

THE SEASON OF *KONGI'S HARVEST*:
THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION
AND THE UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN, NIGERIA

by

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Every day a new adventure

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the efforts of the Rockefeller Foundation in Nigeria's University of Ibadan during the years 1960 to 1969. I argue that the Foundation, though ostensibly nonpartisan, in truth served as an extension of the existing U.S. foreign policy apparatus. To promote American ideals of democracy and capitalism in the newly-independent former British colony, the Foundation contributed more than one million dollars per year to various projects at the University. While most projects focused on public health, agriculture, or economic development, the Foundation also single-handedly funded the creation of the School of Drama. Among the School's primary goals were to take English-language "theatre to the people." I argue that the School's founding was the result of a conscious effort by the Rockefeller Foundation to promote American ideals via drama productions throughout Nigeria, in an effort to combat the perceived Soviet influence in the newly-independent nation.

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CHAPTER ONE:

American Philanthropy and Foreign Policy

Philanthropy is an intrinsic part of the human story. Religious confraternities and congregations, guilds, voluntary associations, and similar organizations have provided emotional and practical support to their members throughout modern recorded history.¹ Americans have embraced philanthropy since their founding. John Winthrop, in his “A Model of Christian Charity” sermon given aboard the ship *Arbella* in 1630, made reference to the duty of Massachusetts Bay colonists to show brotherly love through giving:

Lastly, when there is no other means whereby our Christian brother may be relieved in his distress, we must help him beyond our ability rather than tempt God in putting him upon help by miraculous or extraordinary means. This duty of mercy is exercised in these kinds: giving, lending and forgiving.²

Modern American philanthropists have taken Winthrop’s words to heart across the globe – but at what cost to the recipients? Throughout the twentieth century and into today, charitable organizations based in the United States wield enormous economic and political power. At the end of 2012, for example, an estimated 2.3 million nonprofit organizations existed in the U.S., with about 1.7 million registered formally with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as tax-exempt 501c3 charitable organizations.

¹ Nuzhat Malik, “Defining Charity and Charitable Purposes in the United Kingdom,” in the *International Journal of Not-for-Profit Law* 11, no.1 (November 2008), http://www.icnl.org/research/journal/vol11iss1/special_2.htm (accessed January 23, 2015).

² John Winthrop, “A Modell of Christian Charity,” (Sermon, *Arbella*, Atlantic Ocean, April-May 1630), http://winthropsociety.com/doc_charity.php (accessed April 8, 2015).

Americans reported giving just under \$300 billion in 2011, the majority of it in individual gifts. While this level of individual philanthropy is unique in and of itself, the more dramatic – and problematic – aspect of twentieth-century American philanthropy is the creation and stewardship of large, privately run foundations.

In this thesis, I will explore the efforts of one of the wealthiest and most important U.S. private charitable foundations, the Rockefeller Foundation, at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, during the years 1960 to 1969. I argue that the Foundation, though ostensibly nonpartisan and independent, in truth served as a de facto extension of the foreign policy apparatus of the United States. To promote American ideals of democracy and capitalism in the newly-independent former British colony, the Foundation contributed more than one million dollars per year to various projects at the University. This thesis examines the genesis, development, and outcome of one Rockefeller program at the University of Ibadan, the establishment of the School of Drama. Among the School's primary goals were to take English-language "theatre to the people" through both on-campus and travelling productions. I argue that Rockefeller Foundation investment was the result of its conscious effort to promote American ideals and counter perceived Soviet influence via dramatic productions throughout Nigeria.

American Philanthropy and the Rockefeller Foundation

Americans began to organize philanthropic ventures since the country's earliest days. During his 1831 visit to the United States, French philosopher Alexis de Tocqueville observed the "endless skill with which the inhabitants of the United States

manage to set a common aim to the efforts of a great number of men and to persuade them to pursue it voluntarily.”³ Prior to the establishment of governmental social welfare programs, early Americans formed their own associations to support each other during times of crisis. Informal religious and fraternal organizations attempted to ameliorate members’ suffering during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries by expanding on a tradition of person-to-person charity. Not only did individuals expect to both give and receive assistance, they also understood individual acts of charity as a required part of civil society.⁴ From John Winthrop’s impassioned appeal on the *Arbella* through the Civil War (1861-1865), American philanthropy maintained this individual character.

Soon, however, with an expanding and urbanizing nation, individual charitable acts proved insufficient, and the organizations as well as their goals changed dramatically. As the United States moved into its prosperous post-Civil War years, small religious and fraternal associations crystallized into formal nonprofit organizations to meet new social needs. As urban areas grew in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, upper-class Victorian Americans feared the influx of young people, often immigrants, who lived separately from their families, supported radical ideas such as communism, and enjoyed low-class pastimes such as amusement parks and dance halls.⁵ Exposés like Jacob Riis’s *How the Other Half Lives* (1890) and Upton Sinclair’s novel

³ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (London: Penguin, 2003), 596.

⁴ Lawrence J. Friedman, “Philanthropy in America: Historicism and its Discontents,” in *Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility in American History*, ed. Lawrence J. Friedman and Mark D. McGarvie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 8.

⁵ For an extensive analysis of the links between middle- and upper-class reformers and the rise in working-class leisure, see Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1986).

The Jungle (1906) alerted upper-class Americans to increasingly squalid conditions in cities and factories. Chicago's 1886 Haymarket Square incident, in which a bomb exploded during a labor rally, sent shock-waves through the country, terrifying owners of large factories and businesses, at whom much of the working class's ire was aimed. At the same time, as needs skyrocketed so did America's wealth. Though only about one hundred millionaires existed in 1870, more than forty thousand had appeared by 1916.⁶ To be sure, most millionaires did not feel any particular charitable impulse. For the few who did, though, a new idea took hold. No longer would scattershot individual charity suffice; rather, Gilded-Age philanthropists saw wholesale societal change as their objective. A new cohort of upper-class men and women endorsed a systematic, dispassionate approach to solving social problems, in which professionally-managed philanthropic institutions took the lead.⁷ For example, in Chicago pioneering reformers and social activists Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr founded Hull House, where a staff of professional social workers provided medical, social, and educational services to newly-arrived immigrants. Julius Rosenwald, president of Sears, Roebuck & Company, contributed millions via the Rosenwald Fund to build nearly 5,000 schools for African Americans throughout the South. In New York, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals began in 1866 with a full-time staff of three. Addams, Starr, Rosenwald, and their fellow Progressives promoted a new concept, that of "scientific" philanthropy. Distinct from past traditions of individual charity, "scientific" philanthropy operated under the concept that social change required rational, efficient efforts by the

⁶ Judith Sealander, "Curing Evils at their Source" in *Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility in American History*, ed. Friedman and McGarvie, 218.

⁷ Ibid.

upper class in order to strengthen the lower classes, particularly new immigrants, and teach them how to be “appropriate” Americans. Much as the business world had embraced the idea of scientific management, Progressive-era advocates of scientific philanthropy argued that the best way to reform society involved the application of “new techniques and forms such as scientific research, bureaucratic management, and professional organization.”⁸ The philanthropist’s role was to carefully direct his wealth to the best-run and most efficient programs, then step back to let each organization do its work.

Despite their “scientific” methods, these early philanthropies had clear social and cultural agendas benefitting their founders’ upper classes. Not only was it the moral responsibility of those who had been gifted with wealth to distribute it for the good of society, the thinking went, such a distribution could only help calm the potentially anarchistic unrest bubbling within the lower classes. Andrew Carnegie, perhaps the most well-known of America’s Gilded Age philanthropists, famously wrote in 1889 that the “problem of our age is the proper administration of wealth.”⁹ He had more of a problem than most. Carnegie’s 1919 *New York Times* obituary estimated his lifetime giving at over \$350 million, with an estate remaining of nearly \$500 million.¹⁰ As one of the first and most famous philanthropists, United States Steel Corporation founder Andrew Carnegie wrote “The Gospel of Wealth” for the *North American Review* in 1889. In this

⁸ Steven C. Wheatley, “Introduction” in Raymond B. Fosdick, *The Story of the Rockefeller Foundation*, rev. ed. (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1989), x.

⁹ Carnegie, *Gospel of Wealth*, 14.

¹⁰ “Obituary: Carnegie Started as a Bobbin Boy,” *New York Times*, August 12, 1919, <http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/bday/1125.html> (accessed March 1, 2015).

article, which became essentially a manifesto for Gilded-Age philanthropists, Carnegie explained why the wealthy had a responsibility to use their fortunes for philanthropic purposes while alive, rather than transmit fortunes to their families or to the state after their deaths:

There remains, then, only one mode of using great fortunes; but in this we have the true antidote for the temporary unequal distribution of wealth, the reconciliation of the rich and the poor - a reign of harmony, another ideal, differing, indeed, from that of the Communist in requiring only the further evolution of existing conditions, not the total overthrow of our civilization. It is founded upon the present most intense Individualism, and the race is prepared to put it in practice by degrees whenever it pleases. Under its sway we shall have an ideal State, in which the surplus wealth of the few will become, in the best sense, the property of the many, because administered for the common good; and this wealth, passing through the hands of the few, can be made a much more potent force for the elevation of our race than if distributed in small sums to the people themselves. Even the poorest can be made to see this, and to agree that great sums gathered by some of their fellow-citizens and spent for public purposes, from which the masses reap the principal benefit, are more valuable to them than if scattered among themselves in trifling amounts through the course of many years.¹¹

Of course, Carnegie and his fellow philanthropists had strong opinions on which segments of the community deserved to benefit from their largesse, and in what ways. His philosophy also allocated to the philanthropists the decision on what public purposes would be advanced.

Carnegie's ideas resulted in the creation of the first private philanthropic foundation.¹² He established the Carnegie Corporation of New York in 1911. Commonly

¹¹ Andrew Carnegie, *The Gospel of Wealth and Other Timely Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1962), 14.

¹² For a brief overview of the development of philanthropy and its divergence from individual charity, see Robert A. Gross, "Giving in America: From Charity to Philanthropy," in *Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility in American History*, ed. Friedman and McGarvie, 29-48; and Mark Solovey, *Shaky Foundations: The Politics-Patronage-*

called the Carnegie Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation was the first private philanthropic foundation in the United States.¹³ Two years later, in 1913, John D. Rockefeller, Sr., established the Rockefeller Foundation with an initial gift of \$35 million.¹⁴ Having made his fortune through the Standard Oil Company, Rockefeller spent the last thirty years of his life as an ardent philanthropist. Rockefeller's 1937 *New York Times* obituary, which described him as "The World's Greatest Giver," calculated his total lifetime charitable contributions (in 1937 dollars) at \$530,853,632. Nearly \$200 million of that half-billion went directly to the Rockefeller Foundation. In addition, Rockefeller made gifts totaling \$73,985,313 to the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial, a separate charitable fund established in 1918 in honor of John D. Rockefeller, Sr.'s wife. In 1929, trustees of the two organizations consolidated the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial and its assets into the Rockefeller Foundation.¹⁵ For many years, the Rockefeller Foundation led the list of wealthiest private foundations in the world.¹⁶

Social Science Nexus in Cold War America (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2013).

¹³ Carnegie Corporation of New York, "Mission and Vision," Carnegie Corporation, <http://carnegie.org/about-us/mission-and-vision/> (accessed January 23, 2015).

¹⁴ Rockefeller Foundation, "Our History," Rockefeller Foundation, <http://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/about-us/our-history/1913-1919> (accessed January 24, 2015); Paul Crowell, "John D. Rockefeller Dies at 97 in His Florida Home," *New York Times*, May 24, 1937, <https://www.nytimes.com/books/98/05/17/specials/rockefeller-obit.html> (accessed March 29, 2015).

¹⁵ Rockefeller Archive Center, "Rockefeller Related Organizations: Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial," Rockefeller Archive Center, <http://www.rockarch.org/collections/rockorgs/lrsmadd.php> (accessed January 24, 2015).

¹⁶ According to industry watchdog the Foundation Center, as of November 16, 2014, the Rockefeller Foundation is the sixteenth wealthiest private foundation based in the United States by asset size. For the tax year ending on December 31, 2012, the Rockefeller Foundation reported total assets of almost \$3.7 billion. In contrast, the top

Henry Ford and Edsel Ford, relative latecomers to the philanthropic world but eager to make up for lost time, founded the Ford Foundation in 1936 with Ford Motor Company proceeds.¹⁷ The Carnegie, Rockefeller, and Ford Foundations formed the “Big Three” private philanthropic foundations, setting the gold standard for American foundation philanthropy throughout the twentieth century.

These early foundations--built on the accumulation of personal wealth possible only in a capitalist, industrialized society--dramatically redefined philanthropy’s potential impact on average Americans. Rather than providing direct resources to individuals, through a food bank or an orphanage, philanthropic foundations sought to address the root of a problem, such as public hunger or increasing numbers of parentless children. As Rockefeller phrased it, the best philanthropy “involves a search for a cause, an attempt to cure evils at their source.”¹⁸ Many foundations, particularly the Rockefeller and Ford foundations, took on programs perceived as too controversial or not a priority for the federal government. Beginning in 1909, for example, the Rockefeller Sanitary Commission (a precursor program to the Rockefeller Foundation) funded several successful efforts to eradicate hookworm in the American South, a problem previously

two private foundations on the list reported total assets of \$37.1 billion (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation) and \$11.2 billion. Foundation Center, “Largest Foundations,” Foundation Center, <http://foundationcenter.org/findfunders/topfunders/top100assets.html> (accessed January 24, 2015).

¹⁷ After the deaths of Henry and Edsel Ford, the Ford Foundation began the process of divesting itself of Ford Motor Company stock, a process that it completed in 1974.

¹⁸ Fosdick, *Story of the Rockefeller Foundation*, 22.

ignored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.¹⁹ Similarly, in 1918, responding to an increasing need for public health professionals in the wake of rapid American urbanization, the Rockefeller Foundation built and endowed the Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health, the first of its type. Not only did the School provide training for private health professionals, it also provided training for men and women entering the U.S. Public Health Service.²⁰ Instead of driving talented students overseas to European medical schools, Johns Hopkins, with the Rockefeller Foundation's direction and support, provided equally good medical training in the United States.

As the United States became a global power in the wake of the two world wars, philanthropies also expanded to a global focus but in support of U.S. goals. Responding to worldwide devastation, American foundations turned their focus to Africa, Asia, and Central and South America, while the United States government addressed European recovery through the Marshall Plan. The Rockefeller Foundation formed its International Health Division in 1927 to research and combat diseases as diverse as influenza, malaria, typhus, tuberculosis, and yellow fever.²¹ Other foundations promoted similar public health projects overseas, particularly in former colonial countries after World War II. The goals of such programs, while too complex to completely explain here, were generally intended to improve the physical health of a country's inhabitants in order to either

¹⁹ Ibid., 10. Fosdick explains that the anti-hookworm project elicited opposition from racist elements in the South, as well as in the North, since the disease was seen as one of "lassitude or laziness," especially among African-Americans.

²⁰ Ibid., 42.

²¹ While the Rockefeller Foundation's wealth and size allowed it to dramatically improve human life across the world, that same widespread influence also promoted some negative consequences – for example, the worldwide use of the pesticide DDT, which the International Health Board utilized heavily in the fight against malaria. See *ibid.*, 79.

promote that country's support of the United States in the Cold War or to accomplish an American goal such as population control.²²

In addition to *physical* health programs, philanthropic foundations such as the Rockefeller Foundation also sought to improve the mental, moral, and political health of the developing world as a bulwark against Communist subversion. For example, the Foundation supported early "industrial psychology" studies, using businesses and employees as laboratories to research efficiency and well-being.²³ Foundation funds helped establish the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), which synthesized information from economists, behavioral scientists, historians, and political scientists to produce foreign policy suggestions. Organizations both at home and abroad approached the Rockefeller Foundation for funding on behalf of cultural programs, such as theatre groups, orchestras, literary magazines, and dance troupes. Foundation leadership responded enthusiastically. "It was based on the belief," wrote Foundation biographer and then-president Raymond Fosdick in 1952, "that an organization concerned with the well-being of men can scarcely evade the attempt to make people free to share intelligently their cultural inheritance. Above all, this change should be made available to those original minds capable of interpreting their own times to their own contemporaries and to all who come after them."²⁴

²² Historians and social scientists constantly debate the motives behind Rockefeller, Carnegie, and Ford Foundation philanthropic public health programs. For an excellent introduction to one such group of programs, those concerned with population growth, see Thomas Robertson, *The Malthusian Moment: Global Population Growth and the Birth of American Environmentalism* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2012).

²³ Fosdick, *Story of the Rockefeller Foundation*, 125.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 253.

Though Fosdick couched his statement in the language of cultural inheritance, he could not help but be aware of the potential of artistic expression to support American Cold War objectives. To be sure, he seems to have genuinely believed in the promotion of man's well-being, both physical and cultural. However, during the Cold War the U.S. government also looked to the Ford and Rockefeller foundations as potential partners in the global "fight against Communism." Washington was not disappointed. Although most foundations rejected outright association with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) – with the notable exception of the Ford Foundation – they did play a vital role in American foreign policy, particularly in combatting the perceived Soviet threat in the Third World.²⁵ Fosdick, writing in 1952, detailed the Rockefeller Foundation's perception of the Soviet Union:

An impenetrable barrier was stretched across the world, reinforced by fear and hate. A new era had dawned, black and ominous. . . . We have to reconcile ourselves to the grim necessities which today's problem of security brings to all of us. But perhaps it is not too much to hope that some new pattern will evolve, some internal regeneration among the people of the Soviet Union, which will open their doors and windows to the stimulus of ideas from without, and through which the inspiration of the Tolstoys, the Tchaikovskys [sic.], the Metchnikoffs, the Pavlovs, can again come like a clear breeze to refresh the spirits and minds of men. For in a deep and ultimate sense, it is still one world, one human race, one common destiny. That was the high faith that lay behind the creation of the Foundation, and on that faith the future must depend.²⁶

²⁵ Historians are only just beginning to uncover information concerning CIA involvement in the "cultural cold war." For further reading, see Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper?: The CIA and the Cultural Cold War* (New York: Granta Books, 2000); and Solovey, *Shaky Foundations*. For an introductory overview of the intersections between culture and foreign policy, see Akira Iriye, "Culture and Power: International Relations as Intercultural Relations," in *Diplomatic History* 3, no. 2 (Spring, 1979): 115-28.

²⁶ Fosdick, *Story of the Rockefeller Foundation*, 288.

In other words, the Rockefeller Foundation was at least as committed to fighting the global Cold War, especially on a cultural level, as the U.S. government.

Therefore, Rockefeller Foundation support for the School of Drama at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria was an understandable investment. Seemingly an outlier amongst other Rockefeller programs at the University, the School of Drama provides a valuable lens through which to view some of the major tensions of the Cold War years in Africa. Rockefeller leadership approved grants to the School for both cultural and political reasons. Like their counterparts in the Ford Foundation and other organizations with close ties to the American foreign policy establishment, Foundation leaders sought to support the development of a world-class, Nigerian-led university. They did so with the expectation that the university along with its faculty, staff, and students would be best served with a college created in the American mold and supportive of capitalist aims.

University of Ibadan leadership shared the Rockefeller Foundation's goal of seeing it develop into a world-class, Nigerian-led university. But the situation they faced on campus was often more complicated than a dichotomous Cold War battle. They were juggling a complicated situation between the three major Nigerian ethnic groups and their representatives within the faculty and student bodies. Additionally, the primarily British expatriate faculty in the English and Theatre departments had their own goals for the program, goals which did not always align with those of the Nigerian students and junior faculty. This thesis will lay out the conflicting goals and desires in tracing the history of the University of Ibadan's School of Drama.

Chapter Two offers an overview of the current historiography concerning American private foundations and philanthropy. In Chapter Three, I provide a brief

history of Nigeria, including its former status as a British colony, as well as a description and overview of the University of Ibadan. Though a close examination of Soviet influence in the developing Cold War world is outside the scope of this thesis, this chapter also highlights the major tensions extant between U.S. and Soviet interests throughout Nigeria and West Africa during the Cold War. Chapter Four first introduces the *dramatis personae*, or the men and women of the University of Ibadan and the Rockefeller Foundation, who sparked the creation of the School of Drama. I then analyze the reasons why the Rockefeller Foundation saw the School of Drama as a useful investment, and the steps it took in order to ensure the School would fulfill the Foundation's goals in Nigeria. I argue that Rockefeller Foundation investment was the result of its conscious effort to promote American ideals and counter perceived Soviet influence via dramatic productions throughout Nigeria. Chapter Five concludes the thesis and offers potential avenues for future research on this important topic.

CHAPTER TWO:

Historiography

Surprisingly, given the immense role organized philanthropy plays in American daily life, philanthropy as a field of historical scholarship is only approximately sixty years old. Philanthropy's emergence as a field of study occurred concurrently with the astronomical post-war growth of organized philanthropic organizations' visibility in U.S. social, political, and economic life. Although the oldest American nonprofit corporation, Harvard University, dates from 1636, the vast majority of currently operating nonprofit organizations formed after 1960. Even the "big three" private foundations—Rockefeller, Carnegie, and Ford—operated somewhat beyond the public eye until after World War II, and other major foundations, such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the George Soros Foundation, are creations of the just the past forty years.

The private foundation as an international change-maker was an invention of the twentieth century and has attracted attention from scholars in history, law, business, sociology, psychology, economics, and anthropology. As a result, major debates rage between historians, sociologists, economists, attorneys, policy-makers, and philanthropists themselves concerning the goals and outcomes of American foundations working abroad, particularly the role those foundations play in U.S. foreign policy objectives. These analyses generally fall into one of two camps. One school argues that foundations' international work was and is essentially charitable. Scholars supporting this viewpoint assert that only private foundations of such size and scope as the Rockefeller or Gates Foundations possess the wealth and expertise to fundamentally alter society for

the better. Any role these Foundations play in American foreign policy, the argument goes, is essentially benevolent or a valuable contribution to a healthy, democratic world.¹ The other, more reproachful viewpoint argues that foundations have been directly and deliberately engaged in developing, extending, and bolstering an imperialist U.S. hegemony around the globe ever since the early twentieth century. These historians see foundation leadership's foreign policy goals as important as, if not more so, than their charitable ones. Though a few scholars fall somewhere in the middle, conceding that direct-service foundation staff most likely had genuinely charitable motives while leadership leaned toward programs that would primarily support a capitalist foreign policy, most scholars find themselves far to one side or the other.

The history of American philanthropic foundation's international work is only about one hundred years old. Beginning in the early twentieth century, American foundations, which had previously given mostly to state and local causes, began giving to countries as diverse as Chile, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Russia, and the Ukraine. These foundations engaged in what economist and social-policy analyst Peter Frumkin terms "instrumental" philanthropy. In its simplest form, most individual philanthropy is "expressive"—that is, it is not necessarily envisioning a particular outcome, but is rather an expression of that donor's specific wishes or values. Instrumental philanthropy, however, is derived from a particular and consciously articulated strategic policy and has

¹ For example, as will be discussed further in this chapter, see Fosdick, *Story of the Rockefeller Foundation*; and Olivier Zunz, *Philanthropy in America: A History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012).

a definite change, social or political, as its goal.² Instrumental philanthropy first appeared with the founding of the Carnegie and Rockefeller Foundations, the first two private foundations large enough and strategic enough to wield true power both at home and abroad. As scholars such as public policy analyst Joel Fleishman have argued, private foundations represented a true sea change in philanthropy, as they moved from giving focused on the relief of individual suffering to “socially-focused charity” in which the giver seeks to address the root causes of social problems.³

No historiography of this subject would be complete without acknowledging historian Merle Curti’s seminal 1957 article “The History of American Philanthropy as a Field of Research.” In this thought-piece for the *American Historical Review*, Curti argues that philanthropy should be considered as a legitimate field of historical study. Perhaps not on the same plane as diplomatic or intellectual history, he suggests, but one suitable for graduate students or “young historians who have finished their formal training.”⁴ Moving through a series of general topic areas such as religion, economics, and law, Curti lays out the historical questions we are still asking today: What are the roles of urbanization and international development in philanthropy’s history? To what extent has the work of voluntary philanthropic organizations called the government’s attention to new problems, if at all? How does American philanthropy reflect, extend, or harm American democracy? Unsurprisingly for a protégé of historian Frederick Jackson

² Peter Frumkin, *Strategic Giving: The Art and Science of Philanthropy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

³ Joel Fleishman, *The Foundation: A Great American Secret: How Private Wealth is Changing the World* (New York: Public Affairs Books, 2007).

⁴ Merle Curti, “The History of American Philanthropy as a Field of Research,” *American Historical Review* 62, no. 2 (January 1957): 353.

Turner, Curti also suggests that the westward movement of the nineteenth century should be studied more closely for its relationship to the changing patterns of philanthropy in the United States. Curti ends the piece with a call for better funding for scholars on this topic. He writes, in view of “the difficulties many competent historians have faced in their efforts to secure publication of non-profit scholarly contributions, some plan assuring the publication of superior studies would doubtless encourage many serious and able scholars to undertake such studies as outlined in this essay.”⁵ His intent becomes clearer when one considers the genesis of his article, which emerged from a 1956 conference sponsored by the Russell Sage Foundation at Princeton University that also included representatives from the Ford Foundation and Stanford University. As a result, not only does Curti’s work sound the opening salvo for the history of philanthropy, but it also reflects the reality of working in this field: as in no other discipline, historians and others who write about philanthropic organizations are almost always dependent on philanthropic organizations for funding.

The first real critique of foundation philanthropy appeared in Thorstein Veblen’s 1899 work *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. Economist and sociologist Veblen attacked conspicuous consumption, a category in which he placed philanthropy. Wealthy men, Veblen argued, approached philanthropy in much the same way as they did material objects—as merely a means to display their wealth, and not out of any true charitable impulse.⁶ Although Veblen did not delve too deeply into other potential motives of

⁵ Ibid., 363.

⁶ Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Dover Publications, 1994).

philanthropists, he certainly recognized that foundations had the potential to work for good or ill.

Excepting Veblen, much of the historical literature in the twentieth century ignored the problematic aspects of Carnegie's generosity. Even Merle Curti, in his exceptional philosophical defense of the subject, neglected (or refused?) to incorporate any negative possible outcomes of American domestic or international philanthropy. Little was written in the intervening fifty years about philanthropies until Raymond Fosdick provided one of the first popular accounts of an American foundation in his 1952 *The Story of the Rockefeller Foundation*.⁷ Fosdick's work falls into the "orthodox" category of philanthropic historiography. A lawyer, not an historian by training, he had served as the president of the Foundation and was a close friend and confidante of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Fosdick was the ultimate insider, and the perfect choice to write an uncritical version of the Rockefeller Foundation's history of good works. To be sure, the Rockefeller Foundation made important and lasting change within the United States as well as abroad, such as its work eliminating hookworm in the American South. Fosdick, either because he was a true believer or due to a fear of reprisal, avoided any mention of any problematic Foundation efforts—such as the paternalism future historians would highlight. Rather, he focused on presenting the founders—primarily John D. Rockefeller, Sr., and Frederick T. Gates—as paragons of social justice. *The Story of the Rockefeller Foundation* reads primarily as an autobiography of the organization and its founders,

⁷ Fosdick, *Story of the Rockefeller Foundation*.

rather than an investigational history.⁸ This anecdote from the book gives the reader an idea of Fosdick's tone:

Frederick T. Gates, credited with urging John D. Rockefeller Sr. to launch the Foundation, says to his fellow trustees in his last meeting as member of the Board, "When you die and come to approach the judgment of Almighty God, what do you think He will demand of you? Do you for an instant presume to believe that He will inquire into your petty failures or your trivial virtues? No! He will ask just one question: 'What did you do as a trustee of the Rockefeller Foundation?'"⁹

Fosdick's work highlights the religious beliefs of Gates and Rockefeller as evidence that they approached the Foundation's work with only the purest and most holy of motives.

Fosdick certainly focuses on these pure motives in detailing the work of the Foundation's International Health Division (IHD) in Algeria, Brazil, British Guiana, Italy, and Nicaragua throughout the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. With a straightforward tone somewhat jarring to today's reader, he explains the methods by which IHD typhus researchers utilized "volunteers" from prisoner-of-war (POW) camps in the United States and various villages in Mexico and Nicaragua to explore the biology and life cycle of the body louse, one of the main carriers of typhus and other diseases. "Out of a large number of volunteers," he writes, "thirty men were chosen for a three weeks' experiment, each man being infested with one hundred lice. Several chemical substances were tested on these men for their power to kill lice."¹⁰ In Fosdick's eyes, the ultimate goal—to eradicate these diseases as a gift from the omnipotent United States to the lesser nations of the world—more than justified the use of human subjects who likely had little ability to

⁸ Publishing his article only five years later, perhaps it is no surprise that Merle Curti is specific in his discussion of who should and should not write an historical treatment of a charitable organization.

⁹ Fosdick, *Story of the Rockefeller Foundation*, 1.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 51.

provide informed consent. Any concerns, if they existed, do not appear in Fosdick's retelling of the event. On the other hand, the recipient countries' political and social relationship with the United States, as stated by Fosdick, is of the utmost importance. Additionally, writing a few years after the Communist takeover of China, Fosdick wistfully recalls the Rockefeller Foundation's support of the Peking Union Medical College, writing that "perhaps in some less hysterical day . . . [the College] will appear as it really was: the best that Western civilization had to offer to a people whom it profoundly admired and in whose future it deeply believed."¹¹ With its firm belief in the righteousness of American idealism and its distaste for communism, *The Story of the Rockefeller Foundation* fit firmly into the immediate post-World War II, orthodox U.S. foreign policy historiography.¹²

Fosdick's history stood as the major achievement in philanthropic foundation history from the time of its publication until 1980. At that point, three major histories all published at approximately the same time in the early 1980s struck a new chord in the study of philanthropic history and the foundations' roles at home and abroad. Revisionist historians, spurred on by the brutality of the Vietnam War as well as the disenchantment of the Nixon and Carter administrations, challenged their orthodox forebears and began to see America as an imperialist power. Unlike Fosdick, each of these historians approached America foundations as a potentially negative, rather than essentially positive, international force. These three works signaled a new type of scholarship on the subject, one that critically examined the motives behind foundations' efforts abroad and

¹¹ Ibid., 91.

¹² See also George F. Kennan, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs* 25, no. 4 (July 1947): 566-82.

attempted to explore the ways in which individuals responded to foundation advances into their societies.¹³

Historian John Ettlign's *The Germ of Laziness: Rockefeller Philanthropy and Public Health in the New South* cast the Rockefeller Foundation's anti-hookworm campaigns in a decidedly paternalistic light that also revealed elements of racism. Ettlign argued that the Rockefeller Sanitary Commission for the Eradication of Hookworm (established in 1909) approached its work with an uncomfortably crusade-like zeal that dovetails with John Stanfield's use of the term "secular evangelism" to describe the work of philanthropists, which were "symbolic of the transformations that changed America from a theocratically-based society to one organized according to the principles of science and corporate capitalism"¹⁴ while still retaining an evangelistic fervor. That is, they utilized religious terminology to explain their scientific goals. Not unexpectedly, historians such as Stanfield argued, this evangelism translated easily into foundation efforts abroad on behalf of American capitalism, science, and society. In the early years of the twentieth century, hookworm was an endemic disease in the American South. A microscopic parasitic worm entered the host's body through a cut or opening, often on the feet, and lived in the host's intestines, resulting in anemia. However, since the disease

¹³ The historiography of philanthropy follows the same rough trajectory as that of the historiography of U.S. foreign policy since World War II: orthodox, revisionist, neo-orthodox, etc. Revisionist foreign policy histories contemporary to revisionist philanthropic histories include William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (Cleveland, OH: World Publishing Co., 1959); and Thomas G. Paterson, *Soviet-American Confrontation: Postwar Reconstruction and the Origins of the Cold War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973).

¹⁴ John H. Stanfield, *Philanthropic Regional Consciousness and Institution-Building in the American South: The Formative Years, 1867-1920* (New York: Columbia University Center for American Culture Studies, 1986), 119.

affected primarily poor, rural African-Americans, and often did not display any outward signs except the extreme fatigue associated with anemia, politicians and public health professionals did not see treating hookworm as a priority. In fact, racist attitudes of the time led some medical professionals to claim that it was merely a disease of “laziness,” arguing that the African-Americans it affected simply wished to avoid working. The Rockefeller Commission’s goals were noble and cast in religious terms, Ettlting argued, but implemented without concern for the agency of those being treated. He presented evidence arguing that most patients participating in the Rockefeller anti-hookworm campaign did so without giving fully informed consent to medical treatment. He also asserted that the Commission used private medical information from patients for publications, without gaining consent or even informing the patient. Ettlting’s history drew comparisons between this hookworm campaign and later international Rockefeller Foundation efforts that approached public health from a similarly well-meaning but paternalistic and inherently racist perspective. Do the ends justify the means, Ettlting asked?¹⁵ The questions he raised about the Foundation’s problems at home have been echoed by other historians with an international focus.

Edward H. Berman took Ettlting’s argument further, researching the Foundation’s efforts abroad in various public health and economics programs. An emeritus professor of education at the University of Louisville, Berman published *The Ideology of Philanthropy: The Influence of the Carnegie, Ford, and Rockefeller Foundations on American Foreign Policy* in 1983. Berman deplores what he sees as the foundations’ “disingenuousness” and refusal to acknowledge how much influence they truly exert on

¹⁵ Ettlting, *Germ of Laziness*.

American society as well as U.S. foreign policy goals abroad. Berman presented a Marxist argument that these foundations play a critical role in establishing and asserting capitalist hegemony both at home and abroad. He writes,

Those who control the production and dissemination of culture and ideas influence, to a great degree, the way in which people view the world and the commonsense categories into which they organize their knowledge and by which they conduct their lives. [This book] also discusses how ideological hegemony is used to further interests congruent with the class that controls the means of production, while at the same time limiting concerns that society's dominant class considers less important or threatening to its interests.¹⁶

Where Ettling allowed that the Rockefeller Commission operated at least primarily out of benevolence and a real desire to eliminate disease, Berman argued that philanthropic activities are primarily motivated by class-based self-interest. Perhaps due to his specialization in the field of education, Berman pays particular attention to ways in which the three foundations established or influenced educational programs abroad to further American hegemony. For example, he describes a 1958 conference composed of representatives from the Carnegie, Ford, and Rockefeller foundations as well as executive members of U.S. corporations with investments in various African countries that led to extended educational aid to certain African nations based on Americans' needs.¹⁷ While the conference proceedings listed moral and humanitarian interests as one reason for

¹⁶ Edward H. Berman, *The Ideology of Philanthropy: The Influence of the Carnegie, Ford, and Rockefeller Foundations on American Foreign Policy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983), 15.

¹⁷ This conference was held at the Greenbrier Hotel in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia. Although Berman does not address this issue, the location had a strange significance: one of the last holdouts of the Old South, the historic Greenbrier Hotel hosted a "Robert E. Lee Day" celebration until recent years. What does it mean when a group like this chooses a location so connected with the mythology of the Old South to discuss quasi-missionary work to be done in Africa?

increased aid, economic interests (specifically continued access to African markets and raw materials) and diplomatic interests (maintaining friendly political relations with African governments) predominated. Linking this back to domestic Foundation work, Berman noted that the Ford and Rockefeller foundations saw aid to the American South and aid to Africa in a similar light—since both groups were in subordinate positions to the dominant class, their needs should be subordinate to those of the ruling class.

Additionally, unlike Fosdick and similar historians, Berman incorporated a discussion of foundational leadership into his argument. Moving away from a focus on only the founders, he brought Foundation leaders into the light. He characterized them as “carefully chosen and subsidized intellectuals” and members of the “American ruling class,” who were accountable only to their fellow employees and board members.¹⁸

Robert Arnove, the third major revisionist historian of the early 1980s, characterized the work of the foundations as “corrosive” to democracy since these groups “represent relatively unregulated and unaccountable concentration of power and wealth which buy talent, promote causes, and, in effect, establish an agenda of what merits society’s attention.” Like Berman, he criticized the leadership of such foundations: “They help maintain an economic and political order, international in scope, which benefits the ruling-class interests of philanthropists and philanthropoids¹⁹ – a system which . . . has worked against the interests of minorities, the working class, and Third

¹⁸ Ibid., 177. See also *ibid.*, 147-49.

¹⁹ Arnove defines “philanthropoids” as the trustees, executive officers, and staff who design and implement foundation policies. “Philanthropists” are those men and women who bequeathed fortunes to establish or supplement the endowment of a charitable foundation.

World peoples.”²⁰ Though Arnove claims that submissions for the work were accepted without regard to ideological framework, nearly every essay in his edited volume incorporates the theories of Italian cultural Marxist Antonio Gramsci, who sees hegemony as a factor just as critical and powerful as overt political and economic control of one country by another. Extending Gramsci’s argument to the philanthropic world, Arnove and his collaborators argue that American foundations, while ostensibly private, in fact function as *de facto* tools of the State in countries across the globe, “mitigating the necessity for the State to use its coercive apparatus to control groups which might otherwise be disaffected.”²¹ Arnove’s critique completed the trio of historians who radically challenged Fosdick’s 1950s narrative.

However, this critique did not immediately find its way into other histories of U.S. foreign policy. For example, neo-orthodox historian John Lewis Gaddis’s award-winning 1982 *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy During the Cold War* mentions Rockefeller and Carnegie foundation efforts abroad in passing—including an appreciative reference to the Rockefeller Brothers Fund (a related organization of the Rockefeller Foundation) and its role in promoting the U.S.-Soviet arms race during the Cold War.²² While historians such as Arnove and Berman began to introduce a new critical element into the discourse on foundations

²⁰ Robert Arnove, ed., *Philanthropy and Cultural Imperialism: The Foundations at Home and Abroad* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1980), 1.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

²² John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy During the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).

during the 1980s, the mainstream history community still maintained a generally orthodox view of the foundations and their activities.

Collectively, Arnove, Berman, and Ettlign comprised the beginning of a new strain of historiography on this subject, in which historians began to link foundations' work abroad with sociocultural globalization. Developing alongside the post-revisionist school of Cold War history, this third wave of historians of philanthropy argues that private, uber-wealthy foundations are an inescapable part of America's place in the new world order. Their agreement ends there, though. Within this third wave, two major sides have begun to take shape. One, the neo-revisionists led by historian-economist Inderjeet Parmar, follows in the Gramscian footsteps of Berman and Arnove, arguing that philanthropic foundations benefit their givers and board members much more than they do any potential recipients.²³ On the other side of the aisle, the neo-orthodox group, which is populated by a mix of historians, economists, lawyers, and philanthropists themselves, argues that philanthropy is approaching a new golden age indicated by the increasing importance given philanthropy in foreign policy, history, economics, and

²³ Inderjeet Parmar, *Foundations of the American Century: The Ford, Carnegie, and Rockefeller Foundations in the Rise of American Power*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012). Some of the other major works in this area include Sven Beckert, *The Monied Metropolis: New York City and the Consolidation of the American Bourgeoisie, 1850-1896* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Robert D. Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood: Gender and the Making of Cold War Foreign Policy* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001); and Justin Hart, *Empire of Ideas: The Origins of Public Diplomacy and the Transformation of U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

society as a whole. These writers see only bright skies ahead for America's role as a world leader, with private philanthropists such as Bill Gates firmly in the pilot's seat.²⁴

Inderjeet Parmar's influential 2012 monograph, *Foundations of the American Century: The Ford, Carnegie, and Rockefeller Foundations in the Rise of American Power*, picks up where Berman and Arnove left off. Parmar argues that these foundations directly and deliberately engaged in developing, extending, and bolstering U.S. hegemony around the globe prior to, during, and after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Furthermore, he claims they "failed to alleviate poverty, raise mass living standards, or better educate people"; instead, he argues, they primarily "generated sustainable elite networks that . . . supported American politics—foreign and economic—ranging from liberalism in the 1950s to neoliberalism into the twenty-first century."²⁵ Currently a professor of Government at the University of Manchester (UK) focusing on American Studies and U.S. foreign policy, Parmar's primary purpose in writing the book was to apply a Gramscian lens to three specific case studies: Indonesia, Nigeria, and Chile. Reflective of his training as a sociologist, Parmar is equally as concerned with *what* happened historically as he is with *why* it happened. Although primarily a diplomatic history, *Foundations of the American Century* also fits into the new school of transnational Cold War history. Much like other historians of philanthropy and elite networks such as Sven Beckert and Robert D. Dean, Parmar sees vital official and

²⁴ For example, see Fleishman, *The Foundation*; Soma Hewa and Darwin Stapleton, eds., *Globalization, Philanthropy, and Civil Society: Toward a New Political Culture in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Springer, 2006); and Joseph C. Kiger, *Philanthropists and Foundation Globalization* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2008).

²⁵ Parmar, *Foundations of the American Century*, 3.

unofficial connections between the United States, the funder's history, and the histories of those it aids. Perhaps the most damning of Parmar's arguments is his chapter on Chile. He argues that Chilean economists, co-trained at the University of Chicago and the Catholic University of Chile, overwhelmingly supported General Augusto Pinochet's 1973 military coup, joined the Pinochet government, and provided technocratic and economic experience for the regime, which was responsible for "disappearing" thousands and driving almost a quarter million into exile during its brutal reign. Parmar engages directly with pro-foundation historian Juan Gabriel Valdes. While Valdes, Parmar says, believes that the Ford Foundation was ignorant of its protégés' support of Pinochet's brutal repression, Parmar asserts that Foundation leaders refused to "accept their own responsibility in creating the knowledge communities" that assisted Pinochet's regime.²⁶

Extending and enhancing Berman and Arno's arguments, Parmar introduces the reader to the concept of democratic peace theory (DPT), which he defines as a world pacified through democratization and capitalist globalization. Parmar sees DPT as the dominant cultural-political theory undergirding Washington's current, post-Cold War hegemonic efforts to maintain a world order in which the United States is the preeminent world power. American-led globalization, Parmar believes, is the primary aim of DPT as promoted by U.S. foreign policy and foundations such as Carnegie, Rockefeller, and Ford. By continuing to strengthen elite networks, promote globalization, and position themselves as leaders of a global civil society, American foundations thereby extend U.S. hegemony.

²⁶ Ibid., 219. Also see Juan Gabriel Valdes, *Pinochet's Economists: The Chicago School of Economics in Chile* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

Scholars such as Justin Hart, Joel Fleishman, and Olivier Zunz counter Parmar's arguments with a variety of perspectives of their own. Each of these scholars, though approaching the topic from various theoretical and personal vantage points, sees foundations' histories as positive enhancements to U.S. foreign policy. Fleishman and Zunz, in fact, believe that private American philanthropy—not necessarily the state itself—will be the leader in international change during the next century.²⁷ Justin Hart's 2013 *The Empire of Ideas: The Origins of Public Diplomacy and the Transformation of U.S. Foreign Policy* tackles America's foreign public relations—both via the state and private institutions such as foundations—from the 1930s through to the 1950s. Hart, a post-revisionist historian, argues that the United States attempted to stem the tide of communism by winning the war with words, not arms.²⁸ Although he certainly sees the American propaganda machine as one with clear foreign policy aims, Hart also notes that American money funded cultural programming in foreign countries that provided outlets for individuals in those countries to express themselves. Though somewhat ambivalent about the status of the U.S. as an empire, Hart does not exhibit the same disdain nor outright hatred for the concept of empire in general as Parmar does. Alongside Hart, waving his own pro-foundation flag, is Joel Fleishman. An attorney by training, Fleishman served for many years as president of the U.S. branch of Atlantic Philanthropies (AP), a private foundation established in 1982 to fund health and equality initiatives at home and abroad. Since its founding, AP has given in excess of \$6.1 billion to charitable initiatives in Australia, Bermuda, South Africa, the United States, and

²⁷ Hart, *Empire of Ideas*; Fleishman, *The Foundation*; and Zunz, *Philanthropy in America*.

²⁸ Hart, *Empire of Ideas*.

Vietnam.²⁹ Therefore Fleishman is, like Fosdick, the “ultimate insider” when writing *The Foundation: A Great American Secret: How Private Wealth is Changing the World*.

Published in 2007, Fleishman’s book clearly seeks to reveal the “Great American Secret”—namely, that wealthy private foundations have been laboring thanklessly on behalf of the U.S. public and the world at large. No more!, he suggests. Presenting twelve case studies, Fleishman argues that foundations such as Rockefeller, Ford, Gates, and Soros require a “freedom from accountability” that allows them to effect change impossible for the American government or the recipient nations themselves.³⁰ Like Fleishman, Olivier Zunz applauds what he calls the “unique encounter between philanthropy and the state”: the “hybrid capitalist creation” of the nonprofit sector.³¹ Zunz focuses his history of mass philanthropy in America on the ways in which the federal government and private philanthropists have interacted. *Philanthropy in America: A History*, his 2012 monograph, is one of the most comprehensive treatises on modern American charity, and Zunz one of the leaders in the neo-orthodox school supporting private foundations as forces for good. More than any other historian, he views modern philanthropy as a vital, positive contribution to American democratic society and to the role of the United States in the world “I see not the uninterrupted growth of a leviathan

²⁹ Atlantic Philanthropies, “What We Believe,” <http://www.atlanticphilanthropies.org> (accessed April 8, 2015). The Atlantic Philanthropies exemplify one of the newest trends in foundation philanthropy, the “Giving While Living” philosophy. All of Atlantic Philanthropies’ grantmaking will conclude in 2016, and the organization will cease operations in 2020, thereby distributing all of its wealth in the original donor’s lifetime. The “Giving While Living” philosophy holds that philanthropy is most effective when composed of very large gifts, given to a select few recipients, with relatively quick, demonstrable outcomes.

³⁰ Fleishman, *The Foundation*, 56.

³¹ Zunz, *Philanthropy in America*, 4.

[of public-private cooperation],” Zunz writes, “but a dynamic succession of experiments in government-civil society cooperation.”³² Unlike Hart’s social history focus and Fleishman’s insider view of foundations’ good works, Zunz argues for an economic history perspective as the most useful. Essentially, he argues, private philanthropy is a good thing because it works economically. Unlike Berman or Parmar, for example, Zunz believes civic democracy at home and abroad is only *strengthened* by the philanthropic world:

The nonprofit sector has come of age. The Supreme Court’s decisions, first allowing churches openly to combine their religious and social work even when using federal funds, and then opening up alternative channels of advocacy work for charities, have made the nonprofit sector the institutional voice of American civil society. . . . The court therefore recognized a level of advocacy, whether religious or political, as a necessary condition of freedom in a strong democracy. Conservatives and liberals, individually and collectively, made nonprofits worthy substitutes for the associations Tocqueville had heralded as engines of America liberty.³³

Fleishman and Zunz, unlike Berman or even Fosdick, see worldwide foundation philanthropy as a given, not the relatively new product of Rockefeller’s and Carnegie’s time. While their work is certainly valuable, their unquestioning acceptance of the inevitability of foundation leaderships’ power is potentially problematic. All of these scholars argue that foundation philanthropy is not just beneficial, but indeed now vital, to maintain America’s place in the world.

³² Ibid., 6.

³³ Ibid., 263.

Nigeria in American Historiography

What is today the Federal Republic of Nigeria emerged from the worldwide post-World War II decolonization movement, shaped by religious, political, imperial, and cultural forces. Nigeria's large size, its strategically important location on the west coast of Africa, and its status as a major world oil producer since 1956 mean that Nigeria has long been a useful ally in the eyes of the United States.³⁴ The vast majority of U.S. scholarship concerning Nigeria reflects these primary concerns—oil production, influence over the rest of Africa, and the American desire to keep Nigeria a stable, pro-Western country during the Cold War. Chapter Three of this thesis will provide an overview of Nigerian history, particularly its relationship with the United States since it gained independence from Britain.

American historiography specific to Nigeria is somewhat sparse. Until its independence in 1960, Nigeria existed as part of the British Empire, and as such, Washington dealt with London directly. Even after independence, the United States viewed Nigeria (and most of West Africa) as primarily important in context of the global Cold War. As historian Robert B. Shepard argues, “American policy toward [post-colonial] Nigeria has never had much to do with what was going on in Nigeria, or Africa

³⁴ John N. Paden, *Faith and Politics in Nigeria: Nigeria as a Pivotal State in the Modern World* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2008). One of the best general histories of Nigeria, and the one on which this thesis primarily relies, is Toyin Falola and Matthew M. Heaton, *A History of Nigeria* (Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 2008). Other useful works concerning Nigeria's recent history and its relationship with the United States include Bassey E. Ate, *Decolonization and Dependence: Development of Nigerian-U.S. Relations, 1960-84* (New York: Westview Press, 1987); and Robert B. Shepard, *Nigeria, Africa, and the United States: From Kennedy to Reagan* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991). For a Nigerian perspective on Nigerian leadership and foreign policy in the Cold War years, see Chinua Achebe, *The Trouble with Nigeria* (New York: Heinemann, 1984).

as a whole. . . . Periods of dramatic change in Africa have often been ignored by the United States for the unfortunate reason that the administration in power was simply of the opinion that Africa was unimportant.”³⁵ Relatively little historical literature exists concerning Nigeria and U.S.. What does exist, aside from Shepard’s work and that of some Nigerian historians,³⁶ generally focuses on the Nigerian Civil War of 1967-1970, also called the Biafran War or the Nigeria-Biafra War. In its simplest terms, the War began when a large group of Igbo people, living in the southeast of Nigeria, broke away to form the Republic of Biafra. Nigerian national leadership, though expecting a short engagement, spent the next three years starving the nascent Biafran nation into submission via a supply blockade. The United States remained distant from the conflict until early 1968, when *Life* magazine published vivid photographs of Igbo children suffering from malnutrition and starvation. Eventually a UN-brokered cease-fire resulted in Biafra’s reabsorption into the Nigerian state.³⁷

Fortunately, the last twenty years have seen a surge in American historical interest concerning foreign policy toward Africa as a whole. Once seen as on the periphery of the Cold War, Africa’s importance to the twentieth and twenty-first centuries continues to grow. Of particular interest to historians are the intersections between U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis apartheid countries (such as South Africa) and America’s own issues with race

³⁵ Shepard, *Nigeria, Africa, and the United States*, 7.

³⁶ See Falola and Heaton, *A History of Nigeria*; Ate, *Decolonization and Dependence*; and Achebe, *The Trouble With Nigeria*.

³⁷ Joseph E. Thompson, *American Policy and African Famine: The Nigeria-Biafra War, 1966-1970* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1990); and John J. Stremmlau, *The International Politics of the Nigerian Civil War, 1967-1970* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977).

relations in the 1960s and 1970s.³⁸ In addition, the opening of former Soviet archives since 1991 resulted in a wealth of new information concerning the Soviet Union's interests, or lack thereof, in Africa during the Cold War.³⁹ All of these histories indicate that the relationships between independent African countries, the United States, and the Soviet Union were decidedly complex. In addition, as this thesis will discuss in Chapter Four, historical analyses suggest that U.S. foreign policy and philanthropic leaders saw the Cold War with the Soviet Union as a much more powerful force than did the Africans.

This thesis adds to the existing historiography by examining the creation of the School of Drama at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, a project funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. This thesis seeks to find a new middle ground in historical analysis of foundation philanthropy abroad during the Cold War. Unlike some of the examples given by Berman or Parmar, the creation of the School of Drama had an overall positive impact on the University of Ibadan and its students. Indeed, the Drama Department continues

³⁸ See Thomas Borstelmann, *Apartheid's Reluctant Uncle: The United States and Southern Africa in the Early Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Gerald Horne, *From the Barrel of a Gun: The United States and the War Against Zimbabwe, 1965-1980* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Thomas J. Noer, *Cold War and Black Liberation: The United States and White Rule in Africa, 1948-1968* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1985); and Ebere Nwaubani, *The United States and the Decolonization in West Africa, 1950-1960* (Rochester, NY: Rochester University Press, 2001).

³⁹ See, for example, Maxim Matusевич, *No Easy Row for a Russian Hoe: Ideology and Pragmatism in Nigerian-Soviet Relations, 1960-1991* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2003); Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Intervention and the Making of Our Times* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Vladislav Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); and Nigel Gould-Davies, "The Logic of Soviet Cultural Diplomacy," in *Diplomatic History* 27, no. 2 (April 2003): 193-214.

today, as a department of the University of Ibadan School of Arts. At the same time, the School of Drama raises important questions concerning the intersections of philanthropy and foreign policy during these years, questions which Zunz, Fosdick, or Fleishman would most likely not introduce.

CHAPTER THREE:

“A Struggle for the Minds of Men”: Nigeria and the Cold War

“The world today is divided into three main groups. First there are what we call the Western Powers. You in South Africa and we in Britain belong to this group, together with our friends and allies in other parts of the Commonwealth. In the United States of America and in Europe we call it the Free World. Secondly there are the Communists. Russia and her satellites in Europe and China whose population will rise by the end of the next ten years to the staggering total of 800 million. Thirdly, there are those parts of the world whose people are at present uncommitted either to Communism or to our Western ideas. In this context we think first of Asia and then of Africa. As I see it the great issue in this second half of the twentieth century is whether the uncommitted peoples of Asia and Africa will swing to the East or to the West. Will they be drawn into the Communist camp? Or will the great experiments in self-government that are now being made in Asia and Africa, especially within the Commonwealth, prove so successful, and by their example so compelling, that the balance will come down in favour of freedom and order and justice? The struggle is joined, and it is a struggle for the minds of men. What is now on trial is much more than our military strength or our diplomatic and administrative skill. It is our way of life. The uncommitted nations want to see before they choose.”¹

--Sir Harold Macmillan, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, to the South African Parliament, 1960

Nigeria in 1960—with its enormous land mass, strategically important positioning on the west coast of Africa, massive natural resources, and relatively highly educated population—proved an irresistible prize to the United States, the Soviet Union, and the new Pan-Africanist Movement. Each power sought to increase its influence with Nigeria’s new, independent government and by doing so, underscore its own political

¹ Sir Harold Macmillan, “The Wind of Change” speech, made to the South African Parliament on February 3, 1960, http://africanhistory.about.com/od/eraindependence/p/wind_of_change2.htm (accessed March 17, 2015).

domination in Africa to the other two powers. What made Nigeria a Cold War prize also made it a target for Rockefeller Foundation funding. There were also internal dynamics in Nigeria based on the religious and ethnic composition of its population that held the potential for instability and that became the focus of early Nigerian politics. As a result, the University of Ibadan, the country's premier institution of higher education, sought to bind together Nigeria's diverse population through higher education and thereby contribute to a stable country and future. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Foundation sought to support a number of programs at the University of Ibadan as part of the Rockefeller Foundation's goal of promoting American ideals to counter the perceived Soviet influence in the area and the country. Ultimately, this partnership led to the creation of the University's School of Drama.

What is today the Federal Republic of Nigeria emerged from the worldwide post-World War II decolonization movement, shaped by a variety of religious, political, imperial, and cultural forces. Prior to British colonization, the Nigerian region consisted of multiple kingdoms, each with its own ethnic groups, languages, and culture.² The country's borders with what would become the countries of Benin, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon proved fluid, with individuals and families moving throughout the West African region. Nigeria's location on the Gulf of Guinea also made boat travel to other

² In addition to the general and recent histories of Nigeria described in Chapter 2, note 69, the Federal Republic of Nigeria Government website was also helpful ("Our History," <http://www.nigeria.gov.ng/2012-10-29-11-05-46/history-of-nigeria>, accessed March 7, 2015). See also Lois Mitchison, *Nigeria: Newest Nation* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1960); R. Olufemi Ekundare, *An Economic History of Nigeria, 1860-1960* (New York: Africana Publishing, 1973); and J. N. C. Hill, *Nigeria Since Independence: Forever Fragile?* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

coastal West African countries – such as Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Angola – common. Britain annexed Lagos, the most important coastal city, in 1861. Following several decades of interaction, in 1885 Great Britain announced its claim to a sphere of influence in Nigeria, which other European nations soon acknowledged. One year later, Great Britain chartered the Royal Niger Company, formally laying claim to Nigeria. In 1901, with the dissolution of the Royal Niger Company, Nigeria officially became a British protectorate.

As with so many other countries created out of the imperialist nineteenth century, the Nigerian protectorate encompassed multiple ethnic groups and regions combined for the colonial government's convenience. Britain divided the country into two separate administrative divisions. The Northern Nigeria area contained the largest proportion of Muslim Nigerians, most of whom were part of the Hausa-Fulani ethnic group. This territory north of the river Niger had been part of the pre-colonial Sokoto caliphate, the largest West African entity before British influence, and remained culturally linked with Muslim North Africa. The Southern Nigeria area, which had a primarily Christian population after colonialism, encompassed the Igbo and Yoruba ethnic groups. Yorubas occupied the southwest region, including the cities of Ibadan and Lagos. To the southeast lived the Igbos. The Southern Nigeria division enjoyed access to the western and southern coasts of Nigeria as well as the larger cities of Lagos, Ibadan, and Port Harcourt, often resulting in greater prosperity than the northern, more rural regions of the country.³

³ Ade Adefuye, *Culture and Foreign Policy: The Nigerian Example* (Lagos, Nigeria: Nigerian Institute of International Affairs Press, 1992), 24-6. Fayola and Heaton, *A History of Nigeria* also covers the early religious and ethnic divisions. The author recognizes that such a simplistic breakdown of Nigerian religious and ethnic divisions

Of course, like most countries, individuals within Nigeria were mobile, such that men and women from one ethnic group often lived in what had historically been another ethnic group's territory. Nigeria boasted numerous other ethnic and religious groups in addition to the three main ones listed above. Many British expatriates living in the country clustered near the capitol, Lagos, on Nigeria's southwestern coast.⁴

During this colonial period, the city of Ibadan became the key Nigerian city due to its strategic location. It remained Nigeria's largest city until 1970. Located 128 kilometers northeast of Lagos, Ibadan occupied a privileged point on the major railway and highway routes between Lagos and other southern cities to the areas of northern and eastern Nigeria.⁵ In 1948, a cadre of British and elite Nigerians founded University College of Ibadan (UCI), which eventually became the University of Ibadan. UCI operated as a satellite college of the University of London.⁶ British, German, South African, and other white academics formed the core of UCI's faculty and provided all instruction in the English language. In its first year, 148 African students enrolled in UCI, which was modeled on the English university tradition.⁷ Prior to UCI's establishment,

cannot do justice to the country's complexities. However, for the purposes of this thesis, and given space limitations, this describes the basic religious and ethnic divisions within the British Protectorate of Nigeria and, eventually, the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

⁴ Lagos remained Nigeria's capitol until 1991, when the government relocated to Abuja, in the center of the country.

⁵ P. C. Lloyd, A. L. Mabogunje, and B. Awe, eds., *The City of Ibadan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press in association with the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ibadan, 1967).

⁶ For more information about the relationship between the University of London and University College Ibadan, see the University of London, "About Us," <http://www.london.ac.uk/5606.html#c9962> (accessed March 8, 2015).

⁷ Eric Ashby, *African Universities and Western Tradition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964), 20. See also University of Ibadan, "About Us," <http://ui.edu.ng/> (accessed April 1, 2015).

upper-class Nigerians tended to send their children to European schools for their higher education, as there were previously no institutions of higher education in the country. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, though, increasing numbers of Nigerians attended UCI, establishing a larger cohort of educated middle- and upper-class Nigerians.⁸

During World War II, Nigerians began to clamor for independence. Nigerians pressured Britain for home rule, resulting in a 1954 constitution granting partial independence. Nigeria gained its independence on October 1, 1960. Nigeria operated as a parliamentary democracy in the Commonwealth model—with Queen Elizabeth II as titular head of state—until a new constitution established the first Federal Republic of Nigeria in 1963 (“First Republic”).⁹ Beginning with independence and continuing through the years of the First Republic (which lasted until 1983), these three parties dominated Nigeria’s politics. The National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroon, which was renamed the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC), represented the Christian, eastern, Igbo region. The Northern People’s Congress (NPC) represented the northern, Muslim, Hausa-Fulani region, while the Action Group (AG), based in Ibadan, represented the western region’s Yorubas. Sir Ahmadu Bello won the position of Premier of the NPC, which also took the majority of seats in Parliament in the first national election in 1959, in preparation for independence. Bello held the title of *Sardauna* (war leader) of the Sokoto Caliphate, an extremely important position within the northern

⁸ Ibid., 21-3. See also Fayola and Heaton, *A History of Nigeria*.

⁹ The First Republic came to an end in 1966 with Nigeria’s first military coup. A Second Republic was established in 1979 and lasted until 1983. Another military coup overthrew the Second Republic in 1983 and maintained power until 1999, when the government in power held free elections and the Nigerian Fourth Republic proclaimed. An election in 1993, intended to result in a Third Republic, ended in disaster and another coup.

Muslim community. NPC member Tafawa Balewa, a Muslim Fulani, was elected Prime Minister. Yoruba Chief Obafemi Awolowo, founder of the AG, won election as Premier of the Western Region and Leader of the Opposition.¹⁰ The NPC and NCNC formed a coalition within Parliament, effectively shunting Awolowo's AG party into a position of lesser power. Despite ethnic and religious divisions in the early political parties, each party's participation in the political process seemed promising for the country's future.

Ideological divisions between these three major political parties were not confined to religion or region but also affected each group's foreign policy goals. Each party recognized Nigeria's reliance upon the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union for economic stability. In 1960, for example, approximately 90% of Nigeria's exports went to Western Europe and the United States. A six-year National Development Plan, announced in 1962, relied upon nearly \$300 million in loans from Western countries. However, the Soviet Union also dangled the proverbial carrot, particularly with a loan offer of \$20 million -- interest free -- and the potential for increased exports from Nigeria to Eastern Bloc countries.¹¹ At the same time, other independent African nations courted Nigeria for membership in a potential United States of Africa, an organization proposed by Ghana's government, which Washington considered pro-communist. On the occasion of Nigeria's admission as a member state of the United Nations, on October 7, 1960, Prime Minister Balewa said,

First, it is the desire of Nigeria to remain on friendly terms with all nations and to participate actively in the work of the United Nations. Second, Nigeria has absolutely no territorial expansionist intentions. Third, we shall not forget old friends and we are proud to have been accepted as a

¹⁰ Fayola and Heaton, *A History of Nigeria*, xxi.

¹¹ Adefuye, *Culture and Foreign Policy*, 34.

member of the Commonwealth but nevertheless, we do not intend to align ourselves as a matter of routine with any of the power blocs. Fourth, Nigeria hopes to work with other African States for the progress of Africa and to assist in bringing all African territories to a state of responsible independence.¹²

Flush with the promise of independence, but cognizant of ongoing Cold War tensions, Nigeria's leadership strove to maintain its precarious balance in the world. Other states in this period, such as Yugoslavia and India, chose to establish themselves as the Non-Aligned Movement, but Nigeria avoided overtly joining them or the new movement of Pan-African States. Much like the governments of other countries caught between the United States and the Soviet Union, Nigeria's government took a pragmatic approach to foreign affairs. Nigeria's leaders, whatever their personal political views, proved themselves willing to work with both ideological camps in the service of a modernized Nigeria.¹³ Prime Minister Balewa's governing coalition (the NPC and its partner NCNC) pursued an essentially centrist foreign policy but refused to fully embrace either a pro-Western anti-communism or a pro-Soviet communist/socialist policy that was critical of the West. The NPC, with its strong ties to predominantly Islamic countries in North Africa and the Middle East, also maintained stable but strained relationships with Israel, primarily due to its relationship with the NCNC. On the other side of the aisle, Chief Awolowo's AG party identified itself as socialist, with a pro-nationalist and pro-Pan-Africanist bent, but was similarly dedicated to a strong and independent Nigeria.

¹² Quoted in *ibid.*, 35.

¹³ Maxim Matusevich, "An Elusive Friendship: Nigerian-Soviet/Russian Relations, 1960-2000" in *Nigeria and Global Politics: Twentieth Century and Beyond*, ed. Olayiwola Abegunrin and Olusoji Akomolafe (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2006), 141.

Nigeria might not have proven such a desirable partner for so many countries had it been less rich in natural resources. Nigeria exported a variety of agricultural products (including palm oil, groundnuts, and cocoa), but its most valuable export only came to light in 1956, when Shell-BP, the British petroleum company, first discovered oil in Southeastern Nigeria.¹⁴ The discovery of a second major oil field just off the coast of Nigeria followed in 1958.¹⁵ For an oil-hungry world, particularly those countries with large militaries, influence in an independent Nigeria promised access to this valuable resource as well as Cold War prestige. For its part, Nigeria recognized the need for cordial economic and political relations with the major players on the world stage: the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.). However, American policymakers did not share this pragmatic approach and instead sought to bring Nigeria firmly into the Western camp.

Fears of Communism in West Africa

A communist Nigeria seemed scarily feasible to British and American leaders in 1960, as African nations moved from colonial rule into a world in which the Communist and non-aligned governments seemed to be on the move. Prior to independence, the

¹⁴ Falola and Heaton, *A History of Nigeria*, 163-64; “Industry History,” Nigerian National Petroleum Company, <http://www.nnpcgroup.com/NNPCBusiness/BusinessInformation/OilGasinNigeria/IndustryHistory.aspx> (accessed February 28, 2015).

¹⁵ Although the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) formed in 1960, Nigeria did not become a member until 1971, when the oil industry was nationalized by Nigeria’s military government. One excellent recent piece on the importance of Nigerian oil to the United States over the last forty years is Sebastian Junger, “Blood Oil,” *Vanity Fair* (February 2007), <http://www.vanityfair.com/news/2007/02/junger200702> (accessed March 9, 2105).

British colonial administration in Nigeria made every effort to protect the colony from what it termed “dangerous bolshevism.”¹⁶ In the late 1950s, as it became clear that Nigeria – a large nation, in a strategic location on the African continent, with natural resources as well as an increasingly well-educated populace – was heading toward full independence from Britain, the British government and its American ally assessed the chances of Nigeria’s turning toward communism. Anglo-American fears only grew as an independent Nigerian nation faced a variety of challenges on the African continent and a variety of inducements to adopt a friendlier stance toward the Soviet Union.

The fifteen years since the end of World War II had produced a radically different world, including the emergence of nearly fifty new sovereign countries in Africa alone. Prior to 1945, only three African states – Ethiopia, Liberia, and South Africa – had been independent. In Asia, the People’s Republic of China had emerged under leadership of Party Chairman Mao Zedong in 1949; China wasted no time in making plain its intentions to become a major political and economic force throughout the world. It intervened in the Korean War of 1950-1953, which as a result ended not in victory for the U.N. forces led by U.S. General Douglass MacArthur but in a stalemate and the creation of a communist North Korean government and a non-communist South Korean government. The Nonaligned Movement, composed of countries that did not formally align themselves with either the Soviet Union or the United States, emerged at the Bandung Conference in 1955. All of these developments, plus other smaller conflicts throughout the world, indicated to the British that a communist Nigeria was not only conceivable but viable.

¹⁶ Akiba, *Nigerian Foreign Policy Towards Africa*, 29.

London wished to avoid the same mistakes other colonial powers had made in allowing “unguided” independence of former colonies (particularly France’s disastrous withdrawal from its former colonies of French Indochina in 1954 after a lengthy military campaign) and still safeguard Nigeria against Communist overtures.¹⁷ In a 1959 Foreign Office Memorandum on “Africa: The Next Ten Years,” the British Foreign Office’s Africa Cabinet Committee noted positively that “none of [Nigeria’s] leaders of the majority parties have sympathy with communism, and none of them, except perhaps in his heart of hearts Nnamdi Azikiwe advocates a purely ‘neutralist’ policy.”¹⁸ Azikiwe was the leader of the NCNC at the time; while he publicly repudiated Communism, he was the most leftist of the party leaders. However, a report from the same year to the Cabinet expressed deep fears about Nigeria’s future and potential Soviet inroads into West Africa. “It would be counter-productive to prevent Soviet contacts by force,” the report read. “It would be better to convince the Africans that the new colonialist was the U.S.S.R. and let them experience the fact at first hand.”¹⁹ The British did not worry without reason. In 1948, the Manchester Conference produced what would become the Pan-Africanist movement, led by Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah. The lead countries of the Pan-Africanist movement -- Ghana, Guinea, Egypt, Morocco, Mali, and Tunisia -- shortly formed the core of the Casablanca Group, so named after a conference in 1961. The Casablanca Group’s charter proclaimed their determination to “liquidate

¹⁷ Hakeem Ibikunle Tijani, “Abubakar Tafawa Balewa and Nigeria's Foundation of a Non-Neutralist Foreign Policy,” in *Nigeria and Global Politics*, 130.

¹⁸ British Foreign Office Memorandum, “Africa: The Next Ten Years,” November 23, 1959, FO 371/137972, as quoted in *ibid.*

¹⁹ NATO Report, “Africa—Official Committee,” CAB 134/1353, as quoted in *ibid.*, 131.

colonialism, and neocolonialism in all its forms, to discourage the maintenance of foreign troops and the establishment of military bases which endanger the liberation of Africa, and to strive to rid the African continent of foreign political and economic pressures.”²⁰ Lacking a major base of operations in Africa, the Soviet Union made multiple overtures of friendship to the Casablanca Group as well as to Nigeria and other newly-sovereign countries. A Soviet-African Friendship Society formed in Moscow in 1959, officially to “further cultural relations with Africa.”²¹ The Nigerian-Soviet Friendship Society formed in 1961 in Lagos. The U.S.S.R. extended friendly relations to other non-aligned countries, including Algeria, the Sudan, the Congo, and Somalia.²² Washington viewed these overtures with suspicion and concern over whose side Nigeria would take in the Cold War.

Fears about Soviet interests in Africa heightened in late 1960, when the Republic of the Congo descended into chaos after gaining its independence from Belgium. The

²⁰ As quoted in Akiba, *Nigerian Foreign Policy towards Africa*, 33.

²¹ Hakeem Ibikunle Tijani, *Union Education in Nigeria: Labor, Empire, and Decolonization since 1945* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 8.

²² R. Craig Nation, “Introduction: The Soviet Impact in Africa” in *The Soviet Impact in Africa*, ed. R. Craig Nation and Mark V. Kauppi (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1984). Cold-War era literature on Friendship Societies included Frederick C. Baghoorn, *The Soviet Cultural Offensive: The Role of Cultural Diplomacy in Soviet Foreign Policy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1960); Louis Nemzer, “The Soviet Friendship Societies,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 13, no 2 (Summer 1949): 265-84; and J.D. Parks, *Culture, Conflict, and Coexistence: American-Soviet Cultural Relations, 1917-1958* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 1983). Since the dissolution of the U.S.S.R., historians with access to former Soviet archives are producing significant new work on Soviet Friendship Societies. See, for example, Gould-Davies, “The Logic of Soviet Cultural Diplomacy;” Michael David-Fox, *Showcasing the Great Experiment: Cultural Diplomacy and Western Visitors to the Soviet Union, 1921-1941* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); and Michael David-Fox, “From Illusory ‘Society’ to Intellectual ‘Public’: VOKS, International Travel and Party-Intelligence Relations in the Interwar Period,” *Contemporary European History* 11, no. 1 (2002): 7-32.

Soviet Union supplied weapons, troops, and intelligence to then-Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba's federal government, spurring increased fears of a pro-communist turn in Africa among both the United States and British governments.²³ Nigerian Prime Minister Balewa maintained an anti-Lumumba policy, in line with the administration's attempted neutralist and pro-British policies. However, as Washington could not fail to notice, not all of Nigeria's citizens agreed with Balewa's decisions: several peaceful pro-Lumumba protests in Ibadan and Lagos in 1960 devolved into riots, with Nigerian intellectuals speaking critically of Balewa's anti-Lumumba position. Demonstrators stormed the Belgian and American embassies, demanding Belgian and American troops withdraw from the Congo region.²⁴ Nigerian officials calmed the waters, but internal turmoil still bubbled below the surface.

As part of its attempt to ally with Nigeria, the U.S.S.R. extended offers of friendship and economic support to Nigeria early and often. Moscow sent an official delegation to Nigeria's independence festivities and was one of the first countries to recognize it as a sovereign nation.²⁵ The U.S.S.R. asked for permission to open an embassy in Nigeria in 1960, essentially as soon as the country was independent. For its part, however, the Nigerian government attempted to keep the Soviets interested and available but still at arm's length. The government allowed a Soviet embassy, but intentionally processed the paperwork slowly, so that the embassy did not open until

²³ Not only did the Congo Crisis contribute to worldwide Cold War tensions, it also resulted in the death of U.N. Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold in a plane crash while en route to peace negotiations.

²⁴ Akiba, *Nigerian Foreign Policy towards Africa*, 44-45.

²⁵ Matusevich, "An Elusive Friendship," 144.

1961.²⁶ Lagos restricted Nigerian trade with Eastern Bloc countries and restricted the number of visas available to citizens of socialist countries who wished to visit Nigeria, but it stopped far short of barring Eastern bloc trade or tourism outright.²⁷ Nigeria rejected the Soviet offer of a \$20 million interest-free loan but later contracted with the Soviets to build the Ajaokuta Iron and Steel Works facility, which turned out to be one of the major Soviet investments in African development. Members of the Soviet-Nigerian Friendship Society were invited to visit Nigeria in 1963 but spent much of their time “assuring Nigerian officials and journalists that its mission was purely cultural.”²⁸ Nigeria neither embraced Soviet assistance, as Moscow wished, nor completely repudiated contact with the Communists, as Washington would have preferred. Instead, the country continued to blaze its own middle path to economic, political, and social strength.

The University of Ibadan

With the coming of independence, the University College of Ibadan also sought its independence from its special relationship with the University of London. In 1962, the College formally severed its ties with its London counterpart, reframing itself as the University of Ibadan. Three other universities opened in Nigeria during the first two years of independence, such that each major region of the country had at least one institution of higher learning. However, the University of Ibadan remained the oldest, largest, and most

²⁶ Tijani, “Abubakar Tafawa Balewa and Nigeria’s Foundation of a Non-Neutralist Foreign Policy,” 132.

²⁷ Akiba, 29-30.

²⁸ Matusevich, “An Elusive Friendship,” 144. See also *ibid.*, 141.

respected university in the country, attracting faculty and staff from around the world.²⁹ One Nigerian scholar estimated that, in 1965, the University of Ibadan was the largest single employer of non-Africans in the city, with approximately 250 foreign-born staff members, many of whom also brought their families. This influx of British, Americans, Germans, South Africans, and Indians led the same scholar to remark that “life in Ibadan is conspicuously ostentatious in comparison with the modest, if picturesque, life on a provincial or divisional government station between the wars.”³⁰ The University of Ibadan emerged in the early period of independence as an independent institution with an expatriate faculty.

The Theatre Arts Studies program at the University of Ibadan reflected this uneasy dynamic of a majority white faculty leading a majority black student body. Since so few higher-education opportunities had existed prior to independence, very few Nigerians held faculty positions at the nation’s premier university. Most Ibadan faculty were British, German, or South African, while their students were overwhelmingly Nigerian. Theatre Arts Studies at the University during the 1960s reflected this quite well. The English Department faculty were responsible for the academic study of theatre and as such oversaw plays and theatre programs in which faculty members and advanced students performed. However, Nigerian students performed short skits and musical

²⁹ Falola and Heaton, *A History of Nigeria*, 162.

³⁰ P. C. Lloyd, “The Elite,” in *The City of Ibadan*, ed. P. C. Lloyd, A. L. Mabogunje, and B. Awe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press in association with the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ibadan, 1967), 130. See also *ibid.*, 129.

programs for their peers on campus under the umbrella of extracurricular studies.³¹ In the early 1960s, very few plays written by Nigerians existed in English, and almost none were performed. Faculty productions ran to plays by Sophocles, William Shakespeare, and Bertolt Brecht. Photographs from theatre productions, published in the *Ibadan* journal (the campus's literary magazine-cum-newsletter) show segregated productions, with students and faculty seemingly not performing together on stage, even as they sat together in University classrooms.

Although all Ibadan faculty were expatriates, each professor seems to have been genuinely excited to experience life in Nigeria and to contribute to the establishment of a Nigerian national identity via the theatre. Reflecting the way many educated, liberal Brits and Americans viewed the nascent African university system, professors felt that a university education was the answer to what they saw as the lack of a national Nigerian culture, which was reflected in the dearth of English-language Nigerian plays. In her 1954 inaugural lecture at the then-University College of Ibadan, English Professor Molly Mahood (from Great Britain) argued that “a country does not attain nationhood without a literature, and Nigeria has not yet a literature.”³² This statement was not entirely correct. Yoruba-language plays, performed by travelling theatre companies, were popular in the southern part of the country. Playwright Amos Tutuola wrote his first and most famous work based on Yoruba folk tales, *The Palm-Wine Drinkard and his Dead Palm-Wine*

³¹ Jumai Ewu, “Arts & Development II: Furthering the Agenda, Ibadan,” in *African Theatre in Development*, ed. Martin Banham, James Gibbs, and Femi Osofisan (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 87-98.

³² Molly Mahood, “The Place of English in an African University,” inaugural lecture given at the University College of Ibadan, November 1954, as quoted in Jeanne N. Dingome, “Mbari,” in *European-Language Writing in Sub-Saharan Africa*, ed. Albert S. Gerard (Budapest: Akad Kiado, 1986), 679-88.

Tapster in the Deads' Town, in 1946. A British publisher offered the play for sale in English translation in 1952 and then in French in 1953. However, in contrast to Shakespeare, Brecht, and most plays produced at the time, Tutuola's work featured pidgin English and a distinctly un-grammatical style, which many educated Nigerians (and British) saw as demeaning. Nigeria's most famous writer, Wole Soyinka, defended *The Palm-Wine Drinkard*, writing in 1963 that Tutuola's audience should "come to recognize him for what his talents offer – the contemporary imagination in a story-telling tradition."³³ Otherwise, however, Tutuola's work did not find much favor with either educated Europeans or elite Nigerians. What Nigeria lacked, at least in the view of the country's British and Nigerian elite, was a body of work written in English by Nigerians that maintained the standards of traditional English and American literature. By leaving London and Berlin for Ibadan, Mahood and her fellow expatriate academics sought to help establish this body of work via student education at the University of Ibadan.

In a world of rapid decolonization and increasing African nationalism, many British and American academics saw the establishment of an educated, white-collar middle class as the key ingredient to stability in former colonial nations. As one Nigerian scholar put it decades later, "the dons of the English department, in their collective capacity as the repository of Western enlightenment, were hoping to reproduce the ideal of the Oxbridge gentleman-scholar in Nigeria, that is, to produce social and intellectual elite that would in due course fill the vacuum left by the British withdrawal."³⁴ This viewpoint was not limited to the English or Theatre Arts departments. Speaking on the

³³Wole Soyinka, "From a Common Back Cloth: A Reassessment of the African Literary Image," *American Scholar* 32, no. 3 (Summer 1963): 390.

³⁴ Dingome, "Mbari," 679.

place of the African University at a lecture series in 1964, Sir Eric Ashby drew connections between African nationalism and the changing role of the university in the developing world. Ashby had spent significant time studying the University of Ibadan and the University of Ghana in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Though a botanist by training, Ashby spent the majority of his career as a university administrator and evinced a keen interest in the university system's pivotal role in a post-colonial world.³⁵ In the book composed of his Harvard lectures, he wrote, "African universities, built by the British, French, and Belgians on the foundations of European culture, are now being invaded by ideas and aspirations which have their source in African nationalism. We are witnessing in Africa the beginning of a climacteric in the history of higher education."³⁶ Ashby's "climacteric," or critical period, was in his eyes not necessarily negative. Rather, he argued, both a Western-rooted university system and African nationalism were vital components of African intellectual development. "The prime task of African intellectuals is to make African nationalism creative," he wrote. "To enable scholars to fulfil this task the universities of Africa must not only preserve their present loyalty to the Western tradition: they must also discover and proclaim a loyalty to the indigenous values of African society."³⁷ Ashby, like his fellow academics at Ibadan, supported a self-

³⁵ Sir Peter Frogatt, "Obituary: Lord Ashby," *The Independent*, October 28, 1992, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/obituary-lord-ashby-1559996.html> (accessed March 11, 2105).

³⁶ Ashby, *African Universities and Western Tradition*, 3-4. The full title of the lecture series is "The Godkin Lectures on the Essentials of Free Government and the Duties of the Citizen." The Lectures were established in 1903 at the then-Harvard Graduate School of Public Administration, which was renamed in 1966 as the Harvard University John F. Kennedy School of Government.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 103.

governing, stable Nigeria and saw the University system as the best way to help achieve that.

The Rockefeller Foundation, too, shared this goal. The Foundation's stated mission was, and is, "to promote the well-being of humanity throughout the world."³⁸ From its beginnings, the Foundation and its associated philanthropies operated worldwide, founding and/or funding international health programs in South America, Southeast Asia, Africa, and China. After World War II, the Foundation widened its programming, adding a focus on cultural, economic, and political initiatives. The Foundation intersected with the University of Ibadan first with the development of the Institute for Tropical Agriculture but soon expanded its involvement with the rollout, in 1961, of the Rockefeller University Development Program (UDP). Much like Ashby, the Rockefeller Foundation saw a strong, educated middle class as the answer to a stable Africa – and African universities as the best way to produce that middle class. Program officer Ralph K. Davidson, reflecting on the UDP's genesis, wrote that the Program

evolved from a very deep concern for the problems faced by the developing countries. . . . The discussions within the Foundation during the decade of the fifties emphasized most strongly that the ideas and aspirations generated in the course of democratic, national, and economic revolutions in the Western tradition were producing explosive demands for far-reaching changes in other parts of the world. . . . It was clear that the underdeveloped countries were borrowing ideas and aspirations and had examples before them of more "advanced" countries; but they lacked capital, trained leadership and educated people, political stability, and understanding of how change was to be digested and used by their own cultures.³⁹

³⁸ Rockefeller Foundation, "About Us," www.rockefellerfoundation.org/about-us (accessed March 21, 2015).

³⁹ Ralph K Davidson, "Evolution of the Foundation's University Development Program," unpublished whitepaper, November 1972, p.1, <http://rockefeller100.org/files/original/994dc1ecc1006aaf0e980e0be287353e.pdf> (accessed March 29, 2015).

Dean Rusk, future Secretary of State to Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Baines Johnson, served as President of the Foundation from 1950 to 1961. Rusk and Davidson, along with the directors of the sub-departments of Medical and Natural Sciences, Agricultural Sciences, Social Sciences, and the Humanities helped direct the formation of the UDP.⁴⁰ Their involvement indicates that the Rockefeller Foundation saw the University Development Program as linked with these sub-departments, not a stand-alone or one-time effort.

The Rockefeller Foundation believed that investing in education would help stabilize new and developing countries as well as train future leaders within those nations. Davidson and the architects of the UDP noted that “great issues were at stake” in the development of the Third World, particularly “whether these ‘new’ societies would be able to understand and to draw upon their own history and culture and effectively marry new ideas with the best of their own traditions” and tellingly, “whether they would be ‘open’ societies, in the humanist tradition of the West, or closed by dogma and ideology.”⁴¹ According to Davidson, other entities working in the developing world -- such as the U.S. Technical Assistance Program, the United Nations, and the Ford Foundation -- tended to stress the “necessities of the moment” over long-term leadership

⁴⁰ In Fiscal Year 1959-60 and 1960-61, the Director of the Humanities division of the Foundation was Charles B. Fahs, Ph.D. Associate Directors were Chadbourne Gilpatric and John Marshall; Robert W. July, Ph.D., who would play the largest role in bringing drama to Ibadan, was an Assistant Director during these formative years.

⁴¹ Davidson, “Evolution of the Rockefeller Foundation University Development Program,” 2.

development.⁴² However, “the major barriers to social and economic goals in much of the world lay in an inadequate transfer of knowledge, methods, and materials,” values that Americans and Europeans historically transmitted via college and university education. The Rockefeller Foundation could best assist currently underdeveloped countries, Davidson and his colleagues felt, by “train[ing] the people who would train people.”⁴³ That is, the Foundation would place its own staff (and possibly visiting staff from U.S. or other institutions) in certain African, Asian, and South American universities. Eventually, Rockefeller reasoned, these faculty would train enough new Nigerian scientists and scholars so that they could be replaced by their former students. “The aim of the program,” Davison wrote, “would be to help create stable, progressive, and quality programs which would contribute to national needs in scholarly and scientific areas.”⁴⁴ Particular support was to be given to programs “which address themselves to issues of critical importance, such as increasing food production, increasing the efficiency of economic planning, dealing with population problems, concern for the public health, [and] incorporating new ideas with the national history and cultural identity.”⁴⁵ The program’s goals were not entirely academic, of course. As Davidson noted, the Foundation saw the promotion of “people who could assume positions of leadership in private and public life” as the ideal, ‘big picture’ achievement of the UDP.⁴⁶

The University of Ibadan provided one of the best opportunities for the Rockefeller Foundation to implement the UDP in Africa. It fit all UDP requirements for

⁴² Ibid., 3.

⁴³ Ibid., 4.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 10.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 14.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

participation in the program: an existing university system desiring to expand; strong university leadership; previous connections via grants from the Rockefeller Foundation; a government willing to support, or at least tolerate, Rockefeller Foundation participation in the university; and a stable community with the potential to become a highly developed nation. The then-University College of Ibadan had obtained its first grant from the Rockefeller Foundation in 1953.⁴⁷ In 1959, the Foundation allotted a grant of \$108,870 to the University for the development of the Institute of Child Health and Nutrition and for a large-scale rural outreach program in the country.⁴⁸ The same year, the Foundation extended a three-year grant of \$69,900 to the university to support teaching and research in Arabic language and Islamic Culture.⁴⁹ In the first full year of the UDP (1962), the Foundation allocated over \$400,000 to the University of Ibadan for support of various faculty and projects, including the School of Drama. As the next chapter will show, the Rockefeller Foundation's investment in the University of Ibadan School of Drama would prove fruitful, though fraught with its own set of tensions and difficulties.

⁴⁸ Rockefeller Foundation, "Annual Report: 1959-1960," <http://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/about-us/annual-reports/1950-1959> (accessed February 17, 2015). All dollar figures given are in U.S. dollars and are not adjusted for inflation unless specifically noted.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 345.

CHAPTER FOUR:

Establishing a School of Drama at Ibadan, from Creation to Curtain Call

The possession of funds carries with it power to establish trends and styles of intellectual endeavor. With the best will in the world the trustees of a foundation may select unwisely or place emphasis where it should not be placed or initiate movements which serve only to close men's eyes to more promising avenues. To guard against these evils requires critical judgment, common sense, wide understanding, and eternal vigilance.¹
 --Rockefeller Foundation Trustee Committee Statement, 1934

As independence celebrations commenced throughout Nigeria in October 1960, the Rockefeller Foundation offered a rare opportunity to the University of Ibadan--an extremely lucrative funding stream for not only scientific projects, but cultural ones as well. Foundation staff members envisioned a long-term relationship with the University of Ibadan, and particularly with the potential School of Drama, resulting in the creation of a new cohort of pro-Western, anti-Communist Nigerian students and community members. University of Ibadan faculty members, nearly all European expatriates in 1960, saw a School of Drama as a way to solidify their legacy in the new nation. Ibadan's leadership--conscious of its position in maintaining the shaky balance between its former British colonial masters, the United States, and the Soviet Union--sought to ensure the best possible outcome for the University and its students.

Three major groups of players shared the cultural stage at the University of Ibadan in 1960: faculty members with responsibility for theatre, dance, and movement extracurriculars at the University; the University's Vice Chancellor, a position equivalent

¹ Fosdick, *Story of the Rockefeller Foundation*, 143.

to the President of an American university or college; and the Associate and Assistant Directors of the Rockefeller Foundation Humanities Division, charged with deciding which projects at the University should receive funding and in what amount. These men and women each brought their own biases, motivations, and goals to the creation of Ibadan's School of Drama. As this chapter will show, the Rockefeller Foundation agreed to fund the University of Ibadan's School of Drama as part of the Foundation's University Development Program (UDP). Fears of increased Soviet influence in newly-independent, strategically-important West African countries spurred the Rockefeller Foundation to devote millions of dollars to UDP projects at the University of Ibadan, all with the long-term goal of promoting culture in the American mold. For their part, the University of Ibadan leadership, in the person of the Vice Chancellor, solicited and accepted Rockefeller Foundation funding with a view toward establishing and maintaining a long-term relationship that would make Ibadan the premiere university not just in Nigeria, but in West Africa. Additionally, University faculty, seeking to leave a legacy of their own, supported the creation of a School of Drama in order to provide a formalized education in drama for University of Ibadan students, albeit as long as they could retain their faculty positions. Both Rockefeller and Ibadan leadership agreed, at least in principle, on the necessity of training Nigerian drama professionals and eventually turning leadership of the School over to native Nigerian faculty and staff (but both probably imagined this as a generational change).

Ultimately, the Foundation's efforts with the School of Drama proved unsustainable. The Foundation and the University of Ibadan successfully established the School of Drama in 1963; however, long-standing internal tensions within the Nigerian

state tore the country – and the University – apart only three years later, and the Rockefeller Foundation ended its support of the drama program by the 1969-1970 school year. Nigeria’s disintegration into civil war revealed a truth to which funders at the Rockefeller Foundation had been blind, namely, that the American-Soviet Cold War was neither the only nor the most important factor in the success of postcolonial West Africa.

Act One: Dramatis Personae

The men and women who taught Drama at the University of Ibadan in 1960 reflected the typical makeup of University faculty: white British, German, and South African professionals who each brought their own ideals and goals to Nigeria. Faculty members responsible for drama courses taught in the English Department, since theatre productions at the time only existed as extracurricular activities. Professors Geoffrey Axworthy, Martin Banham, Ulli Beier, and Molly Mahood coordinated and directed theatre programming. Peggy Harper taught dance and movement to students interested in theatre and choreographed dance numbers for drama productions. Axworthy and Banham, both British, had joined the Department of English in the late 1950s to teach English courses and establish a university drama program.² Beier, a German Jew, had relocated to Ibadan from London when offered a position teaching Phonetics; he joined the Department of English shortly thereafter.³ Mahood had joined the faculty in 1954 as

² University of Leeds, “Professor Martin Banham Faculty Page,” http://www.leeds.ac.uk/arts/profile/20040/265/martin_banham (accessed March 29, 2015).

³ Kaye Whiteman, “Ulli Beier Obituary: Academic, Editor, and Energetic Promoter of African Culture,” *The Guardian*, May 24, 2011,

Professor of English, after leaving a tutor position at Oxford University in Great Britain.⁴ Peggy Harper, a white South African, came to the University of Ibadan in 1963, after teaching dance at the University of Ghana in Legon, which had previously been affiliated with the University of London. Although not present as a faculty member in 1960, Harper had established connections with Axworthy and Banham during the latter years of the 1950s. Under the tutelage of Axworthy and Banham, student volunteers coordinated theatre production lighting and sound. Lacking a departmental photographer, Ibadan theatre productions relied upon Frank Speed, medical photographer at the Ibadan teaching hospital.⁵ Although no formal drama degree existed at Ibadan at the time of independence, Axworthy, Banham, Beier, and Mahood expended significant efforts to produce several plays each school year, starring both faculty and students in various roles.⁶

On the other hand, Dr. Kenneth O. Dike, Vice Chancellor of the University, reflected the ideal of the highly-educated Nigerian of the early 1960s. As Vice Chancellor, a position similar to President in American universities, he held overall responsibility for the faculty and staff of the University. Dike had returned to Nigeria after many years abroad, obtaining his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in the United

<http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2011/may/24/ulli-beier-obituary> (accessed March 1, 2015).

⁴ The University of Kent, "Honorary Doctorate: Molly Mahood," July 2010, <http://www.kent.ac.uk/congregations/honorary-grads/archive/2010/mollymahood.html> (accessed February 1, 2015).

⁵ "*Ibadan: A Journal Published at University College*," no.3, June 1958, p.6, Rockefeller Foundation Collection [hereafter "RFC"], Record Group 1.2 [hereafter "RG"], Series 495, Subseries R, Box 5, Folder 46, Rockefeller Archive Center, Tarrytown, New York (hereafter "RAC").

⁶ Ibid. See also, Robert W. July, *An African Voice: The Role of the Humanities in African Independence*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1987).

Kingdom before receiving his Ph.D. in history at the University of London.⁷ Dike ruled as Ibadan's Vice Chancellor from 1960 to 1967, promoting the growth of Ibadan's undergraduate and graduate programs and negotiating the difficult position of being "an Igbo in the heartland of the Yoruba."⁸ Dike worked tirelessly on behalf of the University and in advocating the importance of Nigerian history until 1967, when he left the school to work on behalf of the secessionist state of Biafra, in eastern Nigeria. After the fall of Biafra in 1970, he fled Nigeria for Cambridge, Massachusetts, becoming the first Mellon Professor of African History at Harvard University, but by all accounts deeply saddened by the post-Biafran situation in his beloved country.⁹ Biafra, however, remained nearly a decade in the future. At the point of Nigerian independence in 1960, Dike trumpeted the University of Ibadan's potential to the Rockefeller Foundation. As previously noted, the Foundation had funded several projects at the University of Ibadan in the late 1950s, almost exclusively focused on agriculture and public health projects. Fortunately for Dike and Ibadan's potential School of Drama, however, Nigerian independence coincided with an increased interest in what the Rockefeller Foundation termed "area studies."

Conceived in the early 1930s, area studies programs were intended to "make university education more relevant to a changed world." That is, the Rockefeller Foundation funded graduate and undergraduate programs that combined instruction in the foreign languages, economics, international relations, history, and law of a particular

⁷ "Kenneth O. Dike Dies in a Nigerian Hospital," *New York Times*, November 13, 1983, <http://www.nytimes.com/1983/11/13/obituaries/kenneth-o-dike-dies-in-a-nigerian-hospital.html> (accessed March 29, 2015).

⁸ J. D. Fage, "Obituary: Kenneth Onwuka Dike, 1917-1983," in *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 54, no. 2 (January 1984): 96-98.

⁹ Ibid.

region. The first area studies programs, in the 1930s, focused on the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe in response to the perceived growing threat of communism. These first programs primarily funded Russian-language instruction accompanied by training in Russian and Eastern European history and politics. The Foundation believed that understanding a country's culture was also vital for potential policy analysts, diplomats, civil servants, and educators. To that end, the area studies programs included funding for cultural programming. "With the United States catapulted into world leadership," wrote Assistant Director of the Humanities Division Charles Burton Fahs in 1954, "it has been necessary to pursue simultaneously the dual objectives of cultural enrichment and the strengthening of national capacities for sound foreign policy." After World War II, when Fahs took over directorship of the Humanities Division, area studies programs expanded to include a focus on other contested areas of the globe: China, Japan, Southeast Asia, South America, and Africa.¹⁰ Though occurring in various locales, all area studies programs shared the goal of producing well-trained, highly-educated leaders for new and developing countries, particularly in countries considered susceptible to communist influence.

The Rockefeller Humanities Division, which funded and managed the majority of area studies programs, benefited from the expertise of three very different men, all of whom passionately believed in the necessity of Nigeria remaining a pro-American country in its post-independence years: Dr. Charles Burton Fahs, Chadbourne Gilpatric, and Dr. Robert W. July. These three reflected the type of man making decisions on behalf

¹⁰ Rockefeller Foundation, "Area Studies," http://www.rockefeller100.org/exhibits/show/social_sciences/area-studies (accessed March 22, 2015).

of the Rockefeller Foundation's international programs during the middle years of the Cold War: very well-educated men, with Ivy League ties and strong connections to the American foreign policy establishment. Charles Burton Fahs obtained his Ph.D. in Political Science from Northwestern University. A Rockefeller Foundation post-doctoral fellowship enabled him to spend 1933-1936 studying Japanese, first in Tokyo and then in Kyoto. Fahs and his family became close friends with Edwin O. Reischauer, the U.S. Ambassador to Japan at the time. After returning from Japan, Fahs accepted a professorship at Pomona College in California. His government soon called, however; Fahs left Pomona to join the Office of Strategic Services (OSS)¹¹ in 1941. He spent the remainder of the war in the Far East Research and Analysis Division of the OSS, utilizing his language skills in pursuit of an American victory in the Pacific. Soon after the end of the war, Fahs left the OSS for a position as Assistant Director of the Humanities Division of the Rockefeller Foundation, where he was promoted to Director of the Division in 1950 and remained until 1961. During his years at the Rockefeller Foundation, Fahs developed a close friendship with future Secretary of State Dean Rusk, who served as a Rockefeller Foundation Trustee from 1950 to 1961. Fahs marked his tenure in the Humanities Division with a strong focus on cultural outreach to newly-independent nations. Chadbourne Gilpatric took over the Humanities Division after Fahs's departure. A New York native, he graduated from Harvard University in 1937. During World War II, like Fahs, Gilpatric served with the U.S. Army in the OSS. From 1947 to 1949, he was the Deputy Chief of Operations for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). In 1949, after

¹¹ The OSS was the precursor organization to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

leaving the CIA, Gilpatric joined the Rockefeller Foundation as Assistant Director for the Humanities.¹² After a promotion to Associate Director, he remained in that position with the Rockefeller Foundation until 1968.¹³ Robert W. July served as Assistant Director of the Humanities, Africa Division, first under Fahs and then under Gilpatric. After receiving his Ph.D. in History from Columbia University, July joined the Rockefeller Foundation in the mid-1950s. West Africa fascinated July. After leaving the Rockefeller Foundation in the early 1970s, he taught African History at Hunter College in New York City and published several books on African history and culture. While Fahs primarily maintained his offices in New York and occasionally travelled to Africa and Asia and Gilpatric did the same, July lived in Ibadan for most of 1962 and 1963. After that time, he made at least two multiple-month trips to Africa each year, during which time he travelled widely, visiting current and potential Rockefeller Foundation grantees. July served as the primary Foundation contact for humanities programs at the University of Ibadan and was central in the establishment of the School of Drama. July communicated directly with Vice Chancellor Dike as well as Professors Axworthy, Banham, and the rest of the drama faculty and staff at the University. Fahs, Gilpatric, and July represented the Rockefeller Foundation's interests in the UDP and at the University of Ibadan, but their shared backgrounds of Ivy League education and foreign policy service must have also shaped their decisions of which programs to fund and which to set aside.

¹² It is unclear from available evidence why the Foundation tapped Gilpatric for the Humanities Division. The most likely conclusion, in the opinion of the author, is that Gilpatric's probable professional and personal connections with other individuals within the Rockefeller Foundation structure brought him the job offer.

¹³ Rockefeller Foundation, "Biography: Chadbourne Gilpatric," <http://rockefeller100.org/biography/show/chadbourne-gilpatric> (accessed March 23, 2015).

Fahs, Gilpatric, and July felt strongly that a Nigerian turn to communism was a legitimate possibility. A keen observer of both human and history, July fretted in his diaries about threats to Africa's newfound independence. During a 1961 tour of West Africa, for example, he recorded numerous instances of what he described as communist inroads into Senegal, Ghana, Nigeria, Mali, and Benin. One Anglican clergyman whom July met in Ghana said flatly that "Nkrumah [the leader of Ghana] is a Communist" and that it would be "sooner or later impossible for missions to carry on effective work in that country."¹⁴ In Senegal's Dakar airport, July noted the number of Czech and Russian planes on the field and the "weekly run from Prague to Conakry [Guinea] via Bamako [Mali] and Rabat [Morocco]." He continued to note the Communist presence, writing,

Further, there was a prominently displayed series of photographs dealing with Sekou Toure's [Marxist dictator of Guinea] visit to Russia, as well as a large and gaudy poster advertising an exhibition in Conakry of Chinese economic development – an exhibition which closed over a month ago. Finally, to fix in one's mind the presence of Chinese, there were numbers of them in evidence at the airport including a large delegation which took the plane with me bound for Bamako.¹⁵

During the same trip, July shared these concerns with Moshe Bitan, the Israeli Ambassador to Ghana. Bitan agreed with his fears and described the situation at Bangui, in the Central African Republic, where Israel was providing aid to the government to offset similar Soviet activities.¹⁶ All of these instances served as red flags to July, who clearly noted his concern over communist influence in newly-independent African countries. Each of the three main players on Ibadan's stage, then, approached their roles

¹⁴ Robert W. July diary entry, March 31, 1961, p.159, RFC, RG 1.2, Series 497, Box 240, RAC.

¹⁵ Ibid., 48.

¹⁶ Ibid.,72.

with varying motivations. Drama faculty, Vice Chancellor Dike, and Rockefeller Foundation staff all hoped to produce a program of quality and importance, albeit with different closing scenes in mind.

Act Two: Establishing the School of Drama

A potential solution to July's growing concerns over potential communist threats in Nigeria soon presented itself via the opportunity to support British-led, Nigerian-performed theatre at the University of Ibadan, the country's prime producer of future Nigerian leadership. July genuinely believed in the importance of African theatre as written, directed, and performed by Africans, rather than African theater as merely an imitation of British or American theatre; the University of Ibadan's request for funding was not the first time July had considered theatre as a strong anti-communist force. Prior to independence, July had communicated directly with the Nigerian playwright Wole Soyinka, who had approached the Rockefeller Foundation for funding for a potential study of the history of West African drama.¹⁷ Soyinka wrote July in the summer of 1960 about the lack of drama training in West Africa:

It is a pity that the newly started drama school in Abidjan [Ivory Coast¹⁸] is not taking into account these trends [in African nationalism] in their own dramatic

¹⁷ Robert W. July diary excerpt, February 25, 1960, RFC, RG 1.2, Series 495, Box 5, Folder 45, RAC. According to their correspondence, Soyinka intended for the manuscript to be titled "The Dramatic Form in Nigeria." However, this work never really took shape. Soyinka was imprisoned by the military regime of General Yakubu Gowon in 1967 and spent two years in solitary confinement, after which he fled to the United States.

¹⁸ The Ivory Coast, which obtained independence from France in 1960, maintained a close relationship with Nigeria, bound by trade and history as well as ties of friendship between its leading elite.

attempts. The students are trained in a very European medium - Corneille, Racine, Shakespeare, even Bernard Shaw. I asked why this was so, and the teachers claimed that there wasn't any decent playwriting going on in French West Africa. So the students receive the same kind of training as they would in Britain's central school of speech and drama, or Paris's. It is, as I pointed out, the old circle of the writers won't write unless there are actors and the actors won't train unless there are plays.¹⁹

Soyinka suggested that West Africa lacked a good training mechanism for students interested in drama, causing talented potential actors, directors, and playwrights to either change their career interests or be forced to travel abroad for education. In separate correspondence, Professors Geoffrey Axworthy and Martin Banham echoed Soyinka's call, suggesting a drama program at Ibadan that would surpass those of universities in the Ivory Coast and Ghana, Nigeria's biggest competitors for educational facilities.

Axworthy and Banham, in their initial correspondence (1959-1960) with the Foundation, only requested funding to improve extracurricular drama programming already being performed by Ibadan students. Axworthy, in fact, managed a touring group of students who played an "African adaptation of Moliere" in various Nigerian cities. Mahood, who in the 1950s had accused Nigeria of having no national literature, supported Axworthy's request for funding, writing that theatre offered both entertainment as well as educational opportunities to Ibadan's student body, particularly the opportunity for Nigerians to write new plays in English for performance throughout West Africa.²⁰

In their requests to July and the Rockefeller Foundation, Axworthy and Banham explained why theatre offered the best use of Rockefeller dollars: "The theatre is the

¹⁹ Letter from Wole Soyinka to Robert W. July, June 18, 1960, RFC, RG 1.2, Series 495, Box 5, Folder 45, RAC.

²⁰ Robert W. July diary entry, March 23, 1961, RFC, RG 1.2, Series 497, Box 3, Folder 20, RAC.

[University's] best link with the community and its main contribution to the advancement of the arts."²¹ Dike agreed, giving top priority to the development of theatre at Ibadan and to continued funding for the University's Rockefeller-supported Arabic Studies program. When Rockefeller floated the idea of reserving a portion of funding for English-language training at Ibadan, Dike reiterated his desire for Rockefeller support for drama at Ibadan.²²

In the summer of 1962, Axworthy and Dike approached July and the Rockefeller Foundation with a new concept: a School of Drama at the University of Ibadan. The proposed school would drastically increase the number of dramatic productions at the University and also the level of their professionalism. With the establishment of a school, undergraduates and graduates could obtain a certificate or degree in Drama, rather than carrying a course load in another discipline and doing theatre productions in their spare time. In addition, Axworthy argued that additional training for Ibadan's students in speech would benefit the country itself, as he saw Nigerians' accented English as problematic. "It hampers teaching, government, business – every field in which ineffective speech causes confusion," Axworthy wrote. "We have to do something about this, from the outset. If we succeed we might help to ease the general problem; we can set a standard of West African speech for generations of university students. By their example, and work in mass media like radio and television, they can affect millions (as

²¹ Robert W. July diary entry, March 15, 1961. RFC, RG 1.2, Series 497, Box 3, Folder 20, RAC.

²² Kenneth W. Thompson diary entry, June 25, 1962, RFC, RG 1.2, Series 497, Box 3, Folder 20, RAC.

the BBC does in Britain).²³ Encouraged by the Rockefeller Foundation's receptiveness to their ideas, Axworthy, Banham, and Mahood believed the time was ripe for this expansion, which equated to the addition of a new academic department within the University. July felt so confident that the grant would be approved by Foundation trustees in their annual meeting that he okayed a preliminary grant of \$10,000 in August of 1962, to allow Axworthy to begin to recruit a Technical Director for the School of Drama.²⁴ In the formal grant request to the Rockefeller Foundation in November, the University of Ibadan requested funding for eight staff members as well as costumes, make-up, lighting, and miscellaneous expenses. The eight staff positions included three academic posts (one Director of the School and two Lecturers in Drama), two special posts (Specialist in Speech and Specialist in Mime or Movement), two technical posts (Superintendent Technician and Senior Assistant Technical Officer), and one junior position (Junior Trainee Technician).²⁵ The total grant amount requested, for a three-year period beginning in 1963, totaled \$200,000.²⁶ The grant request letter emphasized Ibadan's intention to utilize the School of Drama as an outreach tool throughout Nigeria and to train a cohort of Nigerians for professional positions in theatre and television:

²³ Letter from Geoffrey Axworthy to Robert W. July, July 20, 1962, RFC, RG 1.2, Series 497, Box 3, Folder 20, RAC.

²⁴ Letter from Ms. Flora Rhind, Rockefeller Foundation Secretary, to Kenneth Dike, September 26, 1962, RFC, RG 1.2, Series 497, Box 3, Folder 21, RAC.

²⁵ Internal memorandum, Geoffrey Axworthy to Kenneth Dike, October 13, 1962, RFC, RG 1.2, Series 497, Box 3, Folder 20, RAC; Formal Request for Funds, Kenneth Dike to Robert W. July and the Rockefeller Foundation, November 2, 1962, RFC, RG 1.2, Series 497, Box 3, Folder 20, RAC.

²⁶ Letter from Ms. Flora Rhind, Rockefeller Foundation Secretary, confirming grant agreement, to Dr. Kenneth Dike, January 2, 1963, RFC, RG 1.2, Series 497, Box 3, Folder 21, RAC. Using the Consumer Price Index and accounting for inflation, \$200,000 in 1963 dollars is roughly equivalent to \$1.55 million in 2014 dollars.

Courses would begin in October, 1963, and would be provided at postgraduate, undergraduate, and professional diploma levels. The programme would also be concerned with the development of the theatre as a recreational facility for the whole community, and with the needs and problems of groups and individuals elsewhere in Nigeria. The programme strongly emphasizes Nigerian participation and the wish was expressed on both sides for a scheme flexible enough to be able to make the best use of suitable Nigerian talents. The funds requested are mainly for the salaries and travel of highly qualified visiting specialists, to assist in the technical direction, and to devise programmes of speech and movement teaching; also for the support of Nigerians being trained for positions of responsibility in the theatre.²⁷

As indicated by the request, Axworthy and his colleagues at the University of Ibadan sought nothing less than a far-reaching impact on Nigeria as a whole—university students, community members, and even television and radio audiences throughout the country.

The phrase “suitable Nigerian talents” is telling. Of the eight staff positions, Axworthy and the faculty at Ibadan intended that only the most junior—that of Trainee Technician—initially be filled by a Nigerian. Although some students at Ibadan presumably had theatre experience, either via extracurricular productions or those coordinated by Axworthy and Banham through the English Department, no communications exist that indicate that any current or former Ibadan students applied for any of the positions. Axworthy offered the position of technical director to William T. Brown, who at the time taught technical theatre at Howard University in Washington, DC (a historically black university). He appointed Peggy Harper, the white South African

²⁷ Letter from Kenneth Dike to Robert W. July and the Rockefeller Foundation, Formal Request for Funds, November 2, 1962, RFC, RG 1.2, Series 497, Box 3, Folder 20, RAC.

working in Ghana, as Movement Director.²⁸ Axworthy and Banham moved from the English Department to take the Director of School and Lecturer in Drama positions, respectively. When the Rockefeller Foundation recruited Dr. Ira Reid from Haverford College in Pennsylvania for an appointment at Ibadan's Sociology Department, it also hired his wife, Anne Margaret Cooke Reid (who held a Ph.D. in Drama from Yale University in Connecticut) to serve as the second Lecturer in Drama.²⁹ Axworthy and July both felt that qualified Nigerians would eventually move up through the ranks as students, graduate students, and eventually faculty members, but they saw the process as taking at least a generation. Unfortunately, as it turned out, they vastly underestimated the amount of time available to them.

At first, the School of Drama seems to have fulfilled one of its stated purposes, that of serving as a tool of community outreach. In a diary entry from an early 1965 visit to Ibadan, July noted favorably that the School of Drama was up and running, playing shows "to typical Nigerian audiences and not just a special educated elite."³⁰ In an interoffice memorandum describing the same visit, he wrote,

Axworthy has started on a new tack. He is using local theme [sic.], in this case the adaptation for stage of a novel written by a Nigerian. The novel is Nkemwankwo's *Danda*, which deals with a sort of Nigerian Till Eulenspiegel [a trickster figure in the German theatre tradition] and his various escapades. Much of the material is pretty largely slapstick, but when we saw this product outdoors a week or so ago here at the university it was followed with rapt attention by a large audience of several

²⁸ Letter from Geoffrey Axworthy to Chadborne Gilpatric, May 22, 1963, RFC, RG 1.2, Series 497, Box 3, Folder 21, RAC.

²⁹ Résumé of Mrs. Anne Margaret Cooke Reid, Interoffice Correspondence Letter, University of Ibadan, April 19, 1962, RFC, RG 1.2, Series 497, Box 3, Folder 20, RAC.

³⁰ Robert W. July diary entry, May 9, 1965, RFC, RG 1.2, Series 497, Box 3, Folder 21, RAC.

thousand, almost entirely African, drawn from the town of Ibadan and also people working around the university. The play had a lot of color, a lot of music, a lot of movement, good choreography, and was laid on with very broad strokes which were picked up easily by the audience. There is nothing very sophisticated here, but on the other hand sophistication is not what is called for. This is popular theatre and it is busily doing the job it should be doing, namely, constructing an audience within the country for live theatre. Thus, as the Institute of Drama proceeds with the training of players, directors, designers, etc., it also proceeds with the important counterpoise of building an audience.³¹

Additionally, the School of Drama Director's Report for school year 1964-1965 trumpeted the establishment of multiple drama courses. Ibadan now offered a joint degree in drama for students studying English, French, or Religious Studies, as well as a one-year postgraduate diploma course for graduates of any subject. The report also noted with pride that through these and various other drama projects, the "School of Drama is providing Nigeria with a positive lead in the development of the performing arts and with cultural facilities which are probably without equal in any country in Africa."³² The School of Drama's other stated purpose – to establish a pipeline of educated Nigerians to take over drama and television positions inside and outside the University – seems to have gotten off to a strong start in the School's first few years. The Director's Report for the 1965-1966 school year announced that 66 students were currently studying drama at various levels at Ibadan, including two M.A. students and one Ph.D. student. The report also noted the establishment of two new professional courses that year, a one-year certificate in Educational Drama and a two-year diploma in Drama that offered training

³¹ Interoffice Memorandum, Robert W. July to R. K. Davidson, March 19, 1965, RFC, RG 1.2, Series 497, Box 3, Folder 21, RAC.

³² Director's Report, University of Ibadan School of Drama, Report to the Rockefeller Foundation, October 29, 1964, RFC, RG 1.2, Series 497, Box 3, Folder 21, RAC.

in theatre as well as radio, film, and television.³³ Faculty members, University leadership, and Rockefeller Foundation leadership all had every reason to believe their new School of Drama was on track to become a flagship program throughout West Africa.

Act Three: Dénouement

Although the School of Drama began with such promise in 1963, within four years it was essentially moribund. Nigeria suffered its first military coup in January 1966 when Prime Minister Balewa died on an assassin's blade and Army officers took control of government. Several coups and attempted coups followed; a general sense of unease permeated Nigeria as the military government cracked down on dissent of all types. By the summer of that year, professors William Brown, Martin Banham, and Peggy Harper had all left Ibadan for other positions in America and Europe. Only Geoffrey Axworthy remained, holding onto his position as head of school. Brown's position was filled by K. W. Lyndersay, a West Indian from Trinidad. Mr. Ola Rotimi, a Rockefeller-sponsored Nigerian playwright who had completed his MFA at Yale, was offered the Lecturer in Drama position for the 1966-1967 school year but did not accept.³⁴ Vice Chancellor Dike wrote to the Rockefeller Foundation in late 1966, asking for an additional grant for the 1967-1968 school year in order to fund existing faculty positions in the School of Drama; the government, partially in retribution for Dike's own political stances, had drastically cut funding for the University of Ibadan. The Rockefeller Foundation approved an

³³ Director's Report, University of Ibadan School of Drama, Report to the Rockefeller Foundation, October, 1965, RFC, RG 1.2, Series 497, Box 3, Folder 22, RAC.

³⁴ Ibid.

additional \$50,000 grant but noted that the Foundation would probably not “be able to support the drama program in any way . . . after the current appropriations . . . have been expended.”³⁵ The Foundation adhered to this statement, offering no further funding for the School of Drama. The Foundation’s original funds were intended to establish the School of Drama, not serve as a long-term support for it. However, University administration was unable to produce the funds to maintain the program on its own, because the new military government of Nigeria was not providing sufficient funds to even maintain current programs.

Civil war broke out in Nigeria in July 1967 as the Nigerian government attacked soldiers of the newly-declared independent state of Biafra, composed of the Igbo homeland in southeastern Nigeria. Tensions between Nigeria’s three main ethnic groups, having never dissipated even in the throes of independence, exploded into violence. Dike left his position at the University to advocate on behalf of Biafra. Large numbers of students also left the University for other countries or to fight on behalf of the Biafran state. Axworthy and Lyndersay departed Ibadan; various student uprisings in 1968 and 1969 resulted in the closure of the University for multiple weeks³⁶. Nigeria remained the hostage of various dictatorships until 1999. Although the University of Ibadan remained open and continued to educate Nigerian men and women, the School of Drama was

³⁵ Letter from Joseph E. Black, Director of the Humanities Division, to Kenneth Dike, July 1, 1966, RFC, RG 1.2, Series 497, Box 3, Folder 22, RAC.

³⁶ “Obituary: Kenneth Dike;” John de St. Jorre, *The Brothers’ War: Biafra and Nigeria* (New York: Faber & Faber, 2012); Robert W. July, *An African Voice: The Role of the Humanities in African Independence*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1987).

gradually subsumed back under the general umbrella of the Department of Arts, bereft of the champions it had once had in Axworthy, Dike, and July.

Axworthy, July, and the other players on the Ibadan stage had believed they had sufficient time to establish the School of Drama and nurture its growth through at least one generation of students. They were wrong. July and the Rockefeller Foundation, in their determination to offset potential Communist inroads by funding cultural programs via the University Development Project, failed to see the reality of Nigeria's national status. That is, their Cold War-era glasses saw only Soviet threats, blinding them to the internal instability that had simmered under the surface since well before independence. Axworthy, Banham, Harper, Mahood, and the other expatriate drama faculty at Ibadan attempted to establish a drama program on a similar timeline to those of their British and South African alma maters but could not – or would not – see the changes on the horizon. Vice Chancellor Dike had done his best to support the development of all facets of the University of Ibadan but, in the end, was pushed out of his position by the same internal ethnic tensions that drove the civil war. While all of the players in this drama might have had noble goals, their methods were ultimately unsustainable.

CHAPTER FIVE:
The Fruits of *Kongi's Harvest*

*...there's a harvest of words
In a penny newspaper.
They say it all on silent skulls
But who cares? Who but a lunatic
Will bandy words with boxes
With government rediffusion sets
Which talk and talk and never
Take a lone word in reply.
--Wole Soyinka, Kongi's Harvest¹*

In his groundbreaking play *Kongi's Harvest*, first performed in 1966, Nigerian playwright Wole Soyinka portrays the clash between the traditional ruler, King Danlola, and the usurping, modernizing dictator, President Kongi. Kongi holds sway with the military and the government, yet he believes he cannot obtain full rulership without King Danlola's offering of a ceremonial yam, the traditional indicator of abdication. King Danlola refuses. Kongi thus relies upon the traditional power structures he seeks to destroy in order to justify his takeover. *Kongi's Harvest* ends abruptly when bar owner and Kongi's former lover, Segi, appears at a state dinner with her father's head on a silver platter, reminiscent of Salome's dance with the severed head of St. John the Baptist in Christian tradition.² The play's ending leaves the audience uncertain – does President Kongi retain power? Do King Danlola's people rise up against the dictator? Or, is Kongi eventually replaced by another modernizing dictator in an endless cycle of upheaval?

¹ Wole Soyinka, *Kongi's Harvest: A Play* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), 61.

² The Bible, Mark 6:17-30, King James Version.

First performed in Dakar, Senegal, *Kongi's Harvest* clearly reflected Soyinka's early 1960's concerns about dictatorship in newly-independent African countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, and Senegal. Soyinka knew first-hand the perils of dictatorship. General Yakubu Gowon's military dictatorship imprisoned Soyinka from 1967 to 1969, in an attempt to punish Soyinka for his efforts on behalf of the newly-proclaimed Republic of Biafra. In fact, in future productions of *Kongi's Harvest* – including a 1973 film of the same name financed and directed by the American Ossie Davis³ – Soyinka made even clearer the similarities between Kongi and Nigeria's military dictators, often dressing President Kongi in a military uniform similar to that of Nigerian leaders and specifying stage settings reminiscent of Nigeria's governmental buildings.⁴

Perhaps more than any other Nigerian of his generation, Soyinka symbolized the multitude of influences at play in mid-century Nigeria: Soyinka had studied at British schools when the country was still a colony of the United Kingdom; he returned to Nigeria excited for independence; he interacted with the Rockefeller Foundation and other American-based philanthropic organizations at the University of Ibadan; he experienced the first of many military coups in 1966; and he watched with horror the butchery of the Nigerian civil war in the waning years of that decade before imprisonment and then exile. It seems no coincidence that multiple military dictatorships saw Soyinka, a playwright and actor, as a threatening enough force to first imprison and then expel. Like Robert July of the Rockefeller Foundation or Geoffrey Axworthy and

³ *Kongi's Harvest*, directed by Ossie Davis (Lagos, Nigeria: Calpenny Nigeria, 1973).

⁴ Josef Gugler, "Wole Soyinka's *Kongi's Harvest* from Stage to Screen: Four Endings to Tyranny," *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines* 31, no. 1 (1997): 32-49.

Kenneth Dike at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria's military governments recognized the power of theatre to inspire, or repel, revolution.

As this thesis has shown, the men leading the Cold War-era Rockefeller Foundation agreed to fund the University of Ibadan's School of Drama as part of their larger University Development Program (UDP). Fears of increased Soviet influence in newly-independent, strategically-important West African countries spurred the Foundation to devote millions of dollars to UDP projects at the University of Ibadan, all with the long-term goal of modernizing Nigeria's economy and culture in the American mold. University of Ibadan leadership, particularly Geoffrey Axworthy and Vice Chancellor Kenneth Dike, solicited and accepted Rockefeller Foundation funding with a view toward establishing the School of Drama as they envisioned it. The leadership of both Rockefeller and Ibadan agreed, at least in principle, on the necessity of training Nigerian drama professionals and eventually turning leadership of the School over to native Nigerian faculty and staff. The Foundation and the University of Ibadan successfully established the School of Drama in 1963; however, longstanding internal tensions within the Nigerian state tore the country – and the University – apart only three years later, and the Rockefeller Foundation ended its support of the drama program by the 1969-1970 school year.

Several important voices are missing from this thesis, particularly those of the Nigerian students who studied under Ibadan's expatriate faculty in the School of Drama during these tumultuous years. Restrictions on time, length, travel, and the availability of Nigerian archival material mean that this thesis primarily utilized documents available at the Rockefeller Archive Center. Future research on this topic should incorporate the work

of these Nigerian students attending Rockefeller Foundation-funded drama courses at a formerly British University, taught by American, British, German, and South African faculty, as they are the best indicators of the long-term results of Nigeria's most pivotal and turbulent years of the twentieth century.

In addition, the vast majority of the information available at the Rockefeller Archive Center centers on official communications between the Rockefeller Foundation staff and primary University of Ibadan faculty and staff. Future research on the complex relationships between the Rockefeller Foundation and recipients of University Development Program funding should also attempt to locate and incorporate additional unpublished memoirs and documents from temporary visiting faculty as well as contract employees. These men and women, essentially sub-contractors paid by Rockefeller Foundation grants, will provide a more nuanced view of philanthropic-university partnerships. One such contract employee, Wesley C. Weidemann, provided a brief report to the Rockefeller Foundation in 1980, reporting on his four years (1973-1977) as a Foundation-funded visiting fellow in agricultural programs at the University of Ibadan. His wife, Jean, worked for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, also based at the University of Ibadan. He wrote, "After we were in Nigeria for two years we felt we knew Nigerians fairly well, but after three years we found we didn't really know them well at all."⁵ This brief, tantalizing statement indicates that perhaps individuals outside the leadership structure possessed a more realistic view of philanthropy's ability or inability to affect Nigerian development.

⁵ Wesley C. Weidemann, Termination Report to the Rockefeller Foundation, August 4, 1980, p.13, RFC, RG 1.3, Series 497, Box 4, Folder 29, RAC.

Andrew Carnegie, as previously noted, famously wrote that the “problem of our age is the proper administration of wealth.”⁶ As the world moves into the twenty-first century, however, this maxim is increasingly less true. A more accurate statement might be that the problem of our current age is not only the administration of wealth but also determining the motives and goals of those charged with allocating such immense amounts of money across the globe. From their humble beginnings with the Carnegie Foundation, private philanthropic foundations today command international attention. Leadership at the Rockefeller, Ford, Carnegie, and Gates foundations have access to the ears of political and cultural leaders worldwide – and the funds to cash any metaphorical checks they might write. Foundations have the potential to drastically alter the political, cultural, and social lives of billions of individuals for the better or worse – as, indeed, they have already done in only the past one hundred years. It is our responsibility, as historians, to ensure that the goals of those men and women making decisions on the foundations’ behalf are known, evaluated, and publicized to the individuals they affect.

⁶ Carnegie, *Gospel of Wealth*, 14.

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