

The Ghana Trades Union Congress and the Politics of International Labor Alliances, 1957–1971*

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ABSTRACT: This article explores the motives of Ghana's Trades Union Congress in securing development assistance during the era of decolonization and early independence. African interests and agency in these complex processes of negotiation have not been sufficiently untangled to highlight the decisions that African trade unionists made as they aligned with, and fostered, international networks and alliances to meet particular development goals. By highlighting the perspectives and actions of Ghana's trade union officials, the article demonstrates what Africans sought to achieve through connections to international trade union organizations. The Ghana case illustrates the ways in which African trade unionists actively engaged in the variable and competing politics and policies of local, regional, and global trade unionism in order to strengthen their union apparatus and meet shifting needs.

INTRODUCTION

The actions of the Ghana Trades Union Congress (GTUC) exemplify how labor organizations in newly independent African states negotiated decolonization and national labor politics, and how those dynamics intersected with international trade union organizations and international politics. Through the lens of African labor interests and the actions of GTUC leaders, I explore the confluence of internationalism and decolonization in post-independence African politics. The scholarly literature has largely explored projects undertaken by international institutions such as the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) in Ghana and other emergent and newly independent countries in political and ideological terms, with historians debating the role and influence of international trade union entities.¹ I build on this growing literature by

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1. For studies of the ways in which African trade unions either engaged with or chose to remain outside of political parties, see Bjorn Beckman, Sakhela Buhlungu, and Lloyd Sachikonye (eds), *Trade Unions and Party Politics: Labor Movements in Africa* (Cape Town, 2010). For assessments of

exploring how Ghanaian trade unionists during Kwame Nkrumah's Convention People's Party (CPP) government, and after it was toppled in 1966, furthered African internationalism, using alliances to secure technical assistance until the contested politics of non-alignment became a major source of turmoil for the GTUC and ultimately led the organization to disaffiliate from the ICFTU in 1959.² Despite this severing of formal ties, the GTUC continued to seek technical assistance from the ICFTU and other international labor organizations, even as Kwame Nkrumah's government politicized and co-opted the Ghanaian movement. After a 1966 coup removed Nkrumah from power, another dramatic shift occurred, as the GTUC sought to mend its broken relationship with international labor organizations, to extricate itself from its ties to the state, and to rebuild itself along democratic lines.

The familiar narrative of African labor interests succumbing to the impulses and politics of international labor organizations needs to be revised. African interests and agency in the complex processes of negotiation have not been sufficiently untangled to highlight the decisions that Africans made as they aligned with and fostered international networks and alliances beyond the African continent to meet particular development goals. I use the term "international" to denote the engagements of Africans with entities outside

African trade union politics within the global framework of Cold War politics, where trade unions performed their roles as allies of either communism or democracy, see William H. Friedland, "African Trade Unions Studies: Analysis of Two Decades", *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, 14 (1974), pp. 575–589. For the international trade union movement's relationship with regional trade unions in Latin America and Europe, see Marcel van der Linden (ed.), *The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions* (Bern, 2000); Geert Van Goethem, *The Amsterdam International: The World of the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU), 1913–1945* (Aldershot, 2006); Patrick Pasture, *Christian Trade Unionism in Europe since 1968: Tensions between Identity and Practice* (Aldershot, 1994); Magaly Rodriguez Garcia, *Liberal Workers of the World, Unite?: The ICFTU and the Defense of Labour Liberalism in Europe and Latin America (1949–1969)* (Oxford [etc.], 2010). For the AFL-CIO's foreign policy in Europe, Asia, and Africa, see Robert Anthony Waters Jr. and Geert Van Goethem (eds), *American Labor's Global Ambassadors: The International History of the AFL-CIO during the Cold War* (New York, 2013). And for the ICFTU's Cold War diplomacy and the ways in which the AFL-CIO facilitated the international organization's support of trade union movements across Africa, see Mathilde von Bulow, "Irving Brown and ICFTU Labor Diplomacy during Algeria's Struggle for Independence, 1954–1962", in Waters and Van Goethem, *American Labor's Global Ambassadors*, pp. 217–236; John C. Stoner, "We Will Follow a Nationalist Policy, but We Will Never Be Neutral: American Labor and Neutralism in Cold War Africa, 1957–1962", in Waters and Van Goethem, *American Labor's Global Ambassadors*, pp. 237–251.

2. See Opoku Agyeman, *The Failure of Grassroots Pan-Africanism: The Case of the All-African Trade Union Federation* (Lanham, MD, 2003); Paul S. Gray, *Unions and Leaders in Ghana: A Model of Labor Development* (Owerri [etc.], 1981); Wogu Ananaba, *The Trade Union Movement in Africa: Promise and Performance* (New York, 1979); Ukandi G. Damachi, *The Role of Trade Unions in the Development Process with a Case Study of Ghana* (New York, 1974); G.E. Lynd, *The Politics of African Trade Unionism* (New York, 1968); Willard A. Beling (ed.), *The Role of Labor in African Nation-Building* (New York, 1968); Jean Meynaud and Anisse Saleh-Bey, *Trade Unionism in Africa: A Study of Its Growth and Orientation* (London, 1967); Margaret Roberts, "African Trade Unionism in Transition", *The World Today*, 17:10 (1961), pp. 447–455.

the continent during the period under study. Trade union diplomacy empowered Africans in their quest for various forms of international assistance and alliances to build or, in some cases, rebuild their union. The GTUC proved to be resourceful and strategic at key moments when financial needs and efforts to become independent of state control and its ideological underpinnings became salient. This article details the perspectives and actions of GTUC officials, exploring what they sought to achieve through connections to international trade union organizations and demonstrating that Africans were not passive actors in international labor and Cold War politics.

TRADE UNIONS IN THE COLONIAL GOLD COAST

In the Gold Coast, government employees participated in informal collective action and bargaining as early as World War I. Trade unions became legal in British colonies after the Labour Party's victory in the 1929 British elections. As was the case elsewhere in colonial West and North Africa, dockworkers, civil service employees, railway workers, and other wage laborers employed by the government operated under the conventional modes of union organization because they participated in work arrangements that were defined by British colonial capitalism.³ The state regulated the working conditions of its employees, meaning that unionized Africans often directed their actions toward the state. As Richard Jeffries has demonstrated, the railway workers and dockworkers contested the abuses of the colonial government and addressed African working-class concerns in the Gold Coast. The unions in turn mobilized wage laborers and state employees to protest employment matters through collective bargaining.⁴ The development of motor unions represented one of the first instances of large-scale efforts by African workers to organize their own operations, moving beyond the adaptation of an external British metropolitan model and reconceptualizing the development of African labor interests.⁵

As a result of labor pressure, the British government began to send trade union advisers to the colonies, resulting in the creation of a labor department in the Gold Coast in 1938 and later in all of Britain's African colonies.⁶ The Gold Coast Labour Department encouraged the development of trade unions in the colony's burgeoning industrial sector, and legislation based on British statutes and international labor conventions legalized trade unions.

3. Jennifer Hart, "Motor Transportation, Trade Unionism, and the Culture of Work in Colonial Ghana", *International Review of Social History*, 59, Special Issue 22 (2014), pp. 185–209, 187.

4. See Richard Jeffries, *Class, Power and Ideology in Ghana: The Railwaymen of Sekondi* (Cambridge, 1978).

5. Hart, "Motor Transportation", pp. 200–209.

6. Charles A. Orr, "Trade Unionism in Colonial Africa", *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 4:1 (1966), pp. 65–81, 75.

British unions and the British Trades Union Congress extended substantial amounts of material and moral support to these new unions, though Africans did not take part in the organizing efforts.⁷

In 1945, fourteen unions came together to found the Gold Coast Trades Union Congress, with an initial membership of 6,030. In 1947, the Gold Coast Trades Union Congress organized registered and non-registered unions to create District Trade Councils of Labour in Accra, Kumasi, and Sekondi. The trade councils had representatives from the various unions. They explored a range of issues including minimum wage, health, education, and housing.⁸ By 1947, the number of affiliates to the Gold Coast Trades Union Council rose to twenty-seven with a total paid membership of 10,976. Between 1944 and 1953, labor department figures included only paid-up membership, which excluded the total number of African wage-salary employees, and thus were incomplete. Starting in 1954, the approximate number of paid-up members out of the total number of wage-salary employees began to be documented.⁹ The Gold Coast Trades Union Congress was headquartered in Sekondi in the Western Region and later moved to Accra in 1953. In 1954, the congress proposed strengthening the local unions by amalgamating them by industry, and the proposal was approved the following year. By 1959, total trade union membership had grown to over 200,000 members. The national industrial unions that were formalized before and after independence included construction, industrial, and commercial workers; agriculture, health services and local government; public services, telecommunications, railways, and ports; education, mines, and maritime workers; and transport, utilities, and timber workers.¹⁰ After the Ghana Trades Union Congress introduced union organization to wage earners across the commercial and industrial sectors under the compulsory structure that the Industrial Relations Act established in 1958, total union membership rose to 320,000 by 1961, about seventeen per cent of the total male labor force.¹¹

African trade unions functioned on three levels. Workplace trade unions bore responsibility for routine negotiating and policing of contracts, with the dues collected through a check-off system. Second, trade unions played an active role in the political organizations of national parties. Finally, trade unions engaged in transnational labor diplomacy, as national union federations made connections with each other.¹² Through the 1940s,

7. *Ibid.*, p. 76.

8. Patrick Obeng-Fosu, *Industrial Relations in Ghana: The Law and Practice* (Accra, 1991), pp. 5, 115.

9. See Jeffries, *Class, Power and Ideology*, pp. 24–25.

10. Obeng-Fosu, *Industrial Relations in Ghana*, pp. 10–11.

11. Jeffries, *Class, Power and Ideology*, p. 25.

12. Gary K. Busch, “The Transnational Relations of African Trade Unions”, *Africa Today*, 19:2 (1972), pp. 22–32, 23–24.

African trade unions developed ties to other geographically close unions rather than to unions in the same industry in other colonies, and only a handful of African unions connected to the Communist International. Concrete efforts toward continent-wide labor organization began in the 1950s, but took place against a backdrop of a nascent international division of labor that was shaped by Cold War tensions between American capitalism and the expansion of socialism. In addition, the speed of decolonization created centrifugal nationalist forces after independence was achieved.¹³

ROAD TO INDEPENDENCE AND THE CREATION OF INTERNATIONAL TIES

In 1949, the Gold Coast Trades Union Congress joined with Kwame Nkrumah's Convention People's Party (CPP) to launch the Positive Action campaign, which promoted mass labor demonstrations and civil disobedience in opposition to the colonial administration's proposed new constitution. After the Gold Coast Trades Union Congress called a general strike, the colonial government declared a state of emergency and jailed CPP leaders, activists, and trade union leaders.¹⁴

Among those who joined the Trades Union Congress at this time was stenographer John Kofi Tettegah. For most of the next decade, he worked to strengthen the union as well as to keep it independent of the CPP.¹⁵ In 1953, the Gold Coast Trades Union Congress merged with rival labor organizations to form the Ghana Trades Union Congress. Tettegah became the new organization's first full-time general secretary.

During this time, the GTUC began to develop connections to the ICFTU. Formed in 1949, the international body conducted its first activities in Africa in 1950–1951, when it sent missions to every region of the continent to try to persuade emergent governments to develop technical and vocational schools. ICFTU representatives subsequently proposed the creation of educational programs in West and Central Africa that would foster trade union training. Proposals to consider the organization and functions of advisory centers led to discussions about establishing an office of the International Labor Organization (ILO) in West Africa.¹⁶ The ICFTU requested that the ILO offer “associate membership” to dependent territories.¹⁷

13. Tiyambe Zeleza, “Pan-African Trade Unionism: Unity and Discord”, *Transafrican Journal of History*, 15 (1986), pp. 164–190, 168–169.

14. Roger Gocking, *The History of Ghana* (Westport, CT, 2005), pp. 93–94.

15. Kojo T. Vieta, *The Flagbearers of Ghana* (Accra, 1999), pp. 387–388.

16. ICFTU Archives, inv. no. 4264, International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam (hereafter, IISH), Report on the History of the ICFTU Educational Activities in Africa, Early Days, Appendix of African Regional Organization, International Conference of Free Trade Unions, Fourth African National Conference, Nairobi, 29 July–2 August 1963.

17. Meynaud and Saleh-Bey, *Trade Unionism in Africa* (London, 1967), p. 146.

ICFTU interests in Africa centered on the idea that financial, educational, and advisory assistance would enable African trade unionism to develop along the lines of free trade unionism in the West and in turn encourage the development of Western-oriented ideological and political commitments.¹⁸ The ICFTU's policy involving the distribution of African expenditures varied, but support was often channeled through the national trade union centers. The ICFTU supported free and democratic trade unionism and constituted a worldwide body with regional organizations that operated through established relationships with international trade secretariats and intergovernmental and international organizations. During the early years of the ICFTU's work, occasional missions visited the various regions of the continent. Once the regional organizations had expanded their activities and became stable and active bodies, the ICFTU focused on organizing campaigns, leadership training, and direct assistance to national centers, unions, and international trade secretariats. Field representatives provided guidance and technical assistance, while international trade secretariats devised regional activities in specific industrial fields. The ICFTU thus envisioned itself as standing at the forefront of the anti-colonial struggle.¹⁹

By the mid-1950s, labor organizations across the continent had strengthened their contacts with other African labor organizations, primarily through the ICFTU, which had begun to eclipse the power of metropolitan movements such as the British Trades Union Congress in decolonizing areas. This shift reflected not only US determination to prevent the Soviet Union from making inroads in African labor, but also a conscious decision by the GTUC and other African organizations to limit the amount of technical assistance obtained from its former colonial master in favor of other European and American entities.²⁰

With Tettegah at the helm, the GTUC's secretariat consolidated its leadership of the organization. His interest in simultaneously enhancing the union's activities and maintaining its autonomy led him to seek out models from international labor groups, and at the GTUC's September 1954 annual meeting in Accra leaders created a task force to study the congress's problems and ultimately embark on international study tours. The task force was backed and financed by the Nkrumah government.²¹

At its 1956 annual conference, held in Takoradi, the GTUC decided to replace the existing unions with the national industrial unions.

18. Dorothy Nelkin, "Labor: Stumbling Block to Pan-Africanism", in Beling, *The Role of Labor in African Nation-Building*, p. 124.

19. ICFTU Archives, inv. no. 4264, IISH, ICFTU Report on GTUC, 21 June 1966.

20. Zeleza, "Pan-African Trade Unionism", p. 170.

21. Rolf Gerritsen, "The Evolution of the Ghana Trades Union Congress Under the Convention Peoples Party: Towards a Re-Interpretation", *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, 13:2 (1972), pp. 229–244, 241.

The restructuring sought to create direction and purpose by reducing the number of unions that were fragmented and structuring them on an industrial basis. Soon thereafter, Tettegah traveled to Israel and West Germany to study their trade union structures and the relationship between political parties and unions.²²

Israel's General Federation of Labour, the Histadrut, was centralized within a highly politicized framework, a configuration that deeply impressed Tettegah, who reportedly exclaimed, "Israel has given me more in eight days than I could obtain from two years in a British University".²³ Tettegah was particularly impressed by the balance he perceived between the Israeli government's interests and those of the country's labor movement. Moreover, Tettegah and his fellow trade unionists argued that more than a decade and a half of experience had proven that the British trade union structure provided an insufficient model for a newly liberated Ghana and criticized the British Trades Union Congress as a capitalist-based system designed by bureaucrats and imposed on vulnerable colonial peoples.²⁴

Tettegah also visited West Germany in 1956, spending three days at the Düsseldorf headquarters of the Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (DGB, the German Trade Union Federation) before visiting East and West Berlin and then Frankfurt, where he saw the DGB's educational institutions. Tettegah admired the West German trade union movement's creation of sixteen powerful national unions and its achievement of a strong voice in industry.²⁵ In 1957, the ILO invited Tettegah and other GTUC members to attend a workers' education seminar in Copenhagen, a trip that Tettegah combined with a short visit to the ICFTU headquarters in Brussels.²⁶

These international endeavors were instrumental in the development of the GTUC's new structure in the lead-up to independence. Applying what he had learned on his travels abroad, Tettegah proposed a substantial reorganization at the GTUC's fourteenth annual conference, held in Cape Coast in September 1957, just six months after Ghana's independence. He recommended that the sixty-four unions affiliated with the GTUC merge into sixteen national industrial unions.²⁷ The GTUC would also establish specialized departments for organization (finance, education, legal action, economics), collect dues through a national check-off system, disburse funds to the industrial unions, and establish union shop floors. GTUC members

22. Damachi, *Role of Trade Unions*, p. 21.

23. Samuel Decalo, *Israel and Africa: Forty Years, 1956-1996* (Gainesville, FL, 1998), p. 34.

24. Douglas Rimmer, "The New Industrial Relations in Ghana", *ILR Review*, 14:2 (1961), pp. 206-226, 216.

25. Vieta, *Flagbearers of Ghana*, p. 389.

26. ICFTU Archives, inv. no. 4263, IISH, Frank McCallister, Director of Labor Education Division, to Victor Reuther, United Auto Workers, AFL-CIO, 8 August 1957.

27. Damachi, *Role of Trade Unions*, p. 22.

enthusiastically adopted the proposal and formally allied the organization with the CPP, based on the premise that the party's programs accorded with those of the congress. In response, the government granted the GTUC 25,000 Ghanaian pounds for organizational work.²⁸

The centralizing features of Nkrumah's nationalist paradigm after independence in March 1957 resulted from ideas about institutional and state security and social and ideological discipline. The CPP sought to transform Ghana's new citizens into an ideologically cohesive yet modern and disciplined workforce.²⁹ Leaders of the trade union movement and government officials viewed the movement and the government as working together to ensure the country's prosperity, a perspective that underpinned government efforts to reorganize the trade union movement to contribute to national reconstruction. Working from the top down rather than from a grassroots perspective, the CPP and the GTUC jointly promoted a development strategy focused on large industries. The government sought production in industrial and agricultural sectors; in return, workers in those sectors expected good wages and benefits.

INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATION AND AFRICAN TRADE UNIONS IN THE 1950s

At the same time that the GTUC integrated itself into Ghana's governing structure, the congress was also becoming involved in the international labor movement. In January 1957, the ICFTU held its first African Regional Trade Union Conference in Accra. Addressing the gathering, Nkrumah declared,

It is particularly fitting that upon the eve of the independence of the Gold Coast you should have chosen Accra as your meeting place. The Gold Coast Government believes that the trade union movement is of the utmost importance in the development of Africa as a whole and I can assure you that my Government will give all the support which it can to the establishment and maintenance of independent and free trade unions.³⁰

With Tettegah as its chair, the conference voted unanimously to create a Pan-African workers' organization to further the goal of independence. In December 1958, Accra hosted the All-African People's Conference, at which representatives of political parties from across the continent adopted a resolution, among others, to create an All-African Trade Union Federation the following year.³¹

28. Ananaba, *Trade Union Movement*, p. 9.

29. See Jeffrey Ahlman, "Managing the Pan-African Workplace: Discipline, Ideology, and the Cultural Politics of the Ghanaian Bureau of African Affairs, 1959–1966", *Ghana Studies*, 15–16 (2012–2013), pp. 337–371.

30. O. Zudonu, "Ghana TUC and ICFTU", *West African Pilot*, 9 September 1961.

31. Ananaba, *Trade Union Movement*, p. 11.

At the beginning of 1957, Ghanaian trade unions, like many African trade unions, embraced a global perspective on worker issues even within the context of the nationalist struggles. Within less than two years, however, that viewpoint had been replaced by an inward-looking perspective that focused on developing an African labor movement on African terms and separate from the international labor movement. Among the primary consequences of this profound shift were concerns about how the organization would finance itself and whether constituent members were required to affiliate with international trade union organizations.³² Because the Nkrumah government and the GTUC advocated the Pan-African trade union model, they had not explored the issue of how such a union would be financed and instead had focused on issues related to international affiliation. The Pan-African and nationalist framework intersected with the question of financing imperatives such that national and continental efforts superseded GTUC's endeavors to work with European or American groups at this pivotal moment. They believed that national labor organizations need not affiliate with international groups and therefore devoted their energy and funds to ensuring that labor organizations, political parties, and governments across the continent focused on establishing African-based union structures.³³

In spite of ongoing ideological divisions among African trade unions related to the issue of international affiliation, union leaders continued to seek and international organizations continued to provide development assistance. Trade unions across the continent invariably were identified with one or the other of the competing Cold War blocs, the Western ICFTU and communist World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), although African political leaders often resisted choosing sides.³⁴ This non-alignment policy emerged in early 1957, when the African Regional Trade Union Conference took place. Some African leaders refused to participate on the grounds that the ICFTU did not represent African interests.³⁵

Despite some African countries' refusal to affiliate with international entities, the underlying competition between the ICFTU and the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions, which represented the West, and the WFTU, representing the Eastern bloc, meant that all three groups continued to provide financial support that enabled delegations, study groups, and technical advisers to travel to and from Africa. Before independence, African unions affiliated primarily with the ICFTU and the

32. Nelkin, "Labor: Stumbling Block to Pan-Africanism", pp. 127–130.

33. Agyeman, *Failure of Grassroots Pan-Africanism*, pp. 128–137.

34. For the Cold War dynamics of these and other international labor groups, see Andrew Carew, "Conflict Within the ICFTU: Anti-Communism and Anti-Colonialism in the 1950s", *International Review of Social History*, 41:2 (1996), pp. 147–181.

35. Nelkin, "Labor: Stumbling Block to Pan-Africanism", p. 130.

International Federation of Christian Trade Unions. Subsequently, however, African trade groups began to look eastward, and the communist movements sought to extend their influence in decolonizing Africa by offering technical advice and financial or other material resources.³⁶ Seeking to counter this growing Eastern bloc influence, the ICFTU did the same.³⁷

African labor unions' need for external assistance to develop their programs contributed to this contested landscape. Labor's close ties to political parties meant that unions were intimately connected to national political and economic spheres. In addition, Africa's trade unions sought to achieve some level of financial and administrative autonomy despite government control. Faced with high expenses for salaries, offices, equipment, and other administrative and organizational needs, many unions eagerly sought financial support from international labor organizations.

By the late 1950s, most of Africa's unions had affiliated with one of the three global internationals. National trade union centers often affiliated to the ICFTU. The African unions received four main forms of assistance: invitations and funding for African leaders to attend conferences and meetings; money, including grants from the ICFTU's International Solidarity Fund, to create training programs for members, and purchase equipment; donations of books and other materials to set up small libraries; and technical assistance and advice from experienced trade unionists from industrialized countries. The primary contributors to the International Solidarity Fund were the US-based American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) and the DGB. German, British, and other national trade union centers also operated independent programs in Africa, offering scholarships and advice and maintaining open channels to the West.³⁸ African labor organizations also received assistance from national organizations from Asia, the Soviet bloc, and the West. These groups often concentrated on national centers and leadership training, an approach that reinforced the importance of the African national institutions.³⁹

The US embassy in Ghana awarded scholarships to enable GTUC leaders to spend up to five months abroad, with funding provided by a grant from the US Operation Mission. The branch secretary of the Ghana Mine Workers' Union, T.K. Owusu, and the president of the GTUC, Joe-Fio Meyer, led this endeavor.⁴⁰ Organizations that invited GTUC to send

36. Friedland, "African Trade Unions Studies", pp. 578, 581–584.

37. Willard A. Beling, *Modernization and African Labor: A Tunisian Case Study* (New York, 1965).

38. Ananaba, *Trade Union Movement*, pp. 188–190.

39. Nelkin, "Labor: Stumbling Block to Pan-Africanism", pp. 129–130.

40. ICFTU Archives, inv. no. 4263, IISH, S.D. Dawson, Area Representative of the West African Trade Union Information and Advisory Centre, Accra, to Hans Gottfurcht, Assistant General Secretary, ICFTU, Brussels, 10 March 1959.

representatives included the Japanese Trade Union Movement, the All-China Federation of Trade Unions, and the USSR's All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions. Cold War tensions figured in these invitations as well: the GTUC declined the Chinese invitation to send two delegates to the 1959 May Day celebrations in Beijing because the CPP government viewed such a visit as contradicting its non-alignment policy.⁴¹

The ICFTU's African initiatives were patterned on its earlier experiences in Latin America and Asia. In those areas, the organization extended its alliance to a range of trade unions considered to be anti-communist. But the unions in Latin America and Asia had already received funding from the US labor movement to form regional alliances against robust communist rivals, and the ICFTU inherited these regional organizations. Thus, international labor efforts in those contexts did not face the challenges posed by Africans' commitment to non-alignment.⁴²

In the 1950s, Tettegah and other Ghanaian trade unionists began to attend ICFTU conferences, including the 1955 meeting in Vienna. The following year, Tettegah and H.W. Mensah served as the Gold Coast labor delegation to the ILO's June conference in Geneva, Switzerland, and attended the meeting of the ICFTU's executive board, on which Tettegah served and of which he was the first sub-Saharan African member.⁴³ The ICFTU invited and probably paid for members of the GTUC to attend the 1959 World Economic Conference of Free Trade Unions and asked Tettegah to speak on behalf of the interests of African labor.⁴⁴

The GTUC formally affiliated with the ICFTU in the early 1950s, and the ICFTU contributed 27,000 pounds to the Ghanaian labor movement in the lead up to independence, money that helped to establish a newspaper, *The West African Worker*, among other projects. The ICFTU also opened information and advisory centers in Accra and Nairobi, Kenya; sent missions to various African countries; and offered seminars, courses, and other assistance across the continent.⁴⁵ In 1958, the ICFTU opened a labor college in Kampala, Uganda, which offered training courses lasting from two days to six months and thus had an important influence on union development in the region. Both the Nkrumah government and the GTUC recognized the trade union's relationship with the ICFTU as beneficial and did not regard it as an imperialist organization bent on exploiting and dominating its African counterparts.

41. ICFTU Archives, inv. no. 4263, IISH, ICFTU West African Trade Union Information and Advisory Centre Memo, Accra, 4 March 1959.

42. Lynd, *Politics of African Trade Unionism*, pp. 156–157.

43. ICFTU Archives, inv. no. 4263, IISH, Correspondence between John Tettegah and J.B. Krane, ICFTU, Brussels, 19 July 1956.

44. ICFTU Archives, inv. no. 4263, IISH, Correspondence between John Tettegah and General Secretary of the ICFTU, 19 February 1959.

45. *Ibid.*, 17 January 1958.

DISAFFILIATION AND ICFTU COMPLAINTS DURING
THE CPP ERA

Nevertheless, as the Pan-African movement gained steam in the lead up to CPP rule in 1957 the GTUC considered disaffiliating from the ICFTU. The Nkrumah government feared that disaffiliation would provide critics with evidence of supposed communist influence and thus offer a reason to suspend the constitution and prevent independence, as had occurred in Guyana. Thus, the GTUC, backed by the ruling party, chose to retain its formal ICFTU affiliation. Nigeria's labor organization similarly began to disaffiliate from the ICFTU but reversed course in 1956 after seeing the experiences of trade unions in Kenya and elsewhere in British colonial Africa.⁴⁶

By the late 1950s, however, the GTUC faced a looming financial crisis. The organization, which included twenty-four unions by 1958, was engaged in a colossal effort to train hundreds of full-time trade union officials and was having difficulty not only funding those programs, but also paying its personnel. In addition, the GTUC sought to build a new central hall and headquarters in Accra at an estimated cost of 200,000 pounds. The GTUC negotiated with the government to acquire land and planned a facility that could host gatherings of several hundred people and would house multiple offices, a 10,000-volume reference library and reading room, conference rooms, and classrooms. The building would not only fulfill practical needs, but also enhance the GTUC's stature. The GTUC appealed to workers to contribute to the hall, and the government agreed to match the amount that the workers raised.⁴⁷ GTUC leaders also sought contributions from fraternal organizations; from American, British, and Israeli labor groups; and from the ICFTU, which expressed reservations about whether a large-scale project of this kind should be a priority of Ghana's labor movement.⁴⁸

To improve its financial position, the GTUC considered approaching allies in the United States and Europe on the grounds that "it was the responsibility of strong unions to help their weak brothers to stand on their own" and that the ICFTU and other groups should work to strengthen the GTUC "as the bastion of democracy in Africa". The GTUC also considered obtaining loans from Ghanaian banks or the government.⁴⁹

In 1958, the GTUC devised a plan for a voluntary check-off system under which employers would deduct union dues from wages and pay the

46. Zeleza, "Pan-African Trade Unionism", pp. 173–175.

47. "Help! Please Help Build £200,000 T.U.C. Hall Memo", *Ghana Worker*, February–March 1957.

48. ICFTU Archives, inv. no. 4263, IISH, J.B. Krane to C.H. Milliard and J.H. Oldenbrook, 10 April 1957.

49. ICFTU Archives, inv. no. 4263, IISH, Speech by John K. Tettegah, Secretary-General, GTUC, Fourteenth Annual GTUC Conference, Cape Coast, 25–26 January 1958.

money directly to the congress. To implement the plan, the GTUC's secretariat sought a 50,000-pound loan from the government, with the money to be repaid two years later, after the check-off system was in operation.⁵⁰

Also in 1958, Parliament passed the Industrial Relations Act that formally restructured the GTUC under the auspices of the CPP government. ICFTU leaders declared that the elements in the measure violated the most basic principles of trade union freedom, citing provisions that mandated which unions would be represented, granted the government extensive powers to freeze a union's funds if its actions were deemed contrary to the public good, made union rules and procedures subject to government approval, allowed the government to control the list of affiliates, and deprived public servants of the right to strike. Some unions, most notably those representing United Africa Company workers and railway workers, joined the ICFTU in opposing the new relationship between the GTUC and the CPP and consequently remained outside the GTUC. The CPP government responded to these criticisms by arguing that economic development superseded all other needs and that although workers had been stripped of the right to strike and of other rights guaranteed by the ILO's and ICFTU's conventions regarding freedom of association, the government would act with workers' best interests in mind.⁵¹ Nkrumah also contended that the African trade union movement must function as a major protagonist in the Cold War, a view that largely echoed the sentiments of Guinea's Sekou Toure. Nkrumah's non-alignment policy served as a means of protecting African interests amidst the East-West divides of unfolding Cold War politics. This policy sought to empower Nkrumah and other African leaders to play a central role in negotiating national, continental, and global affairs.⁵²

In the wake of the ICFTU's criticism of what it viewed to be CPP co-optation of the GTUC and the latter's perceived embrace of CPP ideological rhetoric by the late 1950s, both the CPP and the GTUC came to regard the ICFTU as imperialist. The Nkrumah government changed its rhetoric regarding the ICFTU, and the GTUC, in turn, began to assert its independence from the ICFTU and worldwide labor movements and to increase its advocacy of non-alignment and Pan-Africanism. Despite the concrete benefits that came from the relationship with the ICFTU, the GTUC formally disaffiliated from the international group in 1959. Not surprisingly, ICFTU officials disagreed with the decision to disaffiliate,

50. ICFTU Archives, inv. no. 4263, IISH, S.D. Dawson to C.H. Milliard, Director, ICFTU, Brussels, 5 February 1958.

51. Ananaba, *Trade Union Movement*, pp. 10, 27; ICFTU Archives, inv. no. 4263, IISH, S.D. Dawson to C.H. Milliard, Director, ICFTU, Brussels, 5 February 1958.

52. Zeleza, "Pan-African Trade Unionism", pp. 173–175.

arguing that it isolated Ghana's trade union movement from global democratic unions and the spirit of international cooperation and understanding. Moreover, declared the ICFTU, it was unfortunate that Ghana's TUC decided to leave "[...] the ICFTU instead of playing its part within the organisation and shouldering its international commitments, both moral and financially". ICFTU officials also believed that because Ghana was the first sub-Saharan African nation to gain independence from colonial rule, the country's trade union movement needed to serve as a leader for the labor movement across the continent.⁵³

Such arguments fell on deaf ears, and by 1960 the Nkrumah government, through the GTUC, had gained control of Ghana's unions. The Ghana Trades Union Congress nevertheless continued to advocate on workers' behalf and in some instances persuaded the government to meet laborers' needs, using the Industrial Relations Act to form a substantial financial base and then to expand its political power and policy initiatives.⁵⁴ Tettegah, for his part, embraced the objectives of a socialist transformation of commerce and industry, arguing that incorporating workers into the management of state-owned public corporations and industries would raise laborers' awareness, create a sense of responsibility, and increase productivity.⁵⁵

Despite the GTUC's emergence as the overarching power structure through which Ghana's unions functioned, some of the oldest and most diverse labor groups remained outside that structure. The United Africa Company workers and the railway workers continued to oppose the new structure and refused to join it until 1960, when amendments to the Industrial Relations Act of 1958 forced them to capitulate. The railway workers remained defiant, staging a seventeen-day strike in September 1961 to indicate their rejection of the government's socialist development project, which the union believed was not bringing real benefits and wage stability to the Ghanaian working class.⁵⁶

Such issues also plagued other African countries. In East Africa and Francophone West Africa, centralizing national parties tended to bring trade unions under their control regardless of the country's ideology, system of government, or speed of economic growth. Even in other West African countries where trade unions had not been subjected to formal control by political parties, union autonomy was substantially limited.⁵⁷

53. ICFTU Archives, inv. no. 4263, IISH, Correspondence between General Secretary, ICFTU, and Eiler Jenson, Labor Organization, Copenhagen, 18 June 1960.

54. Rimmer, "New Industrial Relations in Ghana", p. 213; Gerritsen, "Evolution of the Trades Union Congress".

55. Gerritsen, "Evolution of the Trades Union Congress"; ICFTU Archives, inv. no. 4263, IISH, Summary of World Broadcasts, Second Series No. 566, 5 February 1961.

56. Zeleza, "Pan-African Trade Unionism", p. 181.

57. *Ibid.*

Nationalist parties and governments across the continent denounced union demands for increased benefits and higher wages as detrimental to economic growth and national unity.

Many African workers became alienated from their trade unions as a result of this process of consolidation, centralization, and ultimately control by the ruling political parties, a process that undermined organized labor in Africa. As workers eschewed union networks, labor discontent became silenced, a trend demonstrated by a decline in the number of days of work lost to strikes in roughly a dozen countries from more than two million in 1962 to less than half a million by 1963.⁵⁸

Moreover, although the unions under state control continued to obtain concessions on behalf of workers, those concessions failed to provide substantial benefits. In 1961, for example, the CPP's imposition of an austerity budget decreased the prices the cocoa marketing board paid to producers and mandated a drop in workers' wages. When organized labor opposed such changes, the Nkrumah government increased its use of preventative detention.⁵⁹ As Ghana's economic problems worsened over the next two years, the party newspaper increasingly featured articles touting progress, development, and self-help projects, with accompanying photographs showing happy Ghanaians performing manual labor.⁶⁰

Contemporary observers noted that newly independent governments in Ghana and elsewhere in Africa often viewed organized labor as a formidable threat to national unity because it represented the class interests of workers and therefore constituted a sectional group.⁶¹ In many ways, workers achieved little, remaining at the margins of state power despite their major contributions to the independence struggles. Because the state functioned as the dominant employer and principal source of capital, the economy depended on state initiatives, and trade unions faced real limitations on their autonomy and freedom.⁶²

INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE AND RESTORING THE GTUC

Despite its disaffiliation, the GTUC continued to seek – and obtain – various forms of assistance from the ICFTU and other international labor

58. *Ibid.*, pp. 182–183.

59. Douglas Rimmer, *Staying Poor: Ghana's Political Economy, 1950–1990* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 69–86.

60. Kate Skinner, “Who Knew the Minds of the People? Specialist Knowledge and Developmentalist Authoritarianism in Postcolonial Ghana”, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 39:2 (2011), pp. 297–323, 307.

61. Benjamin Bentum, *Trade Unions in Chains* (Accra, 1966), pp. 10–11.

62. R.B. Davison, “Labor Relations in Ghana”, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 310 (1957), pp. 133–141, 133.

groups, particularly as Ghana's political and economic situation became increasingly tenuous during the CPP years. In early March 1959, Tettegah wrote to the Swedish ICFTU affiliate for assistance in printing and issuing new membership cards.⁶³ Later in the month, the GTUC requested and received assistance from the Israeli Histadrut and the US AFL-CIO in reorganizing the secretariat in accordance with the new Ghanaian labor structure.⁶⁴ In 1962, the GTUC informed the ICFTU that many Ghanaian union members were eager to pursue academic courses at German universities but that the Trades Union Congress lacked funding to send many of its people abroad. In turn, S.D. Dawson, the ICFTU's acting representative in West Africa, asked DGB president Willi Richter whether the German union could arrange training for Ghanaian unionists in engineering, medicine, agriculture, economics, building engineering, and other labor-related subjects, noting, "Young as our organisation is, it will not be possible for us to contribute financially to any of these training schemes but it is our firm conviction that though we may not be able to repay this good turn of yours materially, we will no doubt assist other budding nations in the same way".⁶⁵ The German union replied that it did not provide scholarships for either German or foreign students but advised the GTUC to contact other official German organizations and institutions.⁶⁶

Ghanaian labor leaders did not restrict their search for assistance to Western-oriented groups. In 1964, Tettegah traveled to Geneva to request 100,000 Ghanaian pounds from the WFTU to finance the African Trade Union Solidarity Fund and the All-African Trade Union Federation. After the WFTU agreed to provide some of the funds for the Pan-African effort, Nkrumah instructed Tettegah to meet with the Chinese ambassador to Ghana to see if his country would contribute. China offered 50,000 Ghanaian pounds but stipulated that Tettegah would have to travel to Beijing to publicly accept the money. Such a visit would have run afoul of Ghana's efforts to control the terms under which it would receive external funds and Tettegah declined. However, he did journey to East Berlin, where he obtained additional funds from Eastern bloc WFTU affiliates.⁶⁷

Ghanaian unionists thus actively played the capitalist West and the Eastern bloc against each other, accepting assistance from a variety of sources and walking a fine line between the Nkrumah government, local

63. ICFTU Archives, inv. no. 4263, IISH, John Tettegah to President of the Swedish Labor Organization, 5 March 1959.

64. ICFTU Archives, inv. no. 4263, IISH, West African Trade Union Information and Advisory Center Memo, 24 March 1959.

65. ICFTU Archives, inv. no. 4264, IISH, Seth D. Dawson, GTUC, to President, DGB, 30 January 1962.

66. ICFTU Archives, inv. no. 4264, IISH, Harald Simon to S.D. Dawson, "Scholarships", 19 February 1962.

67. Busch, "Transnational Relations", pp. 26–28.

leaders, and the international labor movement. Labor organizations across West Africa followed similar strategies. Nigeria's United Labor Congress, for example, aggressively attempted to secure funds from Italy's Center for Labor and Social Studies as well as from the US-based League for International and Social Cooperative Development, which contributed more than 8,000 dollars annually to the Nigerian group in the mid-1960s. British, German, French, and Scandinavian unions, governments, and foundations also rendered substantial financial and other assistance to African trade unions.⁶⁸

Other international groups aided the African labor movement by creating institutions that worked in multiple countries. Founded in 1960, the Afro-Asian Institute for Labor had an annual budget of more than half a million dollars, with that money provided by the Histadrut and the AFL-CIO. The Institute offered material support – vehicles, typewriters, and stationery – contributed by the Histadrut and DGB as well as leadership training in economic and social affairs relating to trade unions that resulted in significant structural changes to many African unions. Working through the Institute, specialists from the Histadrut and the AFL-CIO provided technical assistance in collective bargaining and in a variety of other labor-related fields.⁶⁹ In Uganda and East Africa, the ILO and other international entities offered a wide range of programs, creating an ILO field office in Dar es Salam, Tanzania; sending missions to Africa to train union leaders and government labor officers; and bringing African union officials to Geneva for training courses. In addition to Ghana, the ICFTU and AFL-CIO established a strong presence in Uganda and Tanzania as British and American leaders increasingly competed over the direction of foreign assistance.⁷⁰

International labor organizations from the West attempted to move beyond the issues of free trade unionism, focusing on economic development and social projects as a means of extending their influence. Communist nations – those in the Eastern bloc and China – similarly sought to project their anti-imperialist worldview across Africa by offering training programs, scholarships, and other forms of aid to trade union advisers.⁷¹

In June 1962, the ICFTU lodged a complaint with the ILO regarding the Ghanaian government's infringement of trade union rights. After an investigation, the ILO ruled in favor of the ICFTU, which began to galvanize international pressure on the GTUC. In 1965, Nkrumah's government relaxed its control of the trade unions to a certain degree. According to minister of labor K. Amoa-Awaah, workers were now

68. *Ibid.*, pp. 29–30.

69. Nelkin, "Labor: Stumbling Block to Pan-Africanism", pp. 130–131.

70. Roger Scott, *The Development of Trade Unionism in Uganda* (Nairobi, 1966), pp. 51–58.

71. Nelkin, "Labor: Stumbling Block to Pan-Africanism", p. 131.

“completely free to form their own organizations, to make their own rules and to conduct negotiations with their employers with regard to terms and conditions of work”.⁷² Nevertheless, stringent restrictions on the right to strike remained in place, as did all of the provisions of the old law except for state control.⁷³

LABOR AFTER CPP RULE

On 24 February 1966, Kwame Nkrumah was deposed as Ghana's leader and replaced by the National Liberation Council. The GTUC largely welcomed the new government. Over the preceding five years, virtually all Ghanaian workers' groups had become disillusioned with the Nkrumah regime. Rapid price inflation and the CPP's refusal to increase the minimum wage severely depressed standards of living and resulted in large-scale demonstrations in Accra, Kumasi, and Sekondi-Takoradi. Between 1960 and 1965, average real wage levels dropped by twenty per cent in the private sector and by forty per cent in the public sector. Although GTUC officials had used the compulsory bargaining mechanism established by the Industrial Relations Act of 1958 to achieve what they could for the country's lowest-paid workers, hostility to the congress had mushroomed, and pressure from the union leaders and the rank and file for an independent and democratic trade movement free of political party influence was evident in the aftermath of the coup.⁷⁴

The National Liberation Council attacked and destroyed many organizations allied with the CPP government but largely left the GTUC intact and viable.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, the GTUC had many needs: expertise to draw up a trade union constitution based on free democratic principles; legal advice; material and personnel assistance in building and managing workers' housing, medical, and recreational facilities; materials to educate union leaders; and other technical and professional training programs.⁷⁶ GTUC leaders such as Benjamin Bentum turned to the vast economic resources and development funds offered by the United States and other international financial bodies.⁷⁷

72. *Ghana Worker*, June–July 1965, n.p.

73. ICFTU Archives, inv. no. 4264, IISH, Confidential Report, ICFTU Executive Board, Brussels, 1–3 February 1966.

74. Jeffries, *Class, Power and Ideology*, pp. 103–105.

75. Emmanuel O. Akwetey with David Dorkenoo, “Disengagement from Party Politics: Achievements and Challenges for the Ghana Trades Union Congress”, in Beckman *et al.*, *Trade Unions and Party Politics*, pp. 39–58.

76. ICFTU Archives, inv. no. 4264, IISH, Correspondence between General Secretary, ICFTU, Brussels, and B.A. Bentum, Prospective GTUC Secretary-General, 22 March 1966.

77. Michael E. Latham, “The Cold War in the Third World, 1963–1975”, in Melvyn P. Leffer and Odd Arne Westad (eds), *Cambridge History of the Cold War, Volume II: Crises and Détente* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 259–280, 259.

In a 1961 speech to the United Nations, John F. Kennedy had declared the 1960s a “Decade of Development”. Over the next few years, the US State Department spent up to thirteen million dollars annually on international labor affairs, while the ICFTU’s International Solidarity Fund spent between one and two million dollars each year through the middle of the decade.⁷⁸ In 1964, the AFL-CIO created the African-American Labor Center, which sponsored programs to grow labor leadership in more than forty African states and brought many African trade unionists to the United States for advanced training. GTUC leaders sought to tap into all of these funding sources. In addition, by the mid-1960s, socialist governments and organizations increased their intervention in African labor affairs, offering scholarships that enabled African trade unionists to attend labor schools in East Germany, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and the Soviet Union.⁷⁹

In April 1966, the GTUC’s acting secretary-general initiated correspondence with the ICFTU, AFL-CIO, the British Trades Union Congress, the DGB, and the Histadrut about economic assistance. GTUC emissaries met in Brussels with representatives from the AFL-CIO, British Trades Union Congress, and DGB and reached agreements to have the ICFTU coordinate foreign assistance to the GTUC. The ICFTU’s Pieter de Jonge immediately traveled to Accra to assess the situation there.⁸⁰

De Jonge reported that despite the check-off system, union finances were abysmal, largely as a consequence of debt accrued under the old regime, which had overspent in a variety of areas, including staffing and unnecessary prestige items. The GTUC urgently needed to stabilize its finances and would require substantial monetary assistance to enable individual unions to hold democratic elections for delegates to a GTUC convention to be held in May. ICFTU affiliates from the United States requested an emergency grant of 26,000 dollars for the GTUC.⁸¹

When Western unions agreed to assist their African counterparts through the ICFTU, its International Solidarity Fund served as the distribution agent, reviewing the proposed budget, approving the allocation of funds, and distributing monies via a representative on the ground in Accra.⁸² Building on its long-term relationship with the GTUC, the ICFTU called

78. *Ibid.*, p. 263.

79. Zeleza, “Pan-African Trade Unionism”, pp. 171, 178; Busch, “Transnational Relations”, p. 26. 80. ICFTU Archives, inv. no. 4264, IISH, Correspondence between General Secretary, ILO Brussels Office, ICFTU, and ILO Stockholm Office, 19 April 1966.

81. ICFTU Archives, inv. no. 4264, IISH, Letter to L.A. Haskins, General Secretary, International Federation of Petroleum Workers, USA, from H.A. Tulatz, Assistant General Secretary, 27 April 1966.

82. Busch, “Transnational Relations”, p. 30; ICFTU Archives, inv. no. 4264, IISH, H.A. Tulatz, Assistant General Secretary, to L.A. Haskins, General Secretary, International Federation of Petroleum Workers, 27 April 1966.

on affiliates to help create a genuine democratic trade movement in Ghana. Led by the Swedish labor organization, many ICFTU affiliates responded, and the Extra-Ordinary Congress of the GTUC convened in May 1966 to examine the role of the country's trade unions and to adopt a new constitution based on free and democratic principles.⁸³ The GTUC invited an ICFTU delegation to attend, signifying the reestablishment of links between the two organizations and recognizing the funding and programmatic assistance that had made the gathering possible.⁸⁴ The following month, the director of the ICFTU's African Regional Office visited Ghana. The GTUC was ready for a new start.⁸⁵

The May 1966 conference elected as secretary-general Benjamin Bentum, who had served as general secretary of the General Agricultural Workers Union until the old GTUC leadership ousted him in 1965. Upon his election, Bentum presented delegates with a "Program for Success" – an ambitious plan under which the GTUC would function not as a political entity, as it had under Nkrumah, but as a truly free trade union that would work on behalf of its members.⁸⁶ With the backing of the National Liberation Council, which restored workers' right to freely elect their leaders and administer their unions, Bentum oversaw the GTUC's reconstruction in accordance with the ICFTU's democratic principles. By the end of his tenure in 1971, the GTUC had emerged as a more aggressive, articulate voice for working-class interests and worker rights, while negotiating evolving political challenges with the NLC government and that of the second republic.⁸⁷ Bentum's leadership was critical to realizing the vision of rank-and-file members. Under his leadership, the organization experienced substantial decentralization and democratization and displayed an increasing commitment to political democracy and social justice.⁸⁸

CONCLUSION

The Ghana case demonstrates GTUC leaders' attempts to secure international resources to develop its union activities at home. The GTUC navigated the shifting and often contested relationship with international labor organizations

83. ICFTU Archives, inv. no. 4264, IISH, Correspondence between Mr Geijer, Swedish LO, and GTUC, 6 May 1966.

84. ICFTU Archives, inv. no. 4264, IISH, B.A. Bentum, Secretary-General, to ICFTU General Secretary, Brussels, 27 April 1966.

85. ICFTU Archives, inv. no. 4264, IISH, "Trade Developments in Ghana", GTUC, 28–30 June 1966.

86. ICFTU Archives, inv. no. 4264, IISH, B.A. Bentum, "A Program for Progress", Speech to GTUC, Accra, 4–5 June 1966.

87. Jon Kraus, "Trade Unions, Democratization, and Economic Crises in Ghana", in *idem* (ed.), *Trade Unions and the Coming of Democracy in Africa* (New York, 2007), p. 92.

88. Jeffries, *Class, Power and Ideology*, pp. 107–111.

and the ruling party at home in meeting its goals for development. During the era of decolonization, the GTUC was receptive to various forms of assistance from entities like the ICFTU, but once the former became an organ of Kwame Nkrumah's Convention People's Party by 1959 new struggles emerged over securing funding and other types of assistance from international labor organizations. The contested politics of affiliating with international labor groups became a major source of turmoil for the GTUC and the larger labor movement across the continent by the late 1950s. By the mid-1960s, a dramatic shift could be seen in efforts to mend the GTUC's broken relationship with the ICFTU as it began to rebuild the union along democratic lines. With the toppling of the Nkrumah regime in 1966, the GTUC and its leaders returned to their former allies in the international labor movement for financial assistance. The fraught political landscape intersected with a tangible need for funding and the development of African labor efforts from the ground up.

The Ghana case also illustrates how GTUC actors took advantage of broader circumstances, both at home in Ghana and around the world, to obtain the financial and other assistance they needed, even as those needs changed with domestic conditions. The GTUC navigated the challenges and opportunities of this momentous era of nation-building and stands out as an example of how a trade union functioned in sub-Saharan Africa's first country to gain its independence from British colonial rule. The experiences of the GTUC compared with other emerging states in Africa where effective union participation in the nation-building process was often curtailed by newly established governments' efforts to establish firm controls over trade union actions. African governments sought to co-opt trade union activities, largely because of national economic development plans and the desire to consolidate political power.

Despite such constraints, GTUC endeavors exemplify the ways in which trade union diplomacy emerged as an important element of African national and international politics during this era. Ghana's trade unionists actively engaged in the shifting and competing politics and policies of local, regional, and global trade unionism to obtain resources before and after independence. Furthermore, a clear break could be seen after Nkrumah's government was ousted. GTUC leaders sought to rebuild the trade union along democratic lines from the bottom up, abandoning the politics of international affiliation in favor of meeting rank-and-file needs. Ghana's trade unionists made conscious choices as they sought out various forms of support, networks, and solidarities to strengthen the apparatus of their labor interests at home.

TRANSLATED ABSTRACTS
FRENCH – GERMAN – SPANISH

Naaboroko Sackeyfio-Lenoch. *La Confédération des syndicats du Ghana et la politique des alliances internationales du travail, 1957–1971.*

Cet article étudie les motifs de la Confédération des syndicats du Ghana pour obtenir une aide au développement pendant l'ère de la décolonisation et les premiers temps de l'indépendance. Les intérêts et l'organisme africains dans ces processus de négociation complexes n'ont pas été suffisamment démêlés pour mettre en valeur les décisions que les syndicalistes africains prirent lorsqu'ils s'alignèrent avec des réseaux et alliances internationaux et encouragèrent ceux-ci pour atteindre des objectifs de développement particuliers. En mettant en lumière les perspectives et les actions des responsables syndicaux ghanéens, l'article montre ce que les Africains tentèrent d'atteindre par des liens avec des organisations syndicales internationales. Le cas du Ghana illustre les manières par lesquelles les syndicalistes africains s'engagèrent activement dans la politique et les politiques variables et antagonistes du syndicalisme local, régional et mondial pour renforcer leur appareil syndical et répondre à des besoins changeants.

Traduction: *Christine Plard*

Naaborko Sackeyfio-Lenoch. *Der ghanaische Gewerkschaftsdachverband und die Politik internationaler Arbeiterbündnisse, 1957–1971.*

Dieser Artikel erkundet die Beweggründe, aus denen sich der ghanaische Gewerkschaftsdachverband während der Zeit der Dekolonialisierung und frühen Unabhängigkeit um Entwicklungshilfsgelder bemüht hat. Die Rolle, die die Interessen und die Handlungsmacht Afrikas in den komplexen Aushandlungsprozessen gespielt haben, ist noch nicht hinlänglich herausgearbeitet worden. Durch ein solches Herausarbeiten lassen sich die Entscheidungen hervorheben, die afrikanische Gewerkschafter getroffen haben, als sie sich mit internationalen Netzwerken und Bündnissen koordinierten und solche Netzwerke und Bündnisse förderten, um bestimmte Entwicklungsziele zu erreichen. Der Beitrag zeigt, durch das Herausstellen der Perspektiven und Handlungen ghanaischer Gewerkschaftsfunktionäre, was Afrikaner mittels ihrer Verbindungen zu internationalen Gewerkschaftsorganisationen anstrebten. Der ghanaische Fall veranschaulicht die Arten und Weisen, auf die sich afrikanische Gewerkschafter aktiv in die wechselhaften und miteinander konkurrierenden Politiken und Strategien des lokalen, des regionalen und des globalen Gewerkschaftswesens einbrachten, um ihren eigenen Gewerkschaftsapparat zu stärken und im Wandel begriffenen Erfordernissen gerecht zu werden.

Übersetzung: *Max Henninger*

Naaborko Sackeyfio-Lenoch. *El Trade Union Congress de Ghana y la política internacional de alianzas en el mundo del trabajo, 1957–1971.*

En este artículo se tratan de analizar los motivos del Trade Union Congress de Ghana para asegurar la ayuda al desarrollo durante el periodo de la descolonización y los primeros momentos de la independencia. Los intereses africanos y su capacidad de actuación en estos procesos complejos de negociación no han sido suficientemente desenredados para poner de relieve las decisiones que los sindicalistas africanos tomaron a la hora de alinearse con, y promover, las redes y alianzas internacionales

para alcanzar objetivos particulares de desarrollo. Prestando atención a las perspectivas y las acciones de los dirigentes sindicalistas de Ghana el artículo demuestra que los africanos buscaban tener éxito mediante el establecimiento de conexiones con las organizaciones sindicales internacionales. El caso de Ghana nos permite ilustrar las vías por las que los sindicalistas africanos se comprometieron de forma activa en las variables y competitivas políticas y estrategias del sindicalismo a nivel local, regional y global para fortalecer su aparato sindical y responder a las necesidades en proceso de transformación.

Traducción: *Vicent Sanz Rozalén*