

AMERICAN SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMMES FOR AFRICAN STUDENTS, 1959-75

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THE UNITED STATES, in conducting her foreign policy, developed foreign aid strategies which were geared towards realizing the goals and objectives of that foreign policy. Implicit in these strategies was the idea that foreign aid was necessary to ensure not only the rapid development of recipient nations, but also a certain type of development. Thus while the Point Four strategy (created in 1949) aimed at the 'know-how' approach to rapid development, the Development Assistance strategy (created in the early 1960s) aimed at developing the human resources by introducing new attitudes, values and institutions in the recipient nations.

In this article I will focus on that aspect of the Development Assistance programmes which aimed at providing, through the scholarship programmes which were organized in the 1960s, highly skilled manpower who would play a role in the modernizing process. Among the programmes were those sponsored by AID (Agency for International Development) such as the African Scholarship Program of American Universities (ASPAU) in 1961, the African Graduate Fellowship Program (AFGRAD) in 1963 and the Inter-African Universities Program (INTERAF) in 1967, and the Southern African Scholarship Program (SASP) in 1961 sponsored by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the Department of State.

These African scholarship programmes were perhaps the most important American contribution to African higher education. They were created at a time when the universities in Africa were not in a position to train adequate manpower. They recognized the lack of highly skilled manpower in the African nations by 'enskill people'.¹

My intention in this article is not so much to describe these programmes as to explore and analyse their development in the light of the ideology of American educational aid. I will show that these programmes were created in response to a concern wider than the mere training and provision of highly skilled manpower. This will be done in three stages. First I will analyse the motives of the United States in creating the scholarship programmes. Second, I will analyse the unique historical circumstances leading to the creation of each programme and the accomplishments of each programme. Finally, I will discuss the place that these programmes had in the overall ideology of American educational aid.

¹ A. Lepawsky, 'Enskilling people', *International Development Review* (1961), III, iii, 16-22.

MOTIVES BEHIND SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMMES

In order to understand the motives behind American involvement in the scholarship aspect of development assistance, it is necessary for us to examine the international political scene at the time of the onset of African independence in the late 1950s and the 1960s. Several factors were at work. To begin with, the colonial powers were 'leaving' Africa, at least politically. By giving up their political power in the African colonies, they opened wide the doors for such non-colonial powers as the United States and the Soviet Union to move in and fill the vacuum.

Second, the colonial powers left the colonies with hardly adequate qualified manpower to take over their operation effectively. The few universities they created and left behind were exclusively élitist institutions whose output hardly met the manpower needs of either public or private sectors.

Third, the colonial powers, despite their élitist institutions, could not 'quench the Africans' thirst for knowledge'.² The colonial university colleges catered for a very small percentage of qualified students, leaving thousands of students unable to get a university education. This point is significant in that we have to recognize that it was the colonial powers who left a legacy which equated a university education with success. A university education, indeed, became a passport to a good job and a good life. Consequently, more and more students strove to obtain that passport for themselves.

These three factors were influential in attracting American as well as Soviet interest in Africa. The two powers shared the image of being clean-handed as regards the possession of colonies, America posing as the first rejector of British colonialism, as was noted by Arthur W. Hummel, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in charge of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, in 1965:

the United States now has a better opportunity than any other nation in the world to influence the future trends of African development. We have no record of colonial domination in Africa, and therefore there are no residual antagonisms rooted in past unpleasant relationships to condition attitudes against the United States.³

As for the Soviet Union, the works of Lenin against colonialism, especially his *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, could be cited⁴ as evidence of Russian disinterestedness.

Both powers recognized the need to assist the new African nations by providing facilities for the training of highly skilled manpower needed in the development of these nations. Both powers recognized the presence of the thirst for

²J. Okello-Oculi, 'Motives of foreign scholarships: The race for Cold War infiltration of African politics', *East African Journal* (1967), IV, vii, 16.

³U.S. Congress: House Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on Africa, *African Students and Study Programs in the United States. Report and Hearings, pursuant to H. Res. 84 (89th Congress)* (Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965), 141.

⁴Okello-Oculi, 'Motives of foreign scholarships', 16.

education and, like Good Samaritans, they offered scholarships which were grabbed without hesitation.

But we should also bear in mind that since the Second World War a Cold War has existed between the United States and the Soviet Union, a state of affairs which has been a key element in international relations. The United States sought to contain the spread of Communism by making her presence felt through foreign aid programmes not only in the nations of Europe and the Far East, but in the new nations of Africa as well. Thus it can be said that American scholarship programmes for Africans were created more as a challenge to Soviet interests in Africa than as a humanitarian interest in the development of the African nations. Ashby appropriately termed the late 1950s and the early 1960s a period of the 'scholarship invasion' of Africa, an expression which is indicative of the competition between the United States and the Soviet Union for influence in Africa.⁵

Indeed the scholarship programmes were initiated precisely because they entailed not only the transfer of skills and knowledge to the nationals from the new African countries. They also meant an exposure to the values, norms, and practices of the donor nations. It was not only an exercise in the provision of substantive skills, it also included an inculcation of the attitudes and values. Baer makes the point that the African students were viewed as the proto-élites of their emerging nations, to be trained and then to assume positions of authority within their newly independent countries.⁶ Thus, indeed, these programmes were bound to influence the future leaders of Africa. As Mazrui writes: 'the skills and intellectual habits that the students acquired in the course of their training in the United States are bound to have some kind of cumulative influence on certain aspects of national life in their own countries'.⁷ The first major effort began with the Kenya student 'airlifts' and the Nigerian-American Scholarship Program in 1959, which led to such AID-sponsored programmes as the ASPAU in 1961, AFGRAD in 1963 and INTERAF in 1967, and at about the same time that ASPAU was created the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs started a special programme, SASP. This historical analysis will deal first with the AID programmes, followed by a discussion of the SASP.

THE KENYA STUDENT 'AIRLIFTS'

American participation in the scholarship invasion began with the student 'airlifts' from Kenya organized in part at the urging of Tom Mboya, a Kenyan trade union

⁵ E. Ashby, *Universities: British, Indian and African* (Cambridge MA, Harvard Univ. Press, 1966), 270.

⁶ K.L. Baer, *African Students in the East and West, 1959-1966: An Analysis of Experiences and Attitudes* (Syracuse NY, Syracuse Univ., Program of Eastern African Studies, Paper 54, 1979), preface.

⁷ A.A. Mazrui, 'The functions of anti-Americanism in African political development', *Africa Report* (1969), XIV, i, 12.

leader. Mboya's rationale for seeking American assistance was that the University College of East Africa was not in a position to provide for the manpower need. Between 1957 and 1958 the college had produced only 76 graduates.⁸ In response to Mboya's requests some American private concerns hastily arranged for some Kenyan students to come to the United States. Organizations such as the African American Students Foundation⁹ and the Joseph P. Kennedy Foundation¹⁰ provided the funds for 81 students in 1959 and chartered four planes to bring an additional 288 students in 1960.¹¹

These early efforts were largely ill-conceived. Most of the African students who came were not ready for college work and some of them were sent to some mediocre American universities and colleges.¹² Nonetheless, the fact is that this was the first large-scale American scholarship programme and that it was consistent with the rise in American interest in African affairs at the time.

THE NIGERIAN-AMERICAN SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM¹³

As in the case of the Kenya 'airlifts', a major effort for getting assistance for Nigerian students was carried out by private concerns and at the urging of African leaders. The provision of American scholarships to Nigerian students was a result of the 1959 discussions between Stephen O. Awokoya, Nigerian Federal Minister of Education, and David Henry, Director of Admission at Harvard College. These discussions focused on the scarcity of highly skilled manpower in the African nations south of the Sahara. In the case of Nigeria, there was only one university college at Ibadan. Awokoya expressed his wish to send some Nigerian students to the United States. As a result, Henry agreed to arrange with a number of American universities and colleges to admit the students and give them tuition scholarships. Awokoya agreed to get the Nigerian Government to pay the travel costs and Henry arranged with the Education Testing Service at Princeton, New Jersey, to provide some tests for screening the students and, with the 'Experiment in International Living', a private organization, to provide orientation for the new students. He also persuaded the African American Institute, which had an office in Lagos, to agree to be the administrative agency for the programme and also to play a major role in the selection process. Thus began the pilot programme, the Nigerian-American Scholarship Program, which selected and sent some 24 students to 24 participating

⁸ See T. Mboya's *Freedom and after* (London, Deutsch, 1963), ch. 7; see also his article, 'African higher education: A challenge to America', *Atlantic Monthly* (1961), CCVIII, 23-6.

⁹ V. McKay, *Africa in World Politics* (New York, Harper and Row, 1963), 394.

¹⁰ The Joseph P. Kennedy Foundation contributed US\$100,000.

¹¹ Ashby, *Universities: British, Indian and African*, 266.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ For details of this programme, see African American Institute, *A Report on the African Scholarship Program of American Universities 1960-70* (New York, The Institute, 1971), 32-3.

universities and colleges.¹⁴

The programme was a success and its success led to the establishment of such AID scholarship programmes as the African Scholarship Programme of American Universities (ASPAU) in 1960, the African Graduate Fellowship Program (AFGRAD) in 1963 and the Inter-African Universities Program (INTERAF) in 1967. These programmes were administered under contract for AID by the African American Institute (AAI).

THE AID PROGRAMMES

1. The African Scholarship Program of American Universities (ASPAU)

The success of the pilot Nigerian-American programme provided enough incentive to its American sponsors to expand the scholarship programme to include other sub-Saharan African nations. The conditions of manpower shortage which had led to the Kenyan student airlifts and the Nigerian-American programme were present in these other countries, too. Thus ASPAU was

developed in response to the needs of the newly independent African governments for massive infusion of trained manpower since they were not in a position to educate their own manpower in either the range of fields or in the volume required to fill local government and business positions.¹⁵

The programme made available to many other African countries the institutional resources of the American universities and colleges.

The same success formula which had worked in the Nigerian-American programme was applied. An ASPAU Report (1960-70) referred to 'the successful partnership of American universities and colleges, the African governments, the American foundations, the African American Institute and the United States Government'.¹⁶ The number of participating universities and colleges rose to 234 in ten years, each being responsible for the tuition scholarships and fees for each student for the duration of his/her baccalaureate studies. Thirty-three African governments participated on the bi-national selection committees and paid the travel costs of each student. Foundations such as the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, and the New World Foundation provided some of the financial support for the programme.¹⁷ But most

¹⁴ The institutions included the eight Ivy League schools and the women's colleges in the east known as the 'Heavenly Seven'.

¹⁵ Agency for International Development, *Evaluation of ASPAU, AFGRAD, and INTERAF: Impact of Regional Scholarship Programs on Manpower Needs in Africa. Report Prepared for the Agency for International Development by Practical Concepts, Inc.* (Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973), Section I.

¹⁶ African American Institute, *A Report on the African Scholarship Program of American Universities 1960-70*, 7.

¹⁷ Between 1960 and 1967, they contributed some US\$160,000. See also African American Institute, *A Report on the African Scholarship Program of American Universities 1960-70*, 33.

significant was the role played by the AAI in negotiating a contract with the International Co-operation Administration (ICA) later to be known as the Agency for International Development (AID), which marked the first instance of the sponsoring of an African scholarship programme by a United States Government agency.

Inspired by the success of the Nigerian-American programme the AAI found it necessary to negotiate a contract with the ICA for support of the scholarship programmes for African undergraduates. The resultant agreement made the AAI the contractor, with the ICA in the middle between the participating universities and colleges represented by the ASPAU steering committee and the Federal Government, and responsible to the United States Government. The initial contract,¹⁸ signed in 1961 between the ICA and AAI for the support of ASPAU, was authorized under the Mutual Security Act of 1954; later contracts came under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961.

Thus while the participating universities and colleges provided tuition scholarships, AID provided for student support and administrative costs.

Student selection and placement As in the Nigerian-American programme, ASPAU screened students carefully. All applicants were holders of either the Cambridge School Certificate (Division 1 or a high Division 2), the Cambridge Higher School Certificate, or the University of London Certificate at Ordinary or Advanced Levels. It is needless to point out that the competition was great. Large numbers of students—even those who qualified to enter the local universities—submitted their applications. In addition to meeting the minimum requirement, the candidates had to take tests specially designed for the programme by the Educational Testing Service.¹⁹ To ensure that the programme was taking the best students, the candidates also had to appear before a bi-national committee for interview. As one of the officials pointed out to this writer, ASPAU aimed at getting at the 'cream' of the African student population. This statement is also supported by the fact that the participating universities and colleges understood their responsibility as being that of educating carefully selected individuals.²⁰ The

¹⁸ The contract read, in part: 'It is the intent of the program that students will be selected primarily in terms of the most urgent needs for manpower for the balanced and integrated economic and social development of the cooperating countries . . . the contractor shall make every effort to develop between the cooperating countries and students an understanding of the requirements of manpower utilization and shall in consultation with ASPAU develop procedures whereby the students are encouraged to return to the cooperating countries or positions in the governments of the cooperating countries or positions for which there is the most urgent demand for such manpower utilization. It is expected that a student will leave the U.S. promptly after the completion of the student's total programme' (cited in African American Institute, *A Report on the African Scholarship Program of American Universities 1960-70*, 7).

¹⁹ K. T. Kinhead, 'Something to take back home', *The New Yorker* (23 May 1964), 51-86.

²⁰ African American Institute, *A Report on the African Scholarship Program of American Universities 1960-70*, 7.

selection was based largely on individual interests rather than on manpower needs of the recipient's country²¹ (see Table I).

Upon selection, the scholar recipients were placed in one of the member institutions. A number of considerations were taken into account in placement and these included:

- a) The student's level of ability.
- b) The academic demands of the institutions to which his credentials were referred.
- c) The availability of the course he wished to follow.
- d) The quality of the institution's concern for African students.²²

En route to their universities and colleges, the students spent some time in an orientation programme conducted by the Experiment in International Living in Vermont which provided a home-stay with an American family for each student. The programme generally entailed an introduction to the American way of life.

Repatriation The original ASPAU contract indicated that the graduating students would be expected to return to their home countries, but this was never

Table I
FIELDS OF STUDY OF ASPAU STUDENTS
1960-70

<i>Fields of Study</i>	<i>No. of Students</i>
Agriculture and Land Resources	83
Business, Public Administration and Economics	198
Education and Teaching	126
Engineering and Technical	523
Liberal Arts and Social Sciences	234
Medicine, Paramedical and Related Fields	131
Sciences	287
Urban Studies	12
TOTAL	<u>1 594</u>

Source: African American Institute, *A Report on the African Scholarship Program of American Universities 1960-70* (New York, The Institute, 1971).

²¹ Ibid. See also Agency for International Development, *Evaluation of ASPAU, AFGRAD, and INTERAF: Impact of Regional Scholarship Programs on Manpower Needs in Africa*, Section I.

²² Statement by Richard Moll, Executive Director, ASPAU, quoted in U.S. Congress, *African Students and Study Programs in the United States*, 56.

enforced, as shown by the 36 per cent repatriation rate. Most students stayed on to pursue graduate studies and some of them were awarded African Graduate Fellowships.

2. The African Graduate Fellowship Program (AFGRAD)

Buoyed by the initial success of ASPAU, the AAI went on to negotiate a contract with AID for a graduate programme, the African Graduate Fellowship Program, which began in 1963. The programme was designed to provide graduate and professional training for African candidates recommended by their governments, for study in fields related to the primary manpower needs of their countries, and for whom no training facilities existed in Africa.²³ According to the AAI Report on AFGRAD, the programme was a means of accomplishing several priority tasks: university staff development; the upgrading of ministerial professional staff at the highest levels of competence and training; development of staff for government-sponsored research organizations.²⁴ (See Table II.)

AFGRAD operated in much the same way as ASPAU: the AAI played an active role in the selection of candidates; the participating universities and colleges paid for tuition; the 24 African governments paid travel costs; AID paid for student support and administrative costs of the programme.²⁵

Repatriation AFGRAD was set up as a professional and graduate training programme. It was understood that those who came to the United States would return to Africa on completion of their set courses. However, as of June 1975 only 61.14 per cent of the recipients had returned to Africa. Those who chose not to go back decided to pursue further studies.

3. The Inter-African Universities Scholarship Program (INTERAF)

The years 1960–7 witnessed a dramatic increase in the number of African universities, from fewer than 10 in 1960 to more than 30 in 1967. This increase inevitably improved the capacity of these universities to educate and train their own manpower. This contributed to the shift in the focus of scholarship programmes, at least at the undergraduate level. There was a shift towards training African students in Africa rather than in the United States.

In response to the increased capacity of the African universities, AID in its African Higher Education Program (AHEP) awarded two contracts to promote the new emphasis on educational development in Africa. The first contract was awarded to the Overseas Liaison Committee to identify and assist pivotal

²³ African American Institute, *Annual Report of the Graduate Fellowship Program 1974–75* (New York, The Institute, 1975), I.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Most of the American universities and colleges which participated in ASPAU also participated in AFGRAD.

Table II
FIELDS OF STUDY OF AFRAGRAD FELLOWS
 1963-75

<i>Fields of Study</i>	<i>No. of Students</i>
Economics and Business Administration	181
Sciences	159
Engineering	154
Agriculture	110
Education	86
Administrative Professions	68
Mathematics, Statistics and Computer Science	65
Medicine and Dentistry	45
Paramedical Fields and Public Health	38
Humanities and Social Services	40
Geography, Demography and Natural Resources	31
Linguistics and English as a Second Language	28
Urban and Regional Planning, Architecture	25
Law	13
Library Science	7
TOTAL	1 050

Source: African American Institute, *Annual Report of the African Graduate Fellowship Program 1974-75* (New York, The Institute, 1975).

development programmes of undergraduate studies within the African universities which could serve multi-country needs.²⁶ The second was awarded to AAI to develop a scholarship programme for African students to attend African universities.²⁷ This led to the establishment of the Inter-African Universities Scholarship Program in 1967.

The task of the AAI in AID's African Higher Education Program was 'to initiate, administer and then take over to the Africans a systematic mechanism for placing African students in development fields in African universities. A proviso for support under this particular programme is that the African student be applying for admission to an African university outside his home country assuming the field of study is not available to him at home'.²⁸

²⁶ R.B. Smith, 'The role of foreign assistance to African educational development', *Pan African Journal* (1968), I, 1, 15.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 14-15.

Student selection and placement The selection process for INTERAF involved an initial formal nomination to the AAI and later to the AAU,²⁹ by the African governments, of qualified candidates, so facilitating their placement in the African universities.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE AID SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMMES

There were some unique historical circumstances which led to the creation of each of the scholarship programmes. ASPAU (1960) and AFGRAD (1963) were established in response to the need for trained manpower because the training facilities in Africa at the time were either non-existent or inadequate. INTERAF (1967) reflected a shift in focus from training students abroad to training them in the African universities. That these programmes helped in increasing the numbers of university-trained individuals is uncontested. But there are some critical points that need to be made.

First, because of the competitive nature of the programmes, the emphasis was on getting the 'cream' of the African student population. The selection process paid off, as is indicated by the high success (graduating) rates—91 per cent in ASPAU, 92 per cent in AFGRAD and 87 per cent in INTERAF. But when such figures are accompanied by such low repatriation rates as 36 per cent in ASPAU and 61.14 per cent in AFGRAD, it is clear that the programmes had serious limitations. AID failed to enforce repatriation of some students in ASPAU and AFGRAD. Students who had graduated stayed for further studies or sought employment.

The other problem with these programmes concerned what they were to achieve. It was the declared aim of AID to produce trained manpower, that is, students trained in specific fields related to African national development. But we have noted that these programmes were academically rather than vocationally orientated. The participating universities and colleges viewed their mission as that of preparing individuals for responsibility and not that of training personnel for national development. The scholarship recipients attended these colleges for individual satisfaction rather than in the interests of national development.³⁰ Again, the repatriation rates substantiate this point.

Of the three programmes, INTERAF was perhaps the best for several reasons. First, as stated earlier, there was no problem over repatriation as students were educated in their own countries. Second, it kept the African students in touch with their own culture. A major criticism of ASPAU and AFGRAD is that the students in these programmes were the 'cream', who came to study in the United

²⁹The Association of African Universities later took over the contract from AAI. See *Organizational Capacity of the Association of African Universities. Reports Prepared for the Agency for International Development by Practical Concepts, Inc.* (Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973).

³⁰For a full discussion of this point, see *Agency for International Development, Evaluation of ASPAU, AFGRAD and INTERAF*, Section 1.

States for extended periods of time away from their own culture, leading inevitably to problems of cultural alienation when, or rather if, they returned to their own countries.

At the end of this article I will relate these problems to the ideology of American educational aid. But I will first discuss a different kind of scholarship programme, sponsored by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the Department of State, the Southern African Scholarship Program (SASP) designed for African students from the non-independent states in Southern Africa. The uniqueness of this programme lay in its clearly stated objectives, unlike the AID scholarship programmes whose objectives were couched in developmental terms.

THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM (SASP)³¹

Compared to ASPAU, AFGRAD and INTERAF, the Southern African Scholarship Program of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs was, perhaps, the most politically motivated programme. It was created in 1961, at about the same time that ASPAU came into being. Whereas ASPAU was directed towards those African nations on the verge of political independence, SASP was created to serve African students, mostly refugees, from the White-ruled nations of Southern Africa. It was

initiated by the Department of State as part of the Fulbright-Hays Educational Exchange Program in the belief that a sweep of independence would soon arrive in Southern Africa. It was felt that the white minority governments of South Africa, South West Africa (now designated Namibia by the United Nations), Angola, Mozambique and Rhodesia as well as the then British colonial governments in Southern Africa, would within a decade certainly accede to or be forced to implement majority rule. Consequently, SASP was begun as an urgent effort to provide educational training to students, primarily from those countries, who would be initially needed for majority rule, self government and development.³²

The features which make this programme unique are not so much those which deal with the provision of trained African manpower, as in ASPAU, but the

³¹ For details, see U.S. Congress, *African Students and Study Programs*. See also J.W. Jacqz, *Refugee Students from Southern Africa. Report to the African American Institute* (New York, The Institute, 1967); B.F. Baron, 'Southern African student exiles in the United States', *Journal of Modern African Studies* (1972), X, 1, 73-91; U.S. Congress: Senate Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee to Investigate Problems Connected with Refugees and Escapees, *African Refugee Problems. Hearings before Subcommittee to Investigate Problems Connected with Refugees and Escapees of U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary, 88th Congress* (Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965); S.D. Kletzien, *A Current Assessment of the Southern African Scholarship Program, Report Submitted to the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State* (Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972); F.M. Madzongwe, 'The Southern African Student Program, 1961-71: An Analysis of a Program to Train Leaders for Southern Africa' (Worcester MA, Clark Univ., unpubl. Ed.D. thesis, 1973).

³² Kletzien, *A Current Assessment of the Southern African Student Program*, 1.

reasons for its creation, which were predominantly political. To begin with, unlike ASPAU, which was sponsored by AID, SASP was sponsored by the Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, with the support of such top government officials as Ambassador Averill Harriman and Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, G. Mennen Williams.

Two political factors were instrumental in the creation of SASP. First, owing to political oppression and denial of educational opportunities in their own countries, thousands of young Africans sought refuge in such neighbouring countries as Zambia and Tanzania. Second, some of those Africans who had fled for political reasons and who were active members of liberation movements were searching for opportunities for military training abroad. These two factors set the stage for the Southern African version of the 'scholarship invasion'.

Here were thousands of young Africans in search of either educational or military training, anywhere abroad. Indeed, both Western and non-Western powers found this a good opportunity to extend their influence into those nations which, according to their assessment, were bound to gain majority rule in a decade or so. Such powers as the Soviet Union offered scholarships for both academic and military training. And the United States Government recognized that these scholarship programmes of the non-Western powers posed a real threat to the American national interest,³³ and also that a sizeable number of the members of African liberation movements were receiving offers of military training from countries with which she did not enjoy cordial trade and diplomatic relations.³⁴ Thus it can be asserted that the American offer of assistance to the African refugees was more in response to the Communist interest in Southern Africa than to genuine African problems in the area. This assertion can be substantiated by examining statements by some government officials.

At a Senate sub-committee hearing on African Refugee Problems in 1965, G. Mennen Williams pointed out that more than 700 refugees (from Southern African countries) had gone to Communist countries for study and training. In the same hearing he stated that since the creation of SASP, for every three refugees that go to Communist countries, one goes to the West. He saw SASP as 'an attractive alternative to study in Communist countries' designed to prepare participants to make a responsible and constructive contribution to the development of Africa, and to provide intelligent and democratic leadership for the the people.³⁵

The political nature of the programme becomes more pronounced when one notes the American dual role of supporting and training young Africans for the eventual take-over of nations under White rule on one hand and indirectly supporting the colonialist activities of fellow NATO members such as Portugal and

³³ M. McAnnaly, 'The plight of student exiles in the U.S.A.', *Africa Today* (1970), XVII, iii, 4. It is interesting to note that the U.S. Government provided funds through AAI to build two schools for refugees in Zambia and Tanzania.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Quoted in U.S. Congress, *African Refugee Problems*, 34.

Britain, and promoting U.S. investment in South Africa and Rhodesia (as it then was) on the other. Thus it can also be argued that SASP was created to ensure that the American interests in Southern Africa would remain in 'responsible hands' even after the 'departure' of White rule.

Student selection The selection procedure for the SASP is not very clear from the records that are available.³⁶ All we know is that whereas in ASPAU bi-national committees were set up to select students, the selection of SASP candidates was conducted by officers of the U.S. Embassies or Consulates, in the countries of refuge of candidates, through the use of aptitude tests. Academic qualifications were not a major requirement, though most of the applicants from South Africa and Rhodesia had completed their high school education.³⁷ Some of the students from the Portuguese colonies had hardly completed their high school education.

Among the selection criteria were: the student's intellectual maturity, his

Table III

COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN OF SASP PARTICIPANTS
1961-72

<i>Country</i>	<i>No. of Students</i>
Rhodesia	176
South Africa	93
Moçambique	68
Angola	62
Namibia	40
Botswana	40
Lesotho	
Swaziland	
* Other	40
TOTAL	519

*from Equatorial Guinea 8, Zambia 7, Sudan 7, Tanzania 5, Somalia 4, Malawi 3, Ghana 2, and 1 each from Kenya, Rwanda-Burundi and Guinea-Bissau.

Source: S.D. Kletzien, *A Current Assessment of the Southern African Scholarship Program. Report Submitted to the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State* (Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972), 2.

³⁶ It is interesting to note the deletion of some remarks made by the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, G. Mennen Williams, at the hearings on *African Refugee Problems* concerning the selection procedures of SASP students, on security grounds. This raises suspicion about the political nature of the programme.

³⁷ Kletzien, *A Current Assessment of the Southern African Student Program*, 3.

apparent ability to benefit from further study, his character, his motivation to serve his country in a responsible manner, his psychological stability and especially his leadership potential.³⁸ Table III shows the numbers of SASP students by country, the largest number of students coming from Rhodesia and South Africa.

Student orientation and placement Upon selection, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs through a contract with AAI assumed responsibility for all costs, for student travel from Africa to the United States, for programme administration and for student support.

Nearly all SASP students were sent to one of the two Department of State-sponsored African Student Centers, located at the University of Rochester and Lincoln University, for orientation. The role of the Centers was to receive scholarship students at any time of the year and to prepare them for placement in regular academic programmes at American universities and colleges. Among the services provided by the centres were:

- a) Testing upon arrival.
- b) Intensive English-language training, especially for students from Portuguese colonies.
- c) Special lectures and orientation programmes concerning politics, the educational system and social habits in the United States.
- d) Remedial course-work to fill gaps in the students' secondary school backgrounds (other students started taking regular courses).
- e) Periodic evaluation of the students' progress, the reporting of this progress to the Department of State and the assisting of the AAI in its efforts to place qualified students in planned degree programmes.³⁹

These students stayed at the centres for a period ranging from one semester to four semesters after which time they were placed in other universities.

Programmes of study As in ASPAU, SASP pursued any field of study which suited the individual interests of students. Most of the students pursued majors in the humanities and social sciences. But it would be naïve to suggest that SASP should have pursued fields in the sciences because the selection process was based more on political considerations than on academic ability or national development considerations.

³⁸ U.S. Congress, *African Students and Study Programs in the United States*, 146.

³⁹ A. Assum, 'A Memo to African Center Students' (Rochester MN, Univ. of Rochester, mimeo, 1966).

Repatriation I have noted that SASP was created to prepare for the eventual take-over of governments in Southern Africa by the African majority, within the decade of the 1960s. The fact that this did not happen as anticipated, and the fact that most of these students were refugees (except for some Rhodesian students and those from the former British High Commission territories), presented problems not only to the students themselves, but also to the AAI and the Department of State. These students could either choose to stay in the United States or go to some other African country. It was often difficult to go to other African countries, since those countries had their own graduates seeking employment. Besides, most SASP students lacked the critically needed skills. To illustrate the magnitude of this problem, by the end of 1968 over one-third of the 188 students who had completed their courses had returned to Africa, and subsequently only 16 per cent of some 200 students who completed their studies after 1968 had returned to Africa.⁴⁰ By 1972 only 25 per cent (mostly Rhodesians) had returned home. Thus a large percentage of SASP students remained in the United States, either pursuing further studies or seeking permanent residence status.

CRITICAL DISCUSSION OF SASP

A programme created in response to the Communist scholarship programmes for Southern Africans, SASP, unlike the AID programmes, revealed the double sharp-edged American policy on Southern Africa. While on one hand expressing the need to prepare for 'impending majority rule' in the area, the United States failed to encourage the minority regimes in the area to concede to African rule. This raises the question of why the programme was created at all. Perhaps it was created to prepare manpower (as a centre in the 'periphery')⁴¹ which would guarantee and safeguard the American national interests in the area in the event that African rule became a reality.

I have noted the kinds of students who were in the programme. Largely self-selected, and having left their home countries because of political oppression or lack of educational opportunities, they desired to achieve for their own countries what those countries to the north had achieved for themselves, namely, national independence. But Baron points out that the experiences of these students overseas served more to pacify them than to encourage them to pursue their former objective of liberating their own countries:

most scholarships designed to educate Southern Africans abroad may have indirectly served to weaken the nationalist movement . . . By drawing off some of the best-educated and most ambitious of this middle

⁴⁰ Kletzien, *A Current Assessment of the Southern African Student Program*, 3, 8.

⁴¹ For a fuller discussion of the centre-periphery framework, see J. Galtung, 'A structural theory of imperialism', *The African Review* (1972), I, iv, 92-138; N. T. Chideya, 'African higher education and academic neocolonialism', in F. M. Orkin and S. E. Welz (eds), *Society in Southern Africa 1975-78* (Johannesburg, Association for Sociology in Southern Africa, 1979), 1-20.

class and by providing them with alternative routes to the reduction of their frustrations and grievances, foreign educational programmes may have helped perpetuate the *status quo* in Southern Africa. For an individual to become a committed participant in radical or revolutionary politics, he must perceive that such a course is the most likely to fulfil his most salient needs. If these can be satisfied by non-political activities, which offer similar rewards at considerably less risk, these quieter alternatives are likely to be chosen.⁴²

That the programme provided a good opportunity for the Southern Africans to get a college education is a fact. But our concern here is that it also effectively influenced them in a direction which weakened their earlier desires to work for the liberation of their respective countries, in which case it may be asserted that SASP was a neo-colonial tool.

CONCLUSION

The American contribution to African higher education through the sponsorship of scholarship programmes was significant in several ways. The programmes were created in the 1960s when the existing institutions in Africa were not in a position to train urgently needed skilled manpower in numbers sufficient to replace expatriates and to realize the declared goals of rapid development. The university colleges which were created by the colonial powers did not have the capacity or the facilities to meet the demands for manpower created by the newly acquired political independence. Indeed, they were also limited by the elitist bias built into their curriculum. Thus, by sponsoring the studies of African students in the United States, the American Government contributed to the solution of the problem of lack of skilled manpower. Such programmes placed the African nations in a comparatively better position to have their manpower trained elsewhere in relatively large numbers. Additionally, these scholarship recipients were exposed to a system of higher education which was utility-orientated, a system which took the view that higher education should serve the needs of society. They attended a wide variety of universities and colleges including those of the Ivy League, some major state universities and some lesser-known colleges. And they took up studies in a wide variety of areas including the applied sciences and business administration. Such an exposure to scientific studies and practices in a technologically advanced nation constituted a positive American contribution. But such a contribution was clouded by the fact that the educational aid was part of a foreign aid strategy aimed at international manipulation.

I have portrayed the scholarship programmes which began in the early 1960s as instruments of the Cold War, in which the United States and the Soviet Union vied for influence on the African continent. This competition for influence was not

⁴² Baron, 'Southern African student exiles in the United States', 91.

limited only to those countries which were about to gain independence but was extended to include the White-ruled countries of Southern Africa.

The United States created a variety of programmes, including nearly 5,000 students at a cost of US\$48.3 million. This contribution is significant given the fact that the ASPAU, AFGRAD and SASP programmes entailed bringing students to the United States. Studying abroad did not only involve training in substantive skills, but also involved the inculcation of new values and attitudes and the intellectual socialization of the scholarship recipients. Through extended stays abroad, these students were inevitably affected by the environment in which they spent this time. Indeed, it was understood by the creators of these programmes that this would happen, that the African students who were brought to the United States would come to understand and appreciate the American way of life and would, on returning to their home countries, help counteract whatever Communist influences there were. That, in essence, was part of the ideology of American educational aid.

The scholarship programmes raised another problem, that of repatriation. Even if we were to accept the proclaimed objective of providing skilled manpower to the new nations of Africa, such repatriation rates as 36 per cent for ASPAU, 64 per cent for AFGRAD and 25 per cent for SASP raise the question of why the sponsors could not have required the immediate return of those African scholarship recipients who had completed their studies. Such a step would indeed have been consistent with the goal of providing skilled manpower.