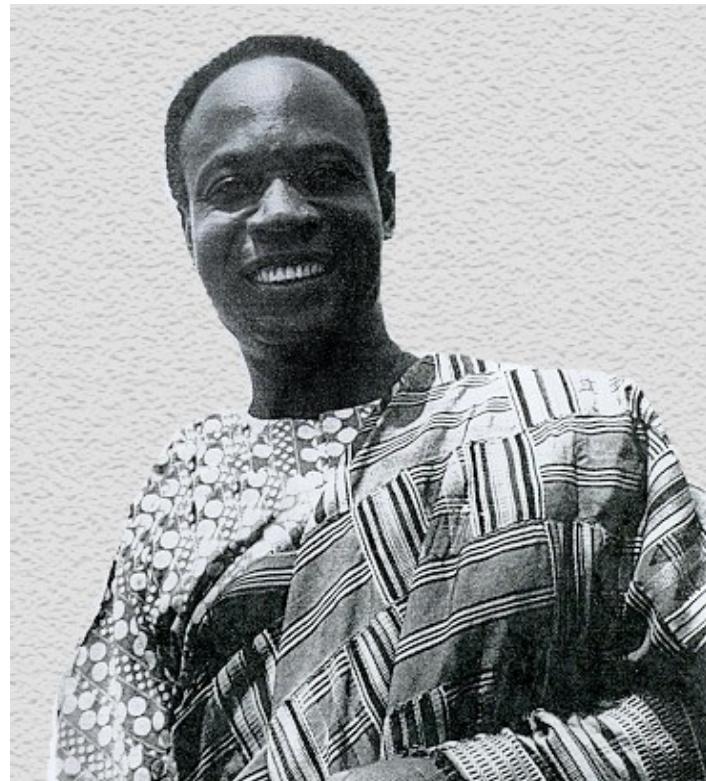


Dr. Kwame Nkrumah



(1909-1972)

[A Short Biography](#)

[Kwame Nkrumah Photo Gallery](#)

[Excerpts from Speeches](#)

[The Big Six](#)

[I Speak of Freedom - 1961](#)

[Africanism and Culture - December 1962](#)

[Meeting of the Editorial Board of the Encyclopaedia Africana - September 24, 1964](#)

[Continental Government for Africa](#)

[Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for De-Colonization](#)

[[Home](#)] [[Up](#)] [[Na'im Akbar](#)] [[Marimba Ani](#)] [[Molefi Kete Asante](#)] [[Ishakamusa Barashango](#)]
[[Yosef Ben-Jochannan](#)] [[Jacob H. Carruthers](#)] [[Chinweizu](#)] [[John Henrik Clarke](#)] [[Cheikh Anta Diop](#)]
[[W.E.B. DuBois](#)] [[Marcus Mosiah Garvey](#)] [[Ray Hagens](#)] [[William Leo Hansberry](#)] [[Asa Hilliard](#)]
[[John G. Jackson](#)] [[Leonard Jeffries](#)] [[Maulana Karenga](#)] [[Martin Luther King, Jr.](#)] [[Patrice Lumumba](#)]
[[Nelson Mandela](#)] [[Gerald Massey](#)] [[Kwame Nkrumah](#)] [[Théophile Obenga](#)] [[Kwaku Person-Lynn](#)]
[[Runoko Rashidi](#)] [[Arthur A. Schomburg](#)] [[Professor James Small](#)] [[Ivan Van Sertima](#)]
[[Frances Cress Welsing](#)] [[Chancellor James Williams](#)] [[Amos Wilson](#)] [[Carter G. Woodson](#)] [[Malcolm X](#)]

Biography of Kwame Nkrumah



(1909-1972)

Kwame Nkrumah became the first prime and later president of Ghana. He was born on September 21, 1909, at Nkroful in what was then the British-ruled Gold Coast, the son of a goldsmith. Trained as a teacher, he went to the United States in 1935 for advanced studies and continued his schooling in England, where he helped organize the Pan-African Congress in 1945. He returned to Ghana in 1947 and became general secretary of the newly founded United Gold Coast Convention but split from it in 1949 to form the Convention People's party (CPP).

After his 'positive action' campaign created disturbances in 1950, Nkrumah was jailed, but when the CPP swept the 1951 elections, he was freed to form a government, and he led the colony to independence as Ghana in 1957. A firm believer in African liberation, Nkrumah pursued a radical pan-African policy, playing a key role in the formation of the Organization of African Unity in 1963. As head of government, he was less successful however, and as time passed he was accused of forming a dictatorship. In 1964 he formed a one-party state, with himself as president for life, and was accused of actively promoting a cult of his own personality. Overthrown by the military in 1966, with the help of western backing, he spent his last years in exile, dying in Bucharest, Romania, on April 27, 1972. His legacy and dream of a "United States of African" still remains a goal among many.

Nkrumah was the motivating force behind the movement for independence of Ghana, then British West Africa, and its first president when it became independent in 1957. His numerous writings address Africa's political destiny.

Kwame Nkrumah Gallery



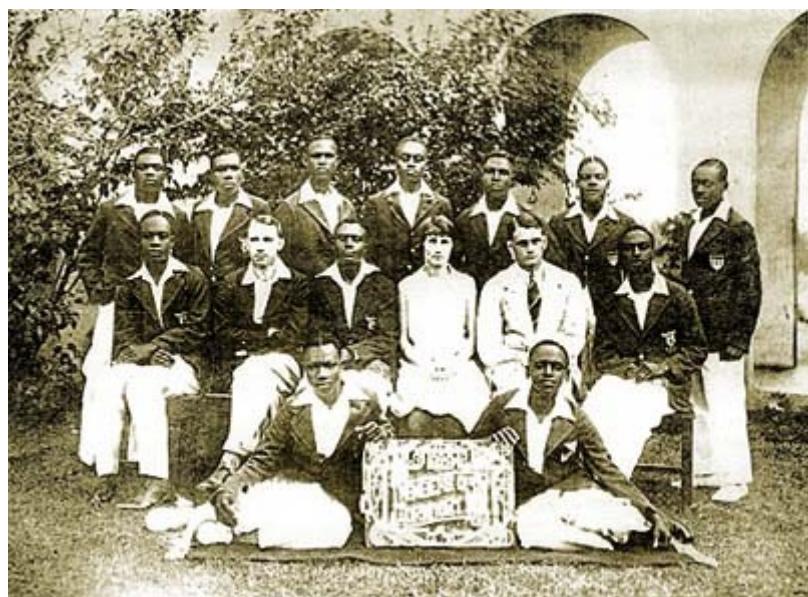
As a student in America



As a teacher in Axim



On the eve of my departure from
London for the Gold Coast
in October, 1947



Aggrey House, 1929. I am seated first on the left in the middle row

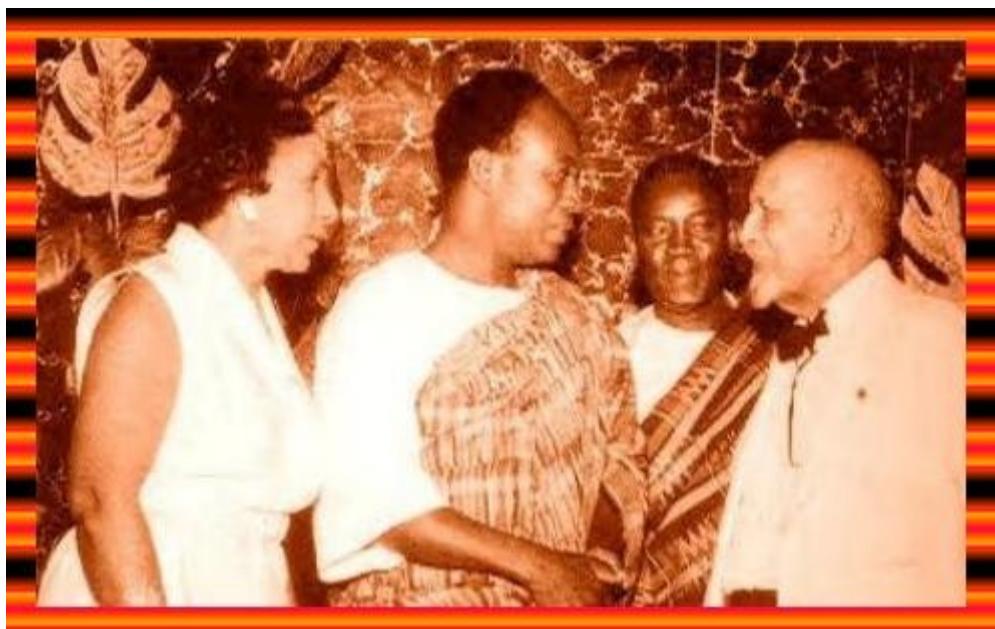
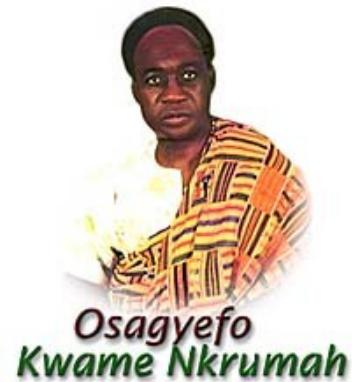
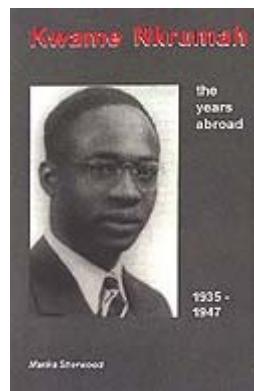


The Nzima Literature Society

Kwame Nkrumah Gallery

(Page 2)





Mrs Shirley DuBois, Kwame Nkrumah, Kojo Botsio (Nkrumah's Foreign Minister) and WEB Dubois

Excerpts from Speeches

[Nkrumah Video Clip](#) - You will need [RealPlayer](#) to view this file

[Conference of Independent African States](#) - April 1958

[Addressing African Heads of State](#) - May 1965

The Big Six



Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, Mr. Obetsebi-Lamptey, Mr. Ako Adjei,
Mr. Edward Akuffo-Addo, Dr. J. B. Danquah, Mr. William Ofori Atta

These were the six brave men and leaders of the United Gold Coast Convention (U.G.C.C.) who were arrested and detained under the Emergency Regulation in 1948 during disturbances in the Gold Coast. They were and are gallant men who spearheaded the transition of Ghana from colonialism to Independence on that memorable day the 6th of March, 1957.

[[Home](#)] [[Up](#)] [[Kwame Nkrumah Gallery](#)] [[Nkrumah's Biography](#)] [[Excerpts from Speeches](#)]
[[I Speak of Freedom](#)] [[The Big Six](#)] [[Continental Government for Africa](#)] [[Africanism and Culture](#)]
[[Meeting of Encyclopedia Africana](#)] [[Consciencism](#)]

I Speak of Freedom



Kwame Nkrumah (1909-1972) was the leader of Ghana, the former British colony of the Gold Coast and the first of the European colonies in Africa to gain independence with majority rule. Until he was deposed by a coup d'état in 1966, he was a major spokesman for modern Africa.

For centuries, Europeans dominated the African continent. The white man arrogated to himself the right to rule and to be obeyed by the non-white; his mission, he claimed, was to "civilize" Africa. Under this cloak, the Europeans robbed the continent of vast riches and inflicted unimaginable suffering on the African people.

All this makes a sad story, but now we must be prepared to bury the past with its unpleasant memories and look to the future. All we ask of the former colonial powers is their goodwill and co-operation to remedy past mistakes and injustices and to grant independence to the colonies in Africa....

It is clear that we must find an African solution to our problems, and that this can only be found in African unity. Divided we are weak; united, Africa could become one of the greatest forces for good in the world.

Although most Africans are poor, our continent is potentially extremely rich. Our mineral resources, which are being exploited with foreign capital only to enrich foreign investors, range from gold and diamonds to uranium and petroleum. Our forests contain some of the finest woods to be grown anywhere. Our cash crops include cocoa, coffee, rubber, tobacco and cotton. As for power, which is an important factor in any economic development, Africa contains over 40% of the potential water power of the world, as compared with about 10%

in Europe and 13% in North America. Yet so far, less than 1% has been developed. This is one of the reasons why we have in Africa the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty, and scarcity in the midst of abundance.

Never before have a people had within their grasp so great an opportunity for developing a continent endowed with so much wealth. Individually, the independent states of Africa, some of them potentially rich, others poor, can do little for their people. Together, by mutual help, they can achieve much. But the economic development of the continent must be planned and pursued as a whole. A loose confederation designed only for economic co-operation would not provide the necessary unity of purpose. Only a strong political union can bring about full and effective development of our natural resources for the benefit of our people.

The political situation in Africa today is heartening and at the same time disturbing. It is heartening to see so many new flags hoisted in place of the old; it is disturbing to see so many countries of varying sizes and at different levels of development, weak and, in some cases, almost helpless. If this terrible state of fragmentation is allowed to continue it may well be disastrous for us all.

There are at present some 28 states in Africa, excluding the Union of South Africa, and those countries not yet free. No less than nine of these states have a population of less than three million. Can we seriously believe that the colonial powers meant these countries to be independent, viable states? The example of South America, which has as much wealth, if not more than North America, and yet remains weak and dependent on outside interests, is one which every African would do well to study.

Critics of African unity often refer to the wide differences in culture, language and ideas in various parts of Africa. This is true, but the essential fact remains that we are all Africans, and have a common interest in the independence of Africa. The difficulties presented by questions of language, culture and different political systems are not insuperable. If the need for political union is agreed by us all, then the will to create it is born; and where there's a will there's a way.

The present leaders of Africa have already shown a remarkable willingness to consult and seek advice among themselves. Africans have, indeed, begun to think continentally. They realize that they have much in common, both in their past history, in their present problems and in their future hopes. To suggest that the time is not yet ripe for considering a political union of Africa is to evade the facts and ignore realities in Africa today.

The greatest contribution that Africa can make to the peace of the world is to avoid all the dangers inherent in disunity, by creating a political union which will also by its success, stand as an example to a divided world. A Union of African states will project more effectively the African personality. It will command respect from a world that has regard only for size and influence. The scant attention paid to African opposition to the French atomic tests in the Sahara, and the ignominious spectacle of the U.N. in the Congo quibbling about constitutional niceties while the Republic was tottering into anarchy, are evidence of the callous disregard of African Independence by the Great Powers.

We have to prove that greatness is not to be measured in stockpiles of atom bombs. I believe strongly and sincerely that with the deep-rooted wisdom and dignity, the innate respect for human lives, the intense humanity that is our heritage, the African race, united under one federal government, will emerge not as just another world bloc to flaunt its wealth and strength, but as a Great Power whose greatness is indestructible because it is built not on fear, envy and suspicion, nor won at the expense of others, but founded on hope, trust, friendship and directed to the good of all mankind.

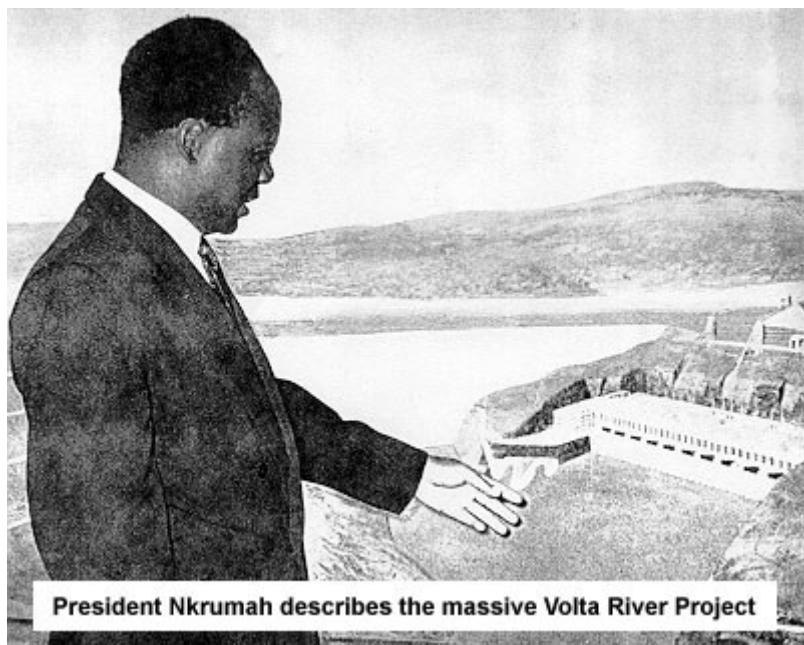
The emergence of such a mighty stabilizing force in this strife-worn world should be

regarded not as the shadowy dream of a visionary, but as a practical proposition, which the peoples of Africa can, and should, translate into reality. There is a tide in the affairs of every people when the moment strikes for political action. Such was the moment in the history of the United States of America when the Founding Fathers saw beyond the petty wranglings of the separate states and created a Union. This is our chance. We must act now. Tomorrow may be too late and the opportunity will have passed, and with it the hope of free Africa's survival.

From Kwame Nkrumah, I Speak of Freedom: A Statement of African Ideology (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1961), pp. xi-xiv.

[[Home](#)] [[Up](#)] [[Kwame Nkrumah Gallery](#)] [[Nkrumah's Biography](#)] [[Excerpts from Speeches](#)]
[[I Speak of Freedom](#)] [[The Big Six](#)] [[Continental Government for Africa](#)] [[Africanism and Culture](#)]
[[Meeting of Encyclopedia Africana](#)] [[Consciencism](#)]

Africanism and Culture



"We have made our contribution to the fund of human knowledge by extending the frontiers of art, culture and spiritual values."

Dr. Kwame Nkrumah

If we have lost touch with what our forefathers discovered and knew, this has been due to the system of education to which we were introduced. This system of education prepared us for a subservient role to Europe and things European. It was directed at estranging us from our own cultures in order the more effectively to serve a new and alien interest.

The central myth in the mythology surrounding Africa is that of the denial that we are a historical people. It is said that whereas other continents have shaped history and determined its course, Africa has stood still, held down by inertia. Africa, it is said, entered history only as a result of European contact. Its history, therefore, is widely felt to be an extension of European history. Hegel's authority was lent to this a-historical hypothesis concerning Africa. And apologists of colonialism and imperialism lost little time in seizing upon it and writing wildly about it to their heart's content.

To those who say that there is no documentary source for that period of African history which pre-dates the European contact, modern research has a crushing answer. We know that we were not without a tradition of historiography, and, that this is so, is now the verdict of true Africanists. African historians, by the end of the 15th century, had a tradition of recorded history, and certainly by the time when Mohamud al-Kati wrote *Tarikh al-Fattash*. This tradition was incidentally much, much wider than that of the Timbuktu school of historians, and our own Institute of African Studies here at this University, is bringing to light several chronicles relating to the history of Northern Ghana.

The Chinese, too, during the T'ang dynasty (AD. 618-907), published their earliest major records of Africa. In the 18th century, scholarship connected Egypt with China; but Chinese acquaintance with Africa was not only confined to knowledge of Egypt. They had detailed knowledge of Somaliland, Madagascar and Zanzibar and made extensive visits to

other parts of Africa.

The European exploration of Africa reached its height in the 19th century. What is unfortunate, however, is the fact that much of the discovery was given a subjective instead of an objective interpretation. In the regeneration of learning which is taking place in our universities and in other institutions of higher learning, we are treated as subjects and not objects. They forget that we are a historic people responsible for our unique forms of language, culture and society. It is therefore proper and fitting that a Congress of Africanists should take place in Africa and that the concept of Africanism should devolve from and be animated by that Congress.

Between ancient times and the 16th century, some European scholars forgot what their predecessors in African Studies had known. This amnesia, this regrettable loss of interest in the power of the African mind, deepened with growth of interest in the economic exploitation of Africa. It is no wonder that the Portuguese were erroneously credited with having erected the stone fortress of Mashonaland which, even when Barbossa, cousin of Magellan, first visited them, were ruins of long standing.

(Excerpt of speech given at the Congress of Africanists) (Accra, Ghana-December 1962)

[[Home](#)] [[Up](#)] [[Kwame Nkrumah Gallery](#)] [[Nkrumah's Biography](#)] [[Excerpts from Speeches](#)]
[[I Speak of Freedom](#)] [[The Big Six](#)] [[Continental Government for Africa](#)] [[Africanism and Culture](#)]
[[Meeting of Encyclopedia Africana](#)] [[Consciencism](#)]

**Speech at the Opening Session of the
First Meeting of the Editorial Board of the
Encyclopaedia Africana**

On September 24, 1964 At the University of Ghana

Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah

Distinguished members of the Editorial Board of the Encyclopaedia Africana, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a great pleasure and privilege for me to inaugurate this first meeting of the Editorial Board of the Encyclopaedia Africana. The presence on this Board here today of representatives from all parts of the Continent of Africa is yet another token of the African cultural renaissance which is manifesting itself side by side with the political resurgence of the African Continent. I must also confess, distinguished guests, that today I feel a great sense of relief and joy to think that at long last a first significant step has been taken towards the positive realisation and consummation of a long cherished dream.

Years ago, I felt that Africa needs to buttress her unimpeachable claim to political independence with parallel efforts to expose to the world the bases of her rich culture and civilisation through the medium of a scholarly Encyclopaedia. I therefore invited W.E.B. DuBois of blessed memory to come to Ghana to help us establish the framework for this great natural heritage. Dr. DuBois was happy to come to Ghana in the very evening of his life to embark upon this task; he took Ghanaian citizenship, and immediately plunged headlong into the stupendous work of setting out the general aims of this project and securing the interest and support of eminent scholars throughout Africa for its realisation. To him this was an exciting state of affairs to produce such an Encyclopaedia.

It is perhaps not without significance that DuBois should have had to wait until the very sunset of his life to find and receive encouragement and support for this project, not in the abundance of the United States, but rather in an Africa liberated from the cramping and oppressive conditions of colonial rule.

In taking upon ourselves this great responsibility for Africa, we are reminded of an old Roman saying: "Semper aliquid novi ex Africa." Africa had a noble past which astounded even the ancient Roman world with its great surprises. Yet, it was only much later, after a millennium and a half of African history that we are now busily engaged in reconstructing for all the world to know, that racial exploitation and imperialist domination deliberately fostered a new and monstrous mythology of race which nourished the popular but unfounded image of Africa as the "Dark Continent." In other words, a Continent whose inhabitants were without any past history, any contribution to world civilization, or any hope of future development - except by the grace of foreign tutelage!

It is unfortunate that men of learning and men of affairs in Europe and America from a century ago down to yesterday, have spent much valuable time to establish this unscientific and ridiculous notion of African inferiority. A European author declared that "the history of civilization on the continent begins, as concerns its inhabitants, with Mohammedan invasion" and that African is poorer in recorded history than can be imagined.

Even the Eleventh Edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica also declared: "Africa, with the exception of the lower Nile Valley and what is known as Roman Africa is, so far as its native inhabitants are concerned, a continent practically without history and possessing no

records from which such history may be conducted the Negro (referring to the black man) is essentially the child of the moment and his memory, both tribal and individual, is very short," And "if Ancient Egypt and Ethiopia be excluded, the story of Africa is largely a record of the doings of its Asiatic and European conquerors and colonizers."

And here I want to sound a note of caution about the term "Negro." I hope that in the record of the Encyclopaedia Africana the term "Negro", whatever meaning or connotation has been given to it, will not find a place, except perhaps in a specific article proving its opprobrious origin and redundancy. I would like that people of African descent and Africans in general should be described as black men, or Africans. I personally would like to be referred to as a black man, African or Ghanaian, not referred to as a "Negro".

It would be long to attempt to survey this field of malicious distortion against Africa. But this would be a useless and unprofitable venture, and I am sure that your Editorial Board would not suffer this pointless waster of valuable time. But listen a while to Leo Frobenius in his Voice of Africa: "The ruins of the mighty past lie slumbering within the bosom of the earth but are glorified in the memory of men who live beneath the sun." He dwells on the "god-like strength of memory in those who lived before the advent of the written word" and he continues: "Every archaeologist can quote examples from the nations of the North. But who would imagine that the Negro Race (here again referring to the black race) of Africa possessed an equally retentive mind for its store of ancient monuments."

It may be argued, however, that this sort of view about Africa is dying out, and we may be accused of whipping a dying horse. It is also true that, particularly in the years since World War II, there has been a marked improvement in much of the writing by non-Africans on Africa and there are today a number of writers and scholars who have made signal contributions to African historiography. Nevertheless, it is to be doubted if the popular image of the so-called Dark Continent has been much affected by the widening horizon of knowledge of Africa. The fact is that the powerful forces which seek to block the advance of the 280 millions of Africans to a place of full equality in the world community and which strive to maintain neo-colonialist or even overt colonial domination and white supremacy rule in Africa, find it in their interest to perpetuate the mythology of racial inferiority.

Thus it is not simple ignorance of Africa, but deliberate disparagement of the continent and its people that Africanists and the Encyclopaedia Africana must contend with. The foulest intellectual rubbish ever invented by man is that of racial superiority and inferiority. We know now, of course, that this distortion and fabrication of the image of man was invented by the apostles of imperialism to salve their conscience and justify their political, cultural and economic domination of Africa.

I understand that through the medium of the Information Report, published periodically by the Encyclopaedia Africana Secretariat, have appeared expressions of support and pledges of co-operation in the work of this great project from numerous eminent scholars. And I am particularly happy that among those who have expressed their endorsement of our work are distinguished scholars in the United States, the Soviet Union, China, India, Britain and other countries outside Africa.

I am sure the members of the Editorial Board share my appreciation of this world-wide support of the idea of an Encyclopaedia Africana. However, it is of course only logical that an encyclopaedia work on Africa should be produced in Africa, under the direction and editorship of Africans, and with the maximum participation of African scholars in all countries.

While I believe that no contribution to the projected Encyclopaedia should be rejected solely and simply because the author happens to be non-African, there are surely valid reasons why the maximum participation of African scholars themselves should be aimed

at. Let me illustrate this point with an example from a book published just fifty years ago by George W. Ellis, an Afro-American who served from 1901 to 1910 as Secretary of the United States diplomatic mission in Liberia. From this study came his book, *Negro Culture in West Africa*, published in 1914. In the Preface to this work Ellis tells how he had sought to widen his knowledge of Africa, before coming to Liberia, by the diligent study of encyclopaedias, geographies, and works of ethnology and anthropology, only to find that much of this information was "unsupported by the facts" and gave a picture "substantially different" from the character of African life which he himself found in West Africa.

Acknowledge the services of European authors such as Harry Johnston, Lady Lugard and others, Ellis stated that to him "it seems more necessary and imperative that the African should explain his own culture, and interpret his own thought and soul life, if the complete truth is to be given to the other races of the earth."

But there were already men in West Africa who had blazed a significant trail in this direction: Edward Wilmot Blyden, Joseph Casely Hayford and John Mensah Sarbah. Many other Africans in preceding generations helped to lay the basis of our present efforts to project a new African image of Africa. One thinks of such figures as James Africanus B. Horton and his "A vindication of the African Race". (1868) and of Carl Reindorf, Attoh Ahumah, Anthony William Amu, Samuel Johnson of Oyo, Blaise Diagne, Herbert Macaulay and others in West Africa, of Duse Mohammed Effendi of the Sudan, Lewanika of Barotseland, Apolo Kagwa of Buganda, and leaders such as John Tengo Jabavu, Solomon T. Plaatje, and Clements Kedalie in South Africa.

And let us not forget the important contributions of others in the New World, for example, the sons of Africa in Haiti such as Antenor Firmin and Dr. Jean Price-Mars, and others in the United States such as Alexander Crummell, [Carter G. Woodson](#) and our own Dr. DuBois.

All of those whose names I have mentioned believed in and urged the necessity of writing about Africa from the point of view of African interests and African assumptions and concepts - and not from the point of view of Europeans or others who have quite different interests, assumptions and concepts, whether conscious or unconscious. This is precisely what we mean when we say that the *Encyclopaedia Africana* must be frankly Afro-centric in its interpretation of African history and of the social and cultural institutions of the African and people of African descent everywhere.

It is to be hoped, therefore, that the work on the *Encyclopaedia Africana* may provide both the forum and the motivation for the development of a virile and salutary new trend in the writing of African history, writing which will rank in scholarship with any other historiography, but which will also be based upon a frame of reference that is independently African, and will lead the way in independent thinking about Africa and its problems.

I am anxious that I should not be misunderstood in my emphasis on an Afro-centric point of view for the *Encyclopaedia Africana*. There are some who will say that this implies simply reversing the faults and distortions of the colonialist minded writers on Africa, painting everything white that they pictured as black, and everything black that they pictured as white.

I should like to assure our guests, the members of the Editorial Board, that that is in no sense my conception of what the *Encyclopaedia Africana* should be. Most certainly it must and will set the record straight on many points of African history and culture. But it will do this not simply on the basis of assertion backed by nothing more than emotion, but rather on the foundation of first-class scholarship linked with the passion for scientific truth.

It will not romanticize or idealize the African past, it will not gloss over African failings

weaknesses and foibles, or endeavour to demonstrate that Africans are endowed with either greater virtues or lesser vices than the rest of mankind. There is undoubtedly considerable evidence of much that is noble and glorious in our African past; there is no need to gild the Lily nor to try to hide that which is ignoble. But here again it is a question of whose standards and values you are applying in assessing something as noble or ignoble, and I maintain that the *Encyclopaedia Africana* must reject non-African value-judgments of things African.

It is true that despite the great advances made during the last twenty years in the various disciplines of African studies, so much of Africa's history has yet to be unearthed, scientifically analysed, and fully comprehended. This sometimes gives rise to the question whether enough is yet known to undertake at this time the compilation of an encyclopaedia of the sort envisaged. Those who entertain such hesitation and doubt only expose the extent of their ignorance about Africa's great past.

Before the colonial era in Africa, Europeans had had many encounters with Africans on the cross-roads of history. They had married into African royal families, received Africans into their courts as ambassadors and social equals, and their writers had depicted African characters as great heroes in their literature. In common with the rest of mankind Africans made extensive use of cereals, they learnt the art of raising cattle, adapted metal tools and weapons to their own use, and, to quote Basil Davidson, "undertook mining and smelting and forging on a continental scale, borrowed crops from other lands, introduced soil conservation, discovered the medicinal value of a host of herbs and plants, and worked out their own explanations of mankind and the universe.

All this had happened before the first ships set forth from Europe."

Let me give another quotation even at the risk of boring you, this time from Leo Frobenius again, a well-known historian who made 17 expeditions into Africa, North, East, West and South, in order to learn at first hand of the culture of the African peoples. Frobenius makes a basic statement in his book *African Civilisation*, which unfortunately has not yet been translated into English. Doubtless, there is reason why no complete translation has yet been made. From a limited translation made by Anna Malise Graves, I quote: "When they, European navigators, arrived in the Gulf of Guinea and landed at Ouidah in Dahomey, the captains were greatly astonished to find streets well laid out, bordered on either side for several leagues with two rows of trees, and men clad in richly coloured garments of their own weaving. Further south in the kingdom of the Congo, a swarming crowd dressed in silk and velvet, great states well ordered and down to the most minute details, powerful rulers, flourishing industries, civilised to the manner of their bones. And the condition of the countries on the eastern coast, Mozambique, for instance, was quite the same. The revelations of the navigators from 15th to the 17th century gave incontrovertible proofs that Africa stretching south from the edge of the Sahara desert was still in full flower - the flower of harmonious and well-ordered civilisations. And this fine flowering the European conquistadors or conquerors annihilated as far as they penetrated into the country."

Indeed, the history of Africa goes back into the dim recesses of time and antiquity. There are even scientists in our time who are beginning to claim that Africa was the very cradle of mankind. The fossil remains of man discovered by Dr. L.S.B. Leakey in Tanganyika have been dated by scientific processes as one and three-quarter million (1,750,000) years old.

From the head waters of the Nile in Tanganyika let us move swiftly to its mouth on the Mediterranean Sea and the Isthmus of Suez where the great civilization of Egypt was fostered for thousands of years down to the Christian era. There, as we all know, man rose to the phenomenal heights of statecraft, science and religion and the excellence of the arts. Evidence from language, religion, astronomy, folklore and divine kinship, as well as geographical and physical proximity, confirms the basic African origin of this Egyptian

cultural eminence.

This great flowering of the mind in Africa was unfortunately scorched by the ravages of the slave trade which encouraged extensive destruction through tribal warfare. Close upon this set in the evil of colonisation and the deliberate effort, to which I have already referred, of painting the African black and backward as a valid justification for colonial rule.

I have endeavoured to touch on some of these questions only as a means of making a clear case for justifying our attempts to provide Africa with an Encyclopaedia portraying vividly the glory of Africa's great past.

I should now like to say just a few words on the vital question of how this great undertaking is to be carried through to completion. I must say at the outset that a broad policy having been laid down, the precise plans for achieving it must be left to the Editorial Board and its staff of competent experts. My purpose is only to call attention to the underlying principle - the principle of Pan-African co-operation - which I believe to be indispensable in any concrete plans of work on the Encyclopaedia.

As you are aware, the preparatory work on this project has been carried forward for a little more than two years by a Secretariat here in Accra, functioning under the aegis of the Ghana Academy of Sciences. This Secretariat has not been content to work in isolation; it has been continually active in establishing contacts with scholars and institutions throughout Africa and abroad. A motion declaring "that all African countries should contribute to the work of the Secretariat" was unanimously adopted at a Conference on the Encyclopaedia Africana attended by some 150 persons from Africa and elsewhere in December, 1962. Soon thereafter, the Secretariat undertook the establishment of Co-operating Committees of scholars in various African countries.

The Secretary of the Secretariat, Dr. W. A. Hunton, met with several of these Committees during a tour which he made in East and North Africa some months ago. Following this came the nominations by the Co-operating Committees of their respective representatives to serve on the Editorial Board of the Encyclopaedia. In this way the basis, at least, of Pan-African co-operation in this work has been established.

The members of the Editorial Board now have before them the Secretariat's detailed prospectus of what the Encyclopaedia Africana should contain and how the material should be presented. This is merely a blueprint of what is to be constructed. The Editorial Board members are asked to examine this blueprint with great care, proposing whatever alterations they consider would result in a more perfect plan for the Encyclopaedia. Once this has been agreed upon, the stage will have been set for the play to begin - that is to say, for the work of preparing and assembling the Encyclopaedia articles to commence.

I sincerely trust that the deliberations of the Editorial Board at this first meeting will successfully hit that mark. The progress of the work from that point on will depend in the first instance, as I see it, on the degree of whole-hearted and effectively organised support that can be procured from African scholars in all countries, from the many institutes of African studies and research agencies of various kinds which are to be found today throughout our continent, and from the various independent African governments which are ready to provide the fullest measure of financial support for this work. So far, the financial burden has been borne by the Government of Ghana alone.

As I have already stated, I have no specific proposals to present with regard to these matters. But I am convinced that the task is not insuperable. The fact that we have advanced this far in accomplishing, almost single-handed, the formation of a Pan-African Editorial Board of the Encyclopaedia Africana augurs success in the further stages of the work. I trust this project will be welcomed by all the African Heads of State, and will have the full support of the Organisation of African Unity. We must now think in terms of

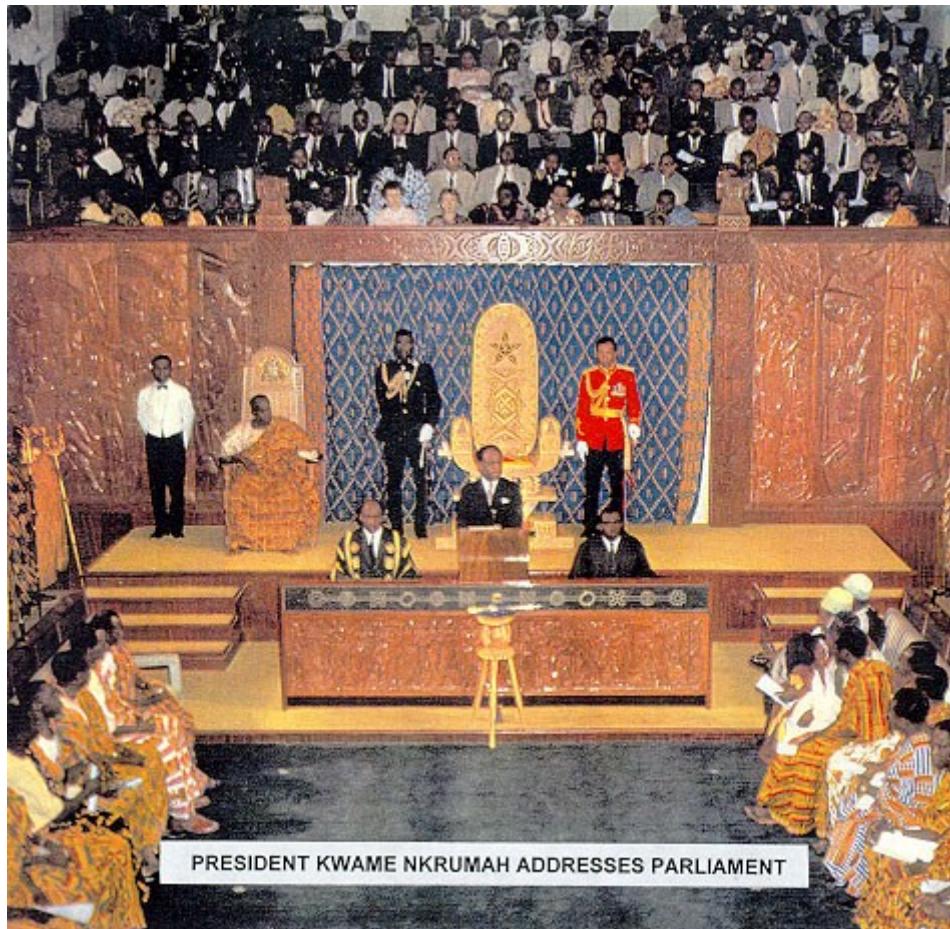
continental political unity in everything we do for Africa. Without such cohesion and unity none of us can survive the intrigues and divisive forces of the imperialists and neo-colonialists. The work of this Encyclopaedia Africana will take us one further step towards the great objective to which we are dedicated - a Continental Union Government of Africa.

Speaking on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Ghana and as Chancellor of our Universities, I can assure the members of the Editorial Board that work on this Encyclopaedia will have the fullest co-operation of our Universities, learned societies and research institutions in Ghana, as well as the financial support of the Government of Ghana.

Distinguished scholars and members of the Editorial Board of the Encyclopaedia Africana, on behalf of the Government and people of Ghana and on my own behalf, I extend a warm welcome to you. May this your first meeting mark the auspicious beginning of your work in a great undertaking for the benefit of mankind

[[Home](#)] [[Up](#)] [[Kwame Nkrumah Gallery](#)] [[Nkrumah's Biography](#)] [[Excerpts from Speeches](#)]
[[I Speak of Freedom](#)] [[The Big Six](#)] [[Continental Government for Africa](#)] [[Africanism and Culture](#)]
[[Meeting of Encyclopedia Africana](#)] [[Consciencism](#)]

Continental Government for Africa



Nkrumah was the motivating force behind the movement for independence of Ghana, then British West Africa, and its first president when it became independent in 1957. His numerous writings address Africa's political destiny. The following discusses his objectives for Africa and issues for the organization of government there.

We have seen, in the example of the United States how the dynamic elements within society understood the need for unity and fought their bitter civil war to maintain the political union that was threatened by the reactionary forces. We have also seen, in the example of the Soviet Union, how the forging of continental unity along with the retention of national sovereignty by the federal states, has achieved a dynamism that has lifted a most backward society into a most powerful unit within a remarkably short space of time. From the examples before us, in Europe and the United States of America, it is therefore patent that we in Africa have the resources, present and potential, for creating the kind of society that we are anxious to build. It is calculated that by the end of this century the population of Africa will probably exceed five hundred millions.

Our continent gives us the second largest land stretch in the world. The natural wealth of Africa is estimated to be greater than that of almost any other continent in the world. To draw the most from our existing and potential means for the achievement of abundance and a fine social order, we need to unify our efforts, our resources, our skills and intentions. . .

At present most of the independent African states are moving in directions which expose us to the dangers of imperialism and neocolonialism. We therefore need a common political basis for the integration of our policies in economic planning, defense, foreign and diplomatic relations. That basis for political action need not infringe the essential sovereignty of the separate African states. These states would continue to exercise independent authority, except in the fields defined and reserved for common action in the interests of the security and orderly development of the whole continent.

In my view, therefore, a united Africa – that is, the political and economic unification of the African Continent – should seek three objectives.

Firstly, we should have an over-all economic planning on a continental basis. This would increase the industrial and economic power of Africa. So long as we remain balkanized, regionally or territorially, we shall be at the mercy of colonialism and imperialism. The lesson of the South American Republics vis-à-vis the strength and solidarity of the United States of America is there for all to see. . .

Secondly, we should aim at the establishment of a unified military and defense strategy. I do not see much virtue or wisdom in our separate efforts to build up or maintain vast military forces for self-defense which, in any case, would be ineffective in any major attack upon our separate states. If we examine this problem realistically, we should be able to ask ourselves this pertinent question: which single state in Africa today can protect its sovereignty against an imperialist aggressor?

. . . The third objective which we should have in Africa stems from the first two which I have just described . . . a unified foreign policy and diplomacy to give political direction to our joint efforts for the protection and economic development of our continent . . . The desirability of a common foreign policy which will enable us to speak with one voice in the councils of the world, is so obvious, vital and imperative that comment is hardly necessary.

I am confident that it should be possible to devise a constitutional structure applicable to our special conditions in Africa and not necessarily framed in terms of the existing constitutions of Europe, America or elsewhere, which will enable us to secure the objectives I have defined and yet preserve to some extent the sovereignty of each state within a Union of African states.

We might erect for the time being a constitutional form that could start with those states willing to create a nucleus, and leave the door open for the attachment of others as they desire to join or reach the freedom which would allow them to do so. The form could be made amenable to adjustment and amendment at any time the consensus of opinion is for it. It may be that concrete expression can be given to our present ideas within a continental parliament that would provide a lower and an upper house, the one to permit the discussion of the many problems facing Africa by a representation based on population; the other, ensuring the equality of the associated states, regardless of size and population, by a similar, limited representation from each of them, to formulate a common policy in all matters affecting the security, defense and development of Africa. It might, through a committee selected for the purpose, examine likely solutions to the problems of union and draft a more conclusive form of constitution that will be acceptable to all the independent states.

The survival of free Africa, the extending independence of this continent, and the development towards that bright future on which our hopes and endeavors are pinned,

depend upon political unity.

Under a major political union of Africa there could emerge a United Africa, great and powerful, in which the territorial boudoirs which are the relics of colonialism will become obsolete and superfluous, working for the complete and total mobilization of the economic planning organization under a unified political direction. The forces that unite us are far greater than the difficulties that divide us at present, and our goal must be the establishment of Africa's dignity, progress and prosperity.

[[Home](#)] [[Up](#)] [[Kwame Nkrumah Gallery](#)] [[Nkrumah's Biography](#)] [[Excerpts from Speeches](#)]
[[I Speak of Freedom](#)] [[The Big Six](#)] [[Continental Government for Africa](#)] [[Africanism and Culture](#)]
[[Meeting of Encyclopedia Africana](#)] [[Consciencism](#)]

Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for De-Colonization



Click on pages to view sample

[[Home](#)] [[Up](#)] [[Kwame Nkrumah Gallery](#)] [[Nkrumah's Biography](#)] [[Excerpts from Speeches](#)]
[[I Speak of Freedom](#)] [[The Big Six](#)] [[Continental Government for Africa](#)] [[Africanism and Culture](#)]
[[Meeting of Encyclopedia Africana](#)] [[Consciencism](#)]