OSA 300-40-1: 848.

Nkrumah's visit to Budapest in 1961

Following initial diplomatic negotiations, in order to solidify his relations with the socialist world Nkrumah made a two-month tour around European socialist countries in 1961, in which he spent a longer stay in Hungary from 28th until 31st July (Table 1). He was invited by the Hungarian government and the President Council, and his arrival was greeted by a grandiose, celebrative reception. Nkrumah visited several sites in Budapest, and laid a wreath at the Heroes' Monument. Apart from Nkrumah, the Ghanaian delegation consisted of Krobo Edusei as Minister of Transportation, Tawiah Adamofio as Minister of Presidential Affairs, A. Y. K. Djin as Chancellor, E. K. Okoh as Secretary of the Presidential Office, M. F. Dei-Anang as the Head Secretary of African Affairs. While in Budapest, the delegation signed a long-term trade treaty, financial agreement, and flight agreement, and negotiated the cultural, technological, and scientific cooperation for 1962.⁷⁴

Table 2. The Ghanaian delegation's tour in European socialist countries

1961.07.11–17	Moscow (USSR)
1961.07.18–19	Kiev (USSR)
1961.07.20–21	Leningrad (USSR)
1961.07.24–25	Moscow (USSR)
1961.07.25–28	Warsaw (Poland)
1961.07.28–31	Budapest (Hungary)
1961.07.31	Prague (Czechoslovakia)
1961.08.1	Berlin (GDR)
1961.08.2–3	Prague (Czechoslovakia)
1961.08.3	Belgrade (Yugoslavia)
1961.08.10	Bucharest (Romania)
1961.08.10–11	Sofia (Bulgaria)
1961.08.11–12	Tirana (Albania)
1961.08.15	Peking (China)

Hungarian journalists covered this visit quite vividly. The press positioned Ghana as an ally of socialist countries in a relationship built on mutual benefits and a joint fight for freedom and peace, heroizing the figure of Nkrumah. The narrative of the press and formal discussions framed this relationship in anti-imperial struggle, solidarity, and interestingly, parallels between the historical colonial backgrounds of the two countries. Since neocolonialism was conceptualized as a wide term denoting

⁷⁴ Népszabadság (1961): Bővülnek a magyar-ghanai gazdasági kapcsolatok. Október 25. Magyar Nemzet (1961): Magyar-ghanai közös nyilatkozatot írtak alá. Magyar Nemzet, július 30. 1961. HU OSA 300-40-1: 848.

the universal expansion of Western dominance, European conflicts could be put in line with those in the “Third World”.⁷⁵ The long article summarizing Nkrumah’s visit framed the this event in the context of the recent French aggression in Tunis, also addressed by a declaration from the World Council of Peace, calling for the annihilation of the colonial system and a movement towards world peace. In his greeting speech to Nkrumah, István Dobi, the president of the President Council, emphasized:

The People’s Republic of Hungary is also guided by the aim to support the war for independence of colonial people, strengthen friendship between different peoples, and contribute to securing world peace.

Later the next day, at the first banquet held at the House of Parliament, Dobi added:

Our people turn with great curiosity towards Africa, where today a battle decisive to the future of mankind is fought between social progress and the forces of imperialism.

In response, Nkrumah gave a toast, in which he declared:

We in Africa fight consistently. Whatever direction we try to leap forward, everywhere we find ourselves confronted by imperialist treachery. We will master our difficulties with the support of the socialist camp. We are here to strengthen our relations with Hungary, and strengthen our ties with the countries of the socialist camp.

And finally, at the evening banquet of the President Council, Nkrumah stated in his toast speech the following:

Mr. President! When I talked with you, the President Council, and members of government, the discussion – on the history of the Hungarian people – brightly evoked in me our the events of our own battles. In the past the Hungarian people also knew well all the curses of alien suppression. We have struggled for more than a hundred years under the yoke of colonial subjection.⁷⁶

The article accounted that later in his talk, when lamenting the violent acts of imperialists against Ghana, the British ambassador and military attaché left the scene – an incident János Kádár recalled in their personal discussion in a sarcastic tone.⁷⁷

The dialogue between Nkrumah and Kádár, who was spending his vacation in his summer resort in Balatonaliga, is even more revealing in how historical parallels were drawn between Ghana and Hungary (Fig. 6). Nkrumah recalled that the ex-Vice President of USA, Nixon called Eastern Bloc countries such as Hungary “Communist slaves,” and added: “if slavery consists of what I saw in Hungary, I am prepared to become a Communist slave,” because “freedom, equality, justice and all what goes with them, that is, humanism, really take shape only in socialist countries.” Kádár also reflected sharply on this vision of common historical fates: “Our country had also lived for centuries under semi-colonial subordination, in fact under the war the

⁷⁵ Soviet and Eastern Bloc media criticized the “Eurafrican policy,” emerging in 1957, of the (later) European Economic Community as a form of neocolonialism. See Melegh (2015), HU OSA 300-8-3-18103. The Communist Drive into Africa, 7 March 1958. p. 14.

⁷⁶ Népszabadság (1961): Üdvözljük kedves vendégünket, Nkrumah elnököt! Július 28. HU OSA 300-40-1: 848.

⁷⁷ Köszegi Frigyes (1961): Távol a szemtől, közel a szívhez. Népszabadság, augusztus 1. HU OSA 300-40-1: 848.

German fascists ruined and looted Hungary.” To accentuate his point, Kádár recalled with pathos Nkrumah’s famous speech at the UN convention on “freedom for Africa.” On his visit at the Beloiannisz Electric Equipment Factory of Budapest, which he decided to copy and transfer to Ghana, Nkrumah declared in his speech to the workers:

...we have chosen the same direction of development as yours. A great lesson and example to be followed is your technical and scientific development, the way you organize your agriculture.⁷⁸

He also added gratefully:

In Hungary, an atmosphere greeted us which was completely free of any kind of racial hatred and discrimination. ... We in Africa fight against imperialism, colonialism, and the new forms of colonialism, neocolonialism. We fight in with the vision that success and victory will crown our actions. In this struggle we count on the Hungarian people...⁷⁹

Thus the delegation’s presence was framed in the form of joint anti-imperialist struggle, intercultural dialogue, and the abolishment of racial oppression and prejudice.

Fig. 6. The meeting of János Kádár and Kwame Nkrumah



⁷⁸ Magyar Nemzet (1961): Magyar-ghanai közös nyilatkozatot írtak alá. Magyar Nemzet, július 30. HU OSA 300-40-1: 848.

⁷⁹ Magyar Nemzet (1961): Magyar-ghanai közös nyilatkozatot írtak alá. Magyar Nemzet, július 30. HU OSA 300-40-1: 848.

Before the delegation arrived, the media accounted for the geopolitical stakes of Nkrumah's visit, while aiming to draw a persuasive picture of his figure. It was explained that Nkrumah opened the first conference for independent African countries in Accra in 1958, and Ghana joined the boycott against South African racism, supported the Gizenga government in Congo, and the Angolan struggle against Portugal. Nkrumah's Pan-Africanism openly accepted support from European, Asian, and Latin American "freedom-loving" countries in liberating Africa.⁸⁰ An article in *Magyar Nemzet* emphasized the European Economic Community's (EEC) Strasbourg meeting with Ghana that discussed in what terms to involve the African country into EEC. Upper Volta also represented itself, and established a trade union with Ghana after the meeting, while the Ghana-Guinea-Mali union was formed against imperialist expansionism, that is, neocolonialism.⁸¹ After developing their foreign contacts, industrialization, and anti-colonial struggle, their need for independence and autonomy could only be met by the support of socialist countries. Soviet and socialist assistance was staged as being based on common interests, mutual respect, humanism, and peace:

One can argue on her methods, claim that other former colonial countries, such as Guinea, have more forcefully leaped on the road to economic autonomy – but it remains a fact that Ghana is one of Africa's most rapidly industrializing country... .. For the help that the Soviet Union gives for Africa's people fighting for their freedom and independence – asks for nothing in return. Africa – and Ghana – advances on its own path.⁸²

Optimist evaluations underlined that Ghana is a rapidly developing country, whose economic strength outgrows Turkey or Spain, and the pace of its economic growth exceeds many other countries'.

Nkrumah's tour should be put in the context of a series of exchange trips connected to Eastern Europe. Perhaps the most notable delegations are of the Soviet Union in 1959, and the tour of Eastern Bloc representatives to Africa, specifically Ghana. Interestingly, Kádár never visited Ghana in this period. Due to Yugoslavia being a Non-Aligned country, Josip Broz Tito made a presidential tour around North and West Africa (Fig. 7). Tito's trip was presented on a map in OSA's exhibition of "Red Africa: Things Fall Apart" (20 April to 4 June 2017), and was also covered in the documentary movie of the famous Serbian director, Aleksandar Mitrović, entitled *Tito u Africi* (1961).⁸³

⁸⁰ Népszabadság (1961): Üdvözljük kedves vendégünket, Nkrumah elnököt! Július 28. HU OSA 300-40-1: 848.

⁸¹ Zala, Tamás (1961): A függetlenség távlatai Ghanában. *Magyar Nemzet*, július 27. HU OSA 300-40-1: 848.

⁸² Kalmár, György (1961): Gyors iparosítás és törzsfőnökök... *Esti Hírlap*, július 27. HU OSA 300-40-1: 848.

⁸³ <http://www.osaarchivum.org/hu/events/Red-Africa-Things-Fall-Apart>

Fig. 7. Tito en route to visit a secondary school in Achimota, Ghana, March 1961



Source: Courtesy of the Museum of Yugoslav History. Waiting for Tito: Unofficial scenes from a presidential tour of Africa. Red Africa, The Calvert Journal.

<http://www.calvertjournal.com/features/show/5337/red-africa-tito-presidential-tour-unofficial-scenes>

Transnational Development Consultancy: The First Seven-Year Plan

The precedings and circumstances of my invitation were novelistic. ...
The capricious play of luck, the fortunate encounter of coincidences –
one can say. Was this true? Yes and no.⁸⁴

– József Bognár

In the early 1960s, Ghana became a transnational hub of various expert groups. In the literature, the issue of Cold War era transnational planners in the postcolonial arena has been raised only quite recently, and perhaps most case studies include architectural planning history and economic development planning.⁸⁵ For example, Łukasz Stanek widely explored the issue of Polish architects in the “Third World,” and specifically in Ghana during this period. He has accumulated a vast amount of

⁸⁴ Bognár, József (1962): Két hónap Ghánában. *Magyar Hírek*, május 1. 1–2. HU OSA 300-40-1: 848.

⁸⁵ For an overview, see Ward (2010), and for the issue of modernization in Africa and specifically Ghana, Bloom et al. (2014). See also the volumes of Healey and Upton (2010), and Andersson and Rindzevičiūtė (2015). For specific case studies in state-building and economic development, see Trentin (2009) and Iandolo (2012), and in architecture and urban planning, Jackson and Oppong (2014), d’Auria (2014), and Silva (2016).

materials and visuals, and also interviewed Hungarian architects and urban planners.⁸⁶ These studies raise the issue of understanding the networks of knowledge in order to show the continuities in planning practices between colonial and postcolonial contexts, such as in “tropical architecture” or “tropical modernism,” or treating post/colonies as “development laboratories.”⁸⁷ Perhaps even more interestingly, planners from countries of the global economic center or the semi-periphery later used their experiences in peripheral regions in their own local contexts. For example, Dudley Seers in the 1970s studied the underdeveloped areas of Europe by repatriating his development studies from the “Third World,” including Ghana.⁸⁸ Similarly, as I will argue later on, József Bognár institutionalized his experiences in “poorly developed countries” at home to advise on Hungary’s economic development and integration into the world economy, drawing comparisons above accepted Cold War ideological regionalism. Nevertheless, the literature seldom links directly architectural or urban planning with economic development planning, although infrastructural investments and economic growth strategies were strongly interconnected (as in the Ghanaian case of the Volta River Project). Thus it would be important to connect urban and regional planning with economic planning, or the “micro” with the “macro” scale, in the context of conceptualizing the “production of space” by the world economic cyclical flows of capital investments into the built environment in these specific regional contexts of postwar decolonization.⁸⁹ Based on collected literature, my heuristic hypothesis is that Ghana represented an important hub or “development laboratory,” specifically to Eastern European planners, influencing a generation of planning experts in a first wave of African decolonization. Nkrumah invested considerably into developing research and planning infrastructures (e.g. libraries, schools, university) convention halls and Ghana was also a site of transnational engagement and knowledge exchange, where experts otherwise separated by the Cold War, could interact and develop relations, work together on joint projects, and build themselves into international organizations, such as the UN, with the perspective of an international career. More specifically, the Ghana experience contributed greatly to the expansion of global comparative studies, African and Asian studies in socialist Europe in the early 1960s, and was thus an important element in generating expertise for “socialist globalization” (cf. Mark and Apor 2016; Bockman et al. *forthcoming*).⁹⁰

⁸⁶ See the studies of Stanek (2012a; 2012b; 2012c; 2014; 2015a; 2015b; Stanek and Albrecht 2014). Notable also is the special issue “Cold War Transfer: Architecture and Planning from Socialist Countries in the ‘Third World’” in *The Journal of Architecture*, Vol. 17, 2012, with an introduction by Stanek. (<https://www.calvertjournal.com/features/show/5407/red-africa-ghana-architecture-communist-europe>). For other cases studies in Ghana, see Jackson and Oppong (2014), d’Auria (2014).

⁸⁷ See le Roux (2003).

⁸⁸ See Emmerij (1989). See also the special issue of *IDS Bulletin* dedicated to the development planning work of Dudley Seers, especially on Ghana by Ingham (1989).

⁸⁹ For this argument, see the path-breaking article of Harvey (1978).

⁹⁰ As Czernichowsky et al. (2012) explain, in the beginning of the 1960s, a “Polish School of African History” led by Marian Małowist contributed comparative studies of developed and underdeveloped regions into international discourse on African history, some of their concepts were adopted by Immanuel Wallerstein in his world-systems analysis. Another notable field was the “Polish Development School” of Ignacy Sachs and Michał Kalecki, whose writings on development economics in Third World countries were internationally recognized. The Centre of Research on Underdeveloped

When Nkrumah was elected in 1951 as Leader of Government Business, he obtained official control over national development, but was restrained by colonial relations and inherited a ten-year colonial development plan, which was created by the colonial administration in 1950 to solicit funds under Britain's Colonial Welfare and Development Act of 1945.⁹¹ This plan focused on improving living standards, infrastructure and social welfare, and identified only priorities. Nkrumah decreased its span to five years but did not alter its content, thus his First Development Plan did not target industrial development. But becoming prime minister in 1957, he envisioned a "jet-propelled" industrialization based on two main initiatives: first the VRP, consisting of a hydroelectric dam, bauxite-extraction facility and aluminum smelter, and the new harbor of Tema; and second, industrialization through development planning.⁹² Despite his turn towards socialist countries, the scale of the project required a high level of investment, which could only be provided by the West. Negotiations began with President Eisenhower and Edgar J. Kaiser, head of the Kaiser Aluminum Corporation (a main actor in the global aluminum industry). A World Bank mission already surveyed economic conditions and questioned the viability of VRP in 1957, but later the American decision to fund the VRP was motivated by setting back Soviet influence. The deal came together between October 1957 and August 1960, and Kaiser created the consortium of Volta Aluminum Company (Valco) to manage project and provide expertise. Funds came from the World Bank \$40 million dollars (£14.3 million), the USA United Kingdom \$14 million dollars (£5 million), and the US \$20 million dollars (£7.14 million).⁹³

Meanwhile, Ghana's Second Development Plan was developed by Lewis, who was trained at the London School of Economics, and came in October 1957 on a two-year contract sponsored by the UN.⁹⁴ Lewis was originally influenced by Fabianism, a non-Marxist socialism that affected British colonial policies during the 1940s, and worked at the Colonial Office as an economic advisor (1943–1945). The 1950s model saw African economic growth through small-scale subsistence farming as a basis for industrialization, suggesting that the raised productivity of peasants generated idle rural labor for industry, which in turn generated the market and supply of cheap goods. In 1957, Lewis worked with the Australian Robert Jackson on the Second Five-Year Plan, which prioritized agricultural development as a basis for industrialization, to be financed by Western foreign investments (US, UK), but

Economies [*Międzyuczelniany Zakład Problemów Krajów Słabo Rozwiniętych*] was a joint unit of the University of Warsaw and the Main School of Planning and Statistics, led by Kalecki. This institution fell victim to political struggle in 1968, and after its staff disintegrated, it was reestablished as the Institute for Research of Developing Countries [*Instytut Gospodarki Krajów Rozwijających się*] (see also Dobrska 1968; Tymowski 2004).

⁹¹ Grischow and Weiss (2015).

⁹² Nkrumah (1957: x, 12, 155).

⁹³ Grischow and Weiss (2015).

⁹⁴ Sir William Arthur Lewis (1915–1991) was a British economist born in Castries, Saint Lucia (British Windward Islands in the Caribbean), who received the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economics in 1979. See Grischow and Weiss (2015).

achieved not through *laissez faire* but state planning.⁹⁵ This entailed a mixed economy with little direct state ownership – even Padmore liked this approach for going between capitalist and socialist development models. But when Nkrumah and leftists ambitiously increased expenditures from £70-80 million to £230 million, Lewis resigned in December 1958.⁹⁶

Despite great expectations, between 1959 and 1961 the growth rate under the Second Development Plan failed to cover its expenditures and already produced a £53 million deficit. After Lewis left and Padmore died (1959), this allowed the CPP's radicals to increase their influence. Nkrumah's "Soviet turn" broke with the non-Marxist reformist ideas of Lewis in the 1950s and the development model favored by Fabian colonial officials during the 1940s.⁹⁷ He aborted the Second Five-Year Plan, and established the National Planning Commission to draft a new development plan, directed by leftists H. Miller-Craig, Joseph H. Mensiah, and T. T. Naer. One of the Ghanaian economists, Omaboe (1966: 450–451) suggested that the Soviet trip in 1961 induced Nkrumah to give the new development plan a span of seven years, imitating Russia in launching its own first seven-year plan in 1959. But his decision to abort the Second Five-Year Plan after only two years was made already before this trip, when Nkrumah described it as "piecemeal and unpurposeful."⁹⁸ As Grischow and Weiss explain, the Ghanaian plan differed from the Nigerian Government's decision to produce adequate data as the basis of planning, instead the growth rate to be achieved was decided first, and the plan was developed to meet these numbers. The plan also differed in that it envisioned a "big push" for rapid industrialization, against the focus on agriculture in Lewis's plan and the Nigerian plan.⁹⁹ As Killick emphasizes, perhaps the main issue was that Ghana's economy was not very "plannable," since its extremely "open economy" primarily depended on a single export product (cocoa), the price of which was very sensitive to the world market, while its essentially agricultural economy depended on the yearly instability of weather conditions. Furthermore, there were no reliable national statistics to prepare a serious macro-economic plan, and many important economic decisions remained in private hands.¹⁰⁰ The plan was based on four bodies of statistical data: the 1960 census, data on external trade, consumption surveys, and national income estimates.¹⁰¹ Although provisions were made for a series of annual plans, but only one ever appeared (Annual Plan of 1965), thus the First Seven-Year Plan had no serious flexibility.

⁹⁵ Lewis, Arthur W. (1953): Report on Industrialization in the Gold Coast. Accra: Gold Coast Government. See Grischow and Weiss (2015). As Grischow and Weiss (2015: 236) explain, Jackson advised on the VRP from 1953, and later chaired the Planning Commission between 1956 and 1961. Previously he was an officer of the British Treasury Board and assistant secretary-general of the UN. See Thompson (1969: 21).

⁹⁶ Grischow and Weiss (2015).

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ See Uphoff (1970: 101) and Killick (2010[1978]: 66).

⁹⁹ Grischow and Weiss (2015).

¹⁰⁰ Killick (2010[1978]: 147).

¹⁰¹ Grischow and Weiss (2015: 231).

In this context, after his visit in the summer of 1961, Nkrumah asked Bognár to participate in putting together Ghana's First Seven-Year Plan. The assignment was also presented in the Hungarian media.¹⁰² The media reported previously that in the discussions between Kádár and Nkrumah, the latter admitted to have procured and read the English edition of Bognár's book (*Tervgazdaság Magyarországon*, 1959):

The people of Ghana also have to fight great difficulties. Above all, we must prospect our country's resources and capabilities, and then we have to develop good plans. Both in the former and the latter we count on the help of the Hungarian people. You already have much experience. From Saturday to Sunday morning I have read the English edition of the book 'State Planning in Hungary.' I must say, it offers splendid guidelines...¹⁰³

This "lucky" incident, later explained by Bognár in numerous interviews, led to his assignment. In an enthusiastic summary, he admitted that his 2 months stay at Ghana proved to be one of the most beautiful periods in his life. Indeed, as we shall see, this had a huge impact on his international career, and shows the importance of taking into account the identity-formation, intentionality, the personal and emotional ties and experiences influencing experts' motivations. In almost all of his interviews, Bognár emphasized that due to great responsibilities, planning work could only be enabled by sincere trust, referring to his personal relation to Nkrumah – and this resonated well with the – politically induced – solidarity between postcolonial and Eastern Bloc countries.

Under Bognár's technical guidance, the Planning Commission worked on the new plan during 1961 and early 1962 (Fig. 8).¹⁰⁴ After a four-month preparation phase, Bognár spent with two assistants, Tamás Bácskai and Gábor Székely, two months from January until the end of March 1962 in Accra. With directives completed, 8 specialized committees worked for 6 months to write up detailed sectoral development plans until October. Bognár published his experiences in the journal *Economic Review [Közgazdasági Szemle]*.¹⁰⁵ He elsewhere argued for the necessary involvement of socialist Hungary in planning "poorly developed countries" due to:

the situation of African countries sometimes directly, but for the time being more indirectly, corresponds with the growing weight of socialist countries in the international scene.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Népszabadság (1962): Hazaérkezett Ghánából dr. Bognár József egyetemi tanár. Népszabadság, március 24.; Magyar Nemzet (1962): Ghana fejlődéséről, hétéves tervének előkészítéséről, az országaink közötti kapcsolatokról nyilatkozott Bognár József egyetemi tanár, a Kulturális Kapcsolatok Intézetének elnöke. Magyar Nemzet, április 3. 1962.; István György (1962): Magyar segítség a ghanai terv készítéséhez: Bognár József professzor afrikai útjáról. Népszabadság, április 13. Magyar Nemzet (1963): Nkrumah fogadta Bognár Józsefet. Április 14. HU OSA 300-40-1: 848., HU OSA 300-40-5: 21/19.

¹⁰³ Köszei Frigyes (1961): Távol a szemtől, közel a szívhez. Népszabadság, augusztus 1. 1961. HU OSA 300-40-1: 713.; See Bognár (1959a; 1959b).

¹⁰⁴ At this point it might be noted, that Bognár was originally not an economist, but educated in the humanities.

¹⁰⁵ Bognár, József (1962): A gazdaságilag gyengén fejlett országok növekedési problémái a ghanai tervezés tükrében. *Közgazdasági Szemle*, július. HU OSA 300-40-1: 848.

¹⁰⁶ Magyar Nemzet (1962): Ghana fejlődéséről, hétéves tervének előkészítéséről, az országaink közötti kapcsolatokról nyilatkozott Bognár József egyetemi tanár, a Kulturális Kapcsolatok Intézetének elnöke. Április 13. HU OSA 300-40-1: 848.

Interestingly, he was surprised to experience that Western experts assigned by the UN in Ghana were also influenced by centralized state planning (the UN was very much state-centrist at that time):

...the planning economy is considered a “fatal sin” in Europe, but acceptable in Africa. ... But one thing is certain: the planning economy has gained prominence on the black continent.

Fig. 8. The Hungarian delegation of economic development consultants



The Hungarian delegation of economists arrive in Accra to develop Ghana's First Seven-Year Plan in 1962. From left to right: Tamás Bácskai (Bognár's assistant, associate professor), Péter Kós (first ambassador), Kwame Nkrumah (President of the Republic of Ghana), József Bognár (chief advisor), Gábor Székely (Bognár's assistant, economic engineer).¹⁰⁷

In an interview, Bognár explained that the plan started with an annual 5.5% growth projection requiring £840 million in expenditures, and aimed to increase gross domestic incomes by 50–55%.¹⁰⁸ The state was imagined as the main driver of growth: since loans were taken up by the state, the new industries were to become state property, thus international aid supported nationalization, while according to new laws, 60% of the profit of foreign companies had to be invested in Ghana. A 5-year tax relief was provided for strategic industrial branches, and a duty relief to the import of machinery and building materials. But the main issue was that the monocultivation of cocoa production had a detrimental effect on domestic agricultural and industrial production, and the economy thus relied on constant and varying amounts of food imports. Agriculture needed first to provide for the local population in face of

¹⁰⁷ Bognár, József (1962): Két hónap Ghánában. *Magyar Hírek*, május 1. 1–2.

¹⁰⁸ *Népszabadság* (1963): Bognár József professzor... Március 31. *Népszabadság* (1963): Bognár József hazautazott Ghanából. Április 11.; István György (1962): Magyar segítség a ghanai terv készítéséhez: Bognár József professzor afrikai útjáról. *Népszabadság*, április 13. HU OSA 300-40-1: 848.

increasing annual population growth (3%). Due to decreasing prices of raw materials but rising prices of finished products at the time, the development of basic industries, such as textile industry, cotton production (25% of Ghana's import was textiles), cement industry, and timber industry, were to reduce imports, supplemented by the manufacturing of existing raw materials, such as gold mints and sawmills, to improve trade exchange rates.

The First Seven-Year Plan of Ghana was a truly transnational product, which represented the emerging transnational character of development planning, since previously colonial planning was administered by experts coming from the imperial core. The assembling of the plan was also a prime example of the postwar development of transnational expertise in economic development. Killick accepts that Bognár was the most influential in creating the Plan, but the Plan was not simply a product of the Hungarian delegation, but a negotiated product of various local and foreign planners and ministers. Formulated by the Planning Commission, the plan's preparations included 4 qualified Ghanaians and 16 foreign advisors of varying expertise and command of English, and limited knowledge of the Ghanaian economy.¹⁰⁹ Among the Ghanaians were Omaboe and Mensah, while the Bank of Ghana was also an important advisor, building together with the Planning Commission a staff of freshly graduated economists versed in the ideas of mainstream development economics.¹¹⁰ The draft plan was written by Mensah, but compiled by Bognár's team. For advice on tax issues, Nkrumah turned to (Lord) Nicholas Kaldor, renowned a Hungarian-born British economist by the original name of Miklós Káldor. Another Eastern European involved in the Plan was the Polish economist Czesław Bobrowski (1904–1996) from the Planning Commission of Poland. Bobrowski's figure is highly interesting, as in the 1970s he became a renowned expert in economic development, working for the United Nations in developing countries such as Algeria, Ghana, Iraq, and Syria.¹¹¹ Due to criticism from the World Bank and to their suggestion, the CPP held an academic conference in March 1963 to discuss the plan. This conference became an iconic moment of clash between different ideas on economic development, with 14 high-ranking experts arriving from the US, the UK, the Eastern Bloc, and the Third World, such as Dudley Seers, (Sir) W. Arthur Lewis, (Lord) Nicholas Kaldor, Albert Hirschman, K. N. Raj (Delhi School of Economics), H. C. Bos, József Bognár (representing Ghana's Planning Commission), and Czesław

¹⁰⁹ Killick (2010[1978]: 147)

¹¹⁰ Killick (2010[1978]: 58)

¹¹¹ Bobrowski is only mentioned passingly by Grischow and Weiss (2015), and surprisingly not at all by Killick (2010[1978]). Bobrowski worked out the postwar reconstruction and development program of Poland in his exile in London. On November 1945, he was appointed president of the Central Planning Office until February 1948, and developed the three-year Economic Recovery Plan. Under Stalinization he was removed from his office and fled to France, where he became research fellow at the Institute of Political Science and the National Center for Research in (*Center Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique*) during 1952–1956. Bobrowski returned to Poland after October 1956, and continued as a researcher and in 1958 full professor at the University of Warsaw, and as deputy chairman of the Economic Council of the Council of Ministers during 1957–1963. Together with Zygmunt Bauman, Jan Strzelecki, and Jerzy Viaterm he took part in the discussion devoted to the future of Polish society in 1961. He left Poland after the events of March 1968.

Bobrowski.¹¹² The draft discussed was identical with the final plan document, which was criticized for its optimism of projected targets and high expenditures, but it was generally well greeted. The international conference was only superficially referred to in the Hungarian press.¹¹³ Mensah agreed to revise the plan and to offer it to be reviewed by Bognár, Lewis, Bobrowski, and Raj. But Mensah increased the budget by £1 billion, and wanted to present the revised plan in August 1963 in Geneva, but only Bognár and Bobrowski took part in the meeting, which ultimately had little impact.

But the First Seven-Year Plan, although accepted by politicians, soon conflicted with the regime. For Nkrumah, development was synonymous with industrialization, while the plan emphasized the need for agricultural development, aiming at reducing Ghana's dependence on imported food-stuffs:

...the most readily available way of raising the national income is by concentrating our efforts in the coming seven years first and foremost on the modernization of agriculture. ... however much progress is made in the non-agricultural sectors of the economy the general level of prosperity in Ghana cannot increase significantly unless agriculture which employs nearly two-thirds of the labor force also undergoes a revolutionary change. During the next two decades the rate of growth in agriculture will condition the rate of growth of the whole economy.¹¹⁴

It was clear that Nkrumah accepted a Plan that he was not in actual agreement with. Conflict evolved between the experts in the Planning Commission and individual ministers, who often resisted them.¹¹⁵ Already one year after its initialization, an *Annual Plan* for 1965 was accepted, which shifted dramatically into higher gear in industrialization. This signaled the expanding rift between Mensah and the militant wing of the ruling party: in an open lecture Mensah criticized Marxist concepts and class analysis as having limited applicability to Ghana (Mensah 1965), and in turn was attacked strongly by party ideologues (e.g. in the *Ghanaian Times*, 4–7 August 1964). In the end, Mensah left to take up a post at the UN. As Grischow and Weiss cite Tignor, the CPP's political vision of rapid socialist industrialization led to treating "economists as mere technicians whose task it was to achieve the goals that the politicians set for the economy, no matter how unrealistic."¹¹⁶ In the end, the plan turned out to be primarily a performative political document, as Grischow and Weiss explain:

Nkrumah's Seven-Year Plan illustrates the optimism of the early 1960s that development planning and forecasting could be used as performative tools for securing visions of the future.¹¹⁷

¹¹² See Grischow and Weiss (2015: 123), Tignor (2006: 187), and Killick (2010[1978]: 58). Tony Killick was also one of the participants.

¹¹³ *Népszabadság* (1963): Bognár József professzor... Március 31. *Népszabadság* (1963): Bognár József hazautazott Ghanából. Április 11. HU OSA 300-40-1: 848.

¹¹⁴ Government of Ghana (1964: 14, 54, 61, 55–56).

¹¹⁵ Killick (2010[1978]: 154 – 155).

¹¹⁶ Tignor (2006: 192).

¹¹⁷ Grischow and Weiss (2015: 231).

The National Planning Commission, controlled by the government, functioned to legitimate through scientific principles and statistical information a technoscientific vision and perspective for the future of a united nation by securing the public's support. Despite all limitations described above, Mensah declared that

in the final analysis, the real value of a plan is to give the nation a sense of direction and to institute a system of purposive discipline. ... The task of holding the nation onto its chosen course and of drawing out of the people of this country their willing sacrifice and enthusiastic co-operation has been entrusted to a new Planning Commission.¹¹⁸

The First Seven-Year Plan, publicly announced in 1962 in accord with Nkrumah's Program for Work and Happiness, intended to create "a socialist state devoted to the welfare of the masses."¹¹⁹ The plan was finally launched in 1964, when Ghana officially turned into a one-party state.¹²⁰

The final budget of the plan was allocated at £486 million, which broke down into £231 million from state funds, £255 million from foreign loans, and around £100 million from socialist countries. Taking huge risks, Ghana counted on paying back loans solely by its cocoa exports if prices remained stable (they originally calculated with the rising prices of 1959–60). The plan was part of an overtly ambitious import-substitution industrialization strategy to decrease the imports of basic consumer goods, while the burdens of industrialization and infrastructure development were to be financed through export surpluses, foreign loans and nationalization. Industrialization was imagined to be funded from around £350 million of private capital, stimulated by concessions to foreign investors.¹²¹ Of the total of £4,47 million worth of exports, £4,39 million were cocoa, of which £3,06 million was Soviet import.¹²² 60% of Ghana's export consisted of cocoa beans, supplemented by tropical timber, diamonds, gold, bauxite, and manganese ore. From socialist countries Ghana imported cement, textiles, shoes and foodstuffs. The share of agricultural exports ranged from 55–75% depending on the world market; 30% of the world's cocoa produce came from Ghana, optimism was based on record production in 1959–1960 (Figyelő 1961). In 1961, socialist countries bought 70.000 tons, the USA, partly due to the "Berlin crisis" and to counter socialist influence, doubled its import to 139.000 tons. But between 1959 and 1962, the price of Ghanaian cocoa beans dropped from 275 to 171 pounds per ton. Ghana strove to secure the stability of cocoa prices by establishing their own stock exchange office (Cocoa Marketing Board), and by negotiating with other producers to enforce international agreements, which was supported by FAO, but ultimately failed. The trade deficit of Ghana grew from £13.6

¹¹⁸ Government of Ghana (1964: vi, x; cited in Grischow and Weiss 2015: 231).

¹¹⁹ Nkrumah (1973: 145, 397; cited in Grischow and Weiss 2015: 229)

¹²⁰ Grischow and Weiss (2015: 231).

¹²¹ Verő, Ubul (1963): Ghana fejlesztési tervei. *Szemle*, 16-17. HU OSA 300-40-1: 713.

¹²² Rynki Zagraniczne (1962): Ghana gazdaságának és külkereskedelmének alakulása. 1962. június 23. *Külkereskedelmi Szemle*, 58–59. HU OSA 300-40-1: 713.

million in 1960 to £27.7 million in 1961, and cocoa prices plummeted between 1961–1965.¹²³

But perhaps the greatest risk was the Volta Dam Project (VRP), which was treated separately from the plan, in spite the burning fact that the whole success of the plan presupposed the complete electrification of Ghana.¹²⁴ It was planned to be one of the largest hydroelectric dams in the world to provide cheap energy for the modernizing state, and support aluminum production to generate income and pay back loans in the long term. But it turned out to be a typical “neocolonial deal”: the main source of credit and expertise came from the US on high interest rates and short-term payback, while Kaiser insisted upon getting a guarantee of 60% profits and did not let Ghana to build on its own base of bauxite in fear of nationalization (the huge bauxite reserves of 200 million tons were a recent discovery), and instead planned to import bauxite. Nkrumah’s visions and fate was largely dependent on the success of the Akosombo hydroelectric plant. Due to trade deficit and costly infrastructure developments, the government’s sterling reserves fell rapidly from 1959, and already in 1961 the £43 million reserves could be contrasted with the £100 million project of the Volta dam. But cocoa prices crashed in 1965, and soon after celebrating the opening of the dam in January 1966, Ghana became officially bankrupt, and Nkrumah’s regime overthrown in a military coup during his visit in Vietnam.

Nevertheless, the VRP was an immense transnational project, on which a range of experts worked from surveying to planning and materialization, coming from the UK, the US, the Soviet Union, and the Eastern Bloc. The VRP was an iconic example of the huge hydroelectric dams envisioned and deployed by postcolonial governments in the belief of unleashing modernity, represented by the sheer materiality of the dam and progressive technoscientific planning to provide a perspective for the future of the nation.¹²⁵ The project was embedded in the general optimism of 1960s in an era of global economic boom and Cold War investment drives, especially postwar US capital expansion. The Volta Lake became the largest man-made lake at the time ranging 3.275 square miles, and needed the displacement of around 80.000 people from 739 villages (ca. 1% of total population), who were mostly subsistence farmers producing cocoa, into newly built towns of “nuclear” or “core” houses.¹²⁶ Relocation entailed serious urban and regional planning. One of the planners was László Huszár, a Hungarian 1956 emigré living in London, who after unsuccessfully attempting to build a political base of emigrant intellectuals, left to work in Ghana with a British architect, David Grove, on planning new settlements for the relocated population

¹²³ Rynki Zagraniczne (1962): Ghana gazdaságának és külkereskedelmének alakulása. 1962. június 23. Külkereskedelmi Szemle, 58–59. HU OSA 300-40-1: 713.

¹²⁴ Miescher (2014a; 2014b) and Miescher and Tsikata (2009/2010).

¹²⁵ The materiality of the dam and its connection to the personality of Nkrumah is well captured by his Memorial in Accra (Fig. 9).

¹²⁶ Johnson et al. (2015). See the documentary book of an American advisor working on the project: Moxon (1984).

between 1961 and 1965.¹²⁷ The work of Huszár and Grove was published in a book that formed an element in the transnational history of spatial analysis or urban and regional planning, a topic yet not treated well in mainstream literature of human geography.¹²⁸

The Center for Afro-Asian Research

In an interview, Bognár claimed that after Ghana he was invited by many other developing countries, such as India, Indonesia, Burma, and the United Arab Republic to advise on their economic plans. He explained his own raised interest in developing countries by “chance”: Nkrumah read his book, *Planned Economy in Hungary* in 1961, and only after his invitation to Ghana as chief advisor did he realize developing countries as “the most important issue in the world economy.”¹²⁹ My interviewees underlined that the book was a relatively huge international success in “developing countries” and was accessed by the representatives of the above-mentioned states.¹³⁰ Due to the pilot project of Ghana, most of Bognár’s later scientific and advisory work focused on the issue of developing countries, for instance, he gained his academic fellowship with the topic “The status and role of developing countries in the world economy in the forthcoming decades.”¹³¹ In an interview, he claimed that despite the many advantages the larger and more developed countries had, Hungary also bore some counter-advantages in building relations with these countries: following an “honest approach,” having knowledge of centralized decision-making, and being similarly dependent on foreign trade. In Bognár’s opinion, the interest of Eastern European socialist countries laid in providing aid, redistribution of world resources, market for socialist products, and enforcing political development. The assignment in Ghana put Bognár into the limelight of international foreign affairs. For example, his interview article noted proudly that the British magazine, *The Economist*, acknowledged Bognár’s opinion of stating that taking up huge loans despite the temporarily good climate would result in crisis.¹³² Ironically, precisely this factor was decisive in leading Ghana into bankruptcy.

¹²⁷ Remarkably, David Grove is still alive at the age of 93, and I have managed to correspond with him and gather his autobiography.

¹²⁸ See the interview of Huszár (2001) by Béla Nové, and Huszár (1965) and Huszár and Grove (1964). See also: d’Auria. (2014). Together with his friend, Géza Ankerl, they drafted and circulated in many languages a “depolarization scheme” in 1960 that proposed multi-step – diplomatic, military, and political – international reorganization, which built on acknowledging the role and power of the “Third World,” and by using the UN envisioned to create new non-alignment zones, through which Central Europe and Hungary could become a neutral country. The transnational history of the theory Huszár and Grove used, namely central place theory, is the topic of my PhD dissertation.

¹²⁹ Pozsgai József (1965): Tervezők tanácsadója: Bognár professzor a fejlődő országok problémáiról. *Magyarország*, 36.: 9. HU OSA 300-40-5: 21/19. See Bognár (1959b).

¹³⁰ Personal correspondence with Mihály Simai.

¹³¹ Magyar Nemzet (1965): A fejlődő országok helyzete és szerepe a következő évtizedek világgazdaságában: Bognár József akadémiai székfoglaló előadása. November 9. HU OSA 300-40-5: 21/19.

¹³² Pozsgai József (1965): Tervezők tanácsadója: Bognár professzor a fejlődő országok problémáiról. *Magyarország*, 36.: 9. HU OSA 300-40-5: 21/19.

Through Bognár's efforts, his connection with Nkrumah also resulted in institutionalizing a new type of expertise in development planning, global development studies, and area studies, which greatly influenced Hungary's participation in the global market of development advocacy to the "Third World." My interviews also reinforced that the "Ghana job" was decisive in institutionalizing the Afro-Asian Research Group in 1963, which later evolved into the formal institute of the Center for Afro-Asian Research at HAS in 1965. Although his research group was already funded by HAS in 1961, due to his rapidly expanding workload and incoming assignments, Bognár proposed the foundation of an official research group on 27 September 1962, which was to be temporarily at Karl Marx Economic University at his department, the Department of Trade.¹³³ In his proposition, he explained that after generalizing his local planning experiences in Ghana, he extended these to other countries in order to identify various development types.¹³⁴ The need for such a research institute was underlined by the fact that "poorly developed countries" [*gyengén fejlett államok*] had gained increasing role in international politics, world economy and trade, and therefore in concerning scientific research. He explained that the UN congress in Geneva (February 1963) was dedicated to the issues of these countries and the UN African Committee was also founded, while a number of UNESCO initiatives and the Vienna congress of the International Association of Economics also focused on these issues. He also highlighted the heightened competition to persuade these countries economically and politically, the need for proper scientific groundwork in this, and that a great number of institutions have been developed in capitalist countries, while development advocacy is now provided not only by individual advisors, but more and more by several institutions at once. Interestingly his rhetoric focused on international organizations and Western competition, and not Soviet needs or institutional developments in the field.

The establishment of CAAR went in line with the institutionalization process of similar centers in socialist countries specializing in global comparative analysis and development expertise, including the Institute for the World Economy and International Relations in the Soviet Union in 1956, the Center of Research on Underdeveloped Economies in Poland in 1962, and the Institute for Developing Countries in Zagreb, Yugoslavia in 1971.¹³⁵ An RLRI report in 1958 already summarized these early institutionalization efforts in the Soviet Union in light of foreign political penetration strategies into African countries – the boom in scientific activity was characteristically labeled as the "export of Communist dogma" against "pure scholarship."¹³⁶ The RLRI reported that the leading Africanist, Ivan Potekhin visited Ghana in 1957 October to do research at the Ghana University College for a

¹³³ HAS Archives. Letter from János Molnár to József Bognár. 31223/1962.VI. Budapest, 8 November 1962.

¹³⁴ HAS Archives. 15302/II/1963. Bognár József: Beadvány a Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Elnökségéhez Afro-Ázsia-i kutató csoport létesítése tárgyában. Budapest, 27 September 1962.

¹³⁵ Bockman et al. (*forthcoming*).

¹³⁶ HU OSA 300-8-3-18103. The Communist Drive into Africa, 7 March 1958.

book on cultural institutions. In an interview he commented on the significance of his trip:

Since Ghana became independent the Soviet Government has developed an extraordinary interest in Ghana in particular and in Africa in general.¹³⁷

Potekhin was the Deputy Directory of the Institute of Ethnography at the Soviet Academy of Sciences (SAS) from 1949 to 1959, which was the center of studies on tropical and Southern Africa. This institution served as the site for a conference held on February 1957 about coordinating research on Africa in the various institutes of SAS, namely of ethnography, oriental studies, geography, world economics, and international affairs. Potekhin was the founding director of the Institute of Africa at SAS in 1959 (until his death in 1964).¹³⁸ The RLRI report noted that while during 1917–1945 books published on Africa were only around four per year, during 1946–1956 this rose to a number between an annual 10 to 100. Potekhin set the agenda:

Soviet scholars have to work out a number of problems concerning African history, geography, economics, languages, etc., in the light of Marxism-Leninism.¹³⁹

The second most important institution noted by the report dealing with the “Afro-Asian problem” was the Institute of Oriental Studies (IOS). Bobodzhan Gafurovich Gafurov, head of IOS and former Secretary of the Communist Party of Tadzhikistan, explained in an interview to the paper *Kommunist Tadzhikistana* on 28 November 1957:

The significance of Africa has grown immeasurably from the point of view of contemporary world politics and world economics. ... It must be said that Soviet science is far from adequately dealing with the study of Africa. Our Institute is faced with the task of thoroughly investigating the economic, social and political processes causing the particular features of the crisis of the colonial system in Africa. We are also called upon to unmask the racial fabrications in English, French and American bourgeois writers. ... The endeavor of the Institute is that the works of the Orientalists should have significance both for scientific establishments and State organizations which are engaged in practical activities in the countries of the East.¹⁴⁰

He also explained their new focus on the history and economics of Africa south of the Sahara, work together with the Institute of World Economics on the decolonization struggle and “questions regarding the economic development of these countries.” From July 1957, IOS published the monthly journal *Contemporary East* [*Sovremenii Vostok*], and its October issue already focused on countries such as Sierra Leone.¹⁴¹ Apart from the first Soviet trajectories, the RLRI also recognized some of the developments in the Eastern Bloc – including the establishment of CAAR – in 1965:

East European countries are beginning to concentrate on African studies. Polish lecturers have been teaching in African universities, and East Germany has taken a particular interest in the

¹³⁷ Ibid. p. 9.

¹³⁸ See Natufe (2011: 105). For Potekhin’s ideas on Africa’s socio-economic and political problems, see Klinghoffer (1969) and Potekhin (1961; 1963).

¹³⁹ Ibid. p. 5.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 6. On Gafurov (1908–1977) and Russian Orientalism during the Cold War, see Jansen (2015)

¹⁴¹ Ibid. p. 7.

Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute at Winneba, in Ghana. There is a new center for African studies in Budapest, and the Polish Institute of International Affairs conducts political studies. The Czechs (who have a traditional interest in Egyptology), the Poles and the East Germans are beginning to conduct field research in Africa.¹⁴²

Eastern European countries strove to export their own national expertise, collect their own experiences and resources, and draft their own foreign economic strategies rather autonomously, in the absence of any effective coordination on the Comecon level, since the latter's Commission for Technical Assistance aiming to construct a united front towards the decolonizing world ultimately failed in practice.¹⁴³

But returning back to Bognár and CAAR, what is conceptually remarkable in his proposal is that he argued *against* imposing socialist or capitalist development models on these countries, and suggested a separate category of “poorly developed countries” as “a specific type of economic development”:

Before my invitation to Ghana, the issue of economically poorly developed countries – as a primary, specific question – has not been dealt with by any Hungarian research institution. The few researchers active in this field did not focus on the growth problems of poorly developed countries, but on the relation of socialist or developed capitalist countries towards poorly developed ones. They aimed to provide answers from the perspective of the nature and character of the socialist or the monopolcapitalist system in order to demonstrate how the two systems were mirrored in the same context (poorly developed countries).

The analysis of problems is also legitimate from this point of view, but inevitably research must primarily be based on poorly developed countries as a separate type of economic development.¹⁴⁴ [original emphasis]

In fact, he continued to argue that “the historically evolved problematic of socialist countries is also not far from the issues of poorly developed countries (China, Vietnam, Mongolia)” [original emphasis].¹⁴⁵ Bognár explicitly proposed his institution to become a think tank for the government, in order to provide training and briefing for advisors, experts, and university lecturers traveling to “poorly developed countries.” This was also highlighted by the report of the HAS Department of Economics:

Thus in the field of economics, the Department leadership used the target support of this year to create a departmental research group focusing on the economic issues of Afro-Asian poorly developed countries, which will function to meet the fast-paced increase of needs in this field generated primarily by various state organs.¹⁴⁶

He also highlighted that the establishment of an institute would remedy that students and experts arriving from these countries to Hungary are not taught in topics relevant to their own regional socio-historical and economic contexts.

¹⁴² HU OSA 300-8-3-18075. East Europe's Role in Africa, 12 June 1965. p. 3.

¹⁴³ See Lorenzini (2014) and Bockman et al. (*forthcoming*).

¹⁴⁴ HAS Archives. 15302/II/1963. Bognár József: Beadvány a Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Elnökségéhez Afro-Ázsia-i kutató csoport létesítése tárgyában. Budapest, 27 September 1962.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ MTA (1964a: 280).

Though the Afro-Asian Research Group [*Afro-Ázsiai Kutató Csoport*] was based at the university's department, but being an entity of HAS and under the personal, political protection of Bognár, it enjoyed great autonomy. This autonomy was guaranteed not only because of Bognár's high reputation, but also due to his good personal relations with János Kádár.¹⁴⁷ Interestingly, it seems that Bognár dragooned some politically sensitive people who quarreled with the regime, and some of my interviewees even suggested some consciousness in this respect to provide him with a more stable "grip" on colleagues.¹⁴⁸ In his proposal, Bognár asked for 7 researchers (he received 6 positions), and ambitiously projected the growth of the research group to 40–50 people by 1980.¹⁴⁹ For funding, he also asked and received a 150.000 Forint "academic loan" from the HAS. The "Ghana job" was outsourced to the Economic History Department, and the International Trade Department, while previous informal work was retroactively funded in part by the new HAS support. The Afro-Asian Research Group was treated as a significant entity under HAS, receiving high funding and escalating development.¹⁵⁰ Initially part-time jobs were provided to Tibor Forgács, Tamás Szentes, Árpád Orosz and Jánosné Sas, but Bognár also asked for the employment of Péter Mándi, Egon Kemenes, Gézáne Hosszú (secretary and coordinator), József Kepecs, Szallah Mohamed, Albertné Molnár. They were a rather heterogeneous team of a new scientific field of global development economics and area studies in Hungary. Bognár's setting calculated with flexible payments to enable efficient, project-based work allocation and payments for external translators and occasional advisors or experts.¹⁵¹ A number of experts joined to work in this flexible setting, such as the already mentioned journalist and reporter György Kalmár. An assistant researcher, Károly Iványi wrote his doctoral dissertation on the economic development of Ghana in 1964.¹⁵² Collaboration was proposed with the Foreign Trade Department and the Economic Geography Department at the university. Ferenc Erdei, the president of the HAS, suggested discussing the perspectives of the institute to focus on either economics or complex Africa studies, in the latter option suggesting the establishment of a council headed by the historian, leading Africanist, diplomat and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Endre Sík.¹⁵³ Although the established institution

¹⁴⁷ Part of my research project plans to decipher their correspondence.

¹⁴⁸ Interview with Tamás Szentes.

¹⁴⁹ HAS Archives. 15302/II/Dm/1963. Kónya Sándor levele Bognár Józsefnek. Budapest, 6 March 1963.

¹⁵⁰ In the HAS budget, the number of institutions receiving target funding decreased (1959: 58, 1962: 24, 1964: 16) in line with the concentration of larger funds to strategic research. Of the 26% total growth in the funds of HAS during 1960–1963, 22% was used to organize the CAAR (MTA 1964b: 413).

¹⁵¹ HAS Archives. Bognár József: Az Afro-Ázsiai Kutató Csoport 1963. évi kutatási támogatásának felhasználási terve. Budapest, 20 May 1963.

¹⁵² HAS Archives. 113/50/1965. Általános beszámoló az MTA Afro Ázsiai Kutató Csoportjának 1964. évi munkájáról. Budapest, 30 January 1965.

¹⁵³ HAS Archives. 15302/II/1963. Magyar Tudományos Akadémia főtitkár. Feljegyzés Kónya Sándor elvtárs részére. Budapest, 28 March 1963. Endre Sík (1891–1978) was captured by the Russian army in 1915 during WWI, and in the Soviet Union he became a teacher at the Africa Department of the Eastern Workers' Communist University (1926–1937), the associate of the Soviet Scientific Academy and taught at the State University of Moscow (1938–1945), coming back to Hungary in 1945, and from 1947 worked in high-rank positions as minister and diplomat in the Foreign Ministry, finally as

partly worked as a think tank for the Foreign Ministry, my interviews suggest that by the 1970s, much of the work ran parallel to and not dependent upon other institutions, and the institute managed to secure great autonomy, partly due to international contracts.

During the 1960s, the research scope and staff expanded rapidly.¹⁵⁴ Criticism of the research group's annual research plan for 1965 included suggestions from the vice-Minister of Foreign Trade, Jenő Baczoni, to turn more acutely towards application in foreign trade, connecting the detailed study of regional and economic development plans of African countries with Hungary's long-term potential export possibilities, particularly machinery products and the export of professionals. A particular suggestion targeted the analysis of the African consumer market, especially Nigeria, and the inclusion of Uganda, as together with Tanganyika and Kenya, they formed a customs union. Baczoni also suggested the regular sending of materials, and to directly involve the Foreign Ministry's Asian and African Interstate Department.¹⁵⁵ János Szita, vice-President of the National Planning Office, recommended including Latin American countries, a general focus on underdevelopment, elaboration on oil production, special ores, and the textile industry, and extending research on the relation of Comecon and underdeveloped countries.¹⁵⁶ Thus the potential of the research group's work was realized and attempts were made by government officials to gravitate the institution closer under the control and demands of government departments. In 1964, the research group collected materials and data on Morocco, Senegal, Guinea, Mali, Dahomey, Ghana, Nigeria, Malawi, Tanzania, Kenya, India, Burma amongst others.¹⁵⁷ The research group also cooperated with the HAS Africanist Working Committee in organizing Hungarian African studies. In the latter part of the 1960s, with the hiring of András Inotai and Béla Kádár, the institution extended its scientific scope to Latin American countries.

Apart from being a scientific institution, the policy-oriented research studies of CAAR consistently argued for export-oriented growth in the Hungarian economy, and

Minister of Foreign Affairs (1958–1961). From 1963, he became member and a year later president of the Council for World Peace [*Béke Világtanács*]. He authored the four-volume *History of Black Africa* [*Fekete-Afrika története*] published in 1964–1973, also in French and English.

¹⁵⁴ Proposed research topics for the 1963–65 period focused on “poorly developed countries” in the following topics: development of education and training, transition from monoculture to diversified agricultural development, energy resources and development, organization of state apparatus (especially economic), internal accumulation, comparative analysis of long-term planning methods, consumer structure, the comparative economic development of Iraq and Iran, general characteristics of underdevelopment, the Common Market's relations with underdeveloped countries, population growth and growth projections. HAS Archives. Az Afro-Ázsiai Kutató Csoport 1965. évi kutatási terve. 6 p.

¹⁵⁵ HAS Archives. Baczoni Jenő véleménye az Afro-Ázsiai Kutató Csoport 1965. évi kutatási tervére vonatkozóan. 20 November 1964.

¹⁵⁶ HAS Archives. Szita János véleménye az Afro-Ázsiai Kutató Csoport 1965. évi kutatási tervére vonatkozóan. 18 November 1964.

¹⁵⁷ In 1964, document exchanges underwent with: Algeria, Republic of Middle Africa, Congo Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Libya, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Malawi, Zambia, South Rhodesia, Senegal, Sudan, Tunisia, Uganda, and Zanzibar. HAS Archives. 113/50/1965. Általános beszámoló az MTA Afro Ázsiai Kutató Csoportjának 1964. évi munkájáról. Budapest, 30 January 1965.

monitored the world economy for comparable development patterns and potential investment opportunities to advise Hungarian foreign policy. For example, in connection with Ghana, after its development of aluminum industry and bauxite mining in the 1960s, one of CAAR's vast policy materials argued for the leading role of Hungary in coordinating the bauxite and aluminum industry in Comecon in relation to "developing countries."¹⁵⁸ Much of CAAR's work was devoted to West Asian regions, such as Iraq, Iran, and Syria, not only because of the postwar significance of oil reserves, but also because these countries became one of the most important consumer markets for Hungarian light industry by the 1970s. My interviews also suggest that Bognár extended his bargaining position with politicians by establishing the Scientific Council for World Economy in 1969 [*Tudományos Világgazdasági Tanács*]. CAAR regularly published a "yellow-brown" book series consisting of their own research results and translations of international authors in the field, and one of its later associates. By the late 1960s and the 1970s, new comparative analytical concepts such as "semi-periphery" (Szentes 1971), "small economies" (Kádár 1971), "open economies" (Kozma 1980) had emerged at the CAAR and its successor, the IWE (1973–) and related institutions and ministries. Breaking off from Cold War conceptual dichotomies, they developed these alternative geographical development concepts of socialist globalization to reposition their country in the global hierarchy of centre-periphery relations. By reaping the benefits of decolonization, they aimed to tackle increasing global competition and world economic restructuring to enable Hungary's successful integration into the world economy. As I have tried to show in this case study, the impetus for this conceptual maneuvering in global development imaginaries originally came from Hungary's experience in Ghana.

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¹⁵⁸ CAAR (1971).

Fig. 9. The Nkrumah Memorial



Source: www.tripadvisor.co.hu

Proceedings and acknowledgments

My research stay at OSA resulted in a fruitful exchange of ideas, intensive networking and collaboration. The 2-months stay was only enough to investigate and collect potential materials, develop ways to organize, categorize and connect copied materials, and build an annotated database of digitized files. However, the detailed analysis and interpretation of these materials still awaits. As noted in the report, the Visegrad Fund grant also provided me with resources to continue my research on materials outside of the OSA. I gained access to CEU's library, from which I could gather books in transnational and global history, geography and imperialism, and more specifically works connected to the Kwame Nkrumah, for instance, his autobiography. With other grantees and members of the staff, we openly shared our materials and information. I would like to take the opportunity to hereby highlight and acknowledge the support of some wonderful people in this respect.

István Sántha shared with me important contacts and background information in reference to Ghana, Tanzania, and the Hungarian research expeditions in Africa in the 1980s. Zsuzsa László also shared her ideas and materials, and we developed a close collaboration. Together with Zsuzsa, Eszter Szakács, and Dóra Hegyi (of *tranzit.hu*) we are currently organizing an exhibition, to be held at FUGA in Budapest on October 26, on the relations of Hungary and the "Third World," entitled *Developing countries – progressive ideas: Suggestions for creating a pan-peripheral network* [*Fejlődő országok – haladó eszmék: Javaslatok egy pán-periferiális hálózat létrehozására*]. In the preparation of our materials, we are looking forward to further collaboration with OSA. Gábor Danyi, working for a similar project, also shared his materials and findings. Zsuzsa's and Gábor's collaboration opened the way to connect cultural and ideological aspects with political economic relations. I also want to thank István Rév for his support and providing me with his excellent comments and information connected to my research. Lastly, I owe my gratitude to the OSA's excellent staff for their warm and helpful assistance during in my work, particularly Robert Parnica, Judit Hegedűs, Katalin Gáboros, Örs Lehel Tari, and Anna Mazanik.

My plans are to continue this research project in the following directions:

- I have applied in August to access the materials of the Foreign Ministry in the form of a scholarship, from 15 September to 15 December.
- Extend this study to international media coverage on Ghanaian and Eastern European relations.
- Extend the investigation to other Eastern European countries in the initial period of the late 1950s and the 1960s, based on OSA materials.
- Gather the references to Ghana in Hungarian discussions at international conferences (e.g. UN congresses, UNCTAD conferences).
- Include the investigation of the foreign economic relations of other socialist countries to African countries, such as the relations between China and Ghana.

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