

James Campbell Learning Circle

Presented by the Lowcountry Action Committee
and College of Charleston Students for a Democratic Society

Why We Are Reading [Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism](#) by Kwame Nkrumah

This summer we will gather to honor the life and legacy of [James E. Campbell](#), educator, mentor, and freedom fighter, by taking him up on his urgent call to read *Neo-colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* by Kwame Nkrumah. We believe Brother Campbell has called on us to embrace this as a living text with deep implications for our current day and for the future of our people.

Kwame Nkrumah's *Neo-colonialism* is a critique of African dependency and a timely warning that we must name and understand the global systems that continue to structure Black life. Though published in 1965 and focused largely on Africa, the forces it identifies like foreign capital, military aid as control, the disunity of colonized peoples, and the hollowing out of sovereignty are not distant from the realities of Black life in the United States. Nowhere is this more apparent than in a place like Charleston, a city shaped by the afterlives of slavery, capitalism, and empire.

While we can never know the full extent of his motivations, we can rest assured that Brother Campbell did not assemble the [reading list](#) this text was selected from for academic reflection alone. As a letter to his family and friends shows, he saw these texts as part of a continuum. We imagine that Brother Campbell believed that to study a text like *Neo-colonialism* is to trace the arc from the commodification of African labor to the current political and economic orders that impact Black life across the diaspora. Nkrumah's work sits on the list alongside W. E. B. DuBois, Eric Williams, Anna Rochester, and the case studies of Basil Davidson and Franz Fanon not just because of shared content, but because each of these texts offers tools for decoding our conditions and some advice for changing them.

Therefore, reading this together is not a passive act. It is not just about observing how Africa was shaped by external forces. It is about analyzing how those same forces remain active in our communities today via schools, housing, labor, and culture. It is about linking Charleston to the Congo, North Charleston to Nigeria, and understanding that the struggle for liberation has never respected national borders.

Nkrumah warns us that the danger of neo-colonialism is that it gives the illusion of independence while maintaining dependency. Reading this book together is a refusal of that illusion. It is an opportunity to sharpen our collective analysis by asking: What forces govern our communities today? What are the mechanisms of our exploitation? And most importantly, what tools of resistance are still available to us?

Join us in celebration of the life of Brother Campbell by studying this and discussing it together on July 31 at the Avery Research Center (hybrid option will be available).

"Life and living is a constant of living, study(learning), living, study (learning), living, study(learning), ad infinitum . . . a dialectical process!" — James E. Campbell

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Weekly Reading Schedule

Use this reading schedule and guiding questions below to prepare for the book discussion on July 31st. We recommend playing the audio book while following along and taking notes on the text. Both the PDF of the text and link to the audio book are linked below.

Link to PDF of Text - [Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism](#)

Link to Audio Book - [Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism](#)

<u>Week</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Assigned Reading</u>	<u>Guiding Question</u>
1	June 24 – June 30	Introduction - <i>Africa's Resources</i>	What is Nkrumah's definition of neo-colonialism, and how does he contrast it with classical colonialism?
2	July 1 – July 7	<i>Obstacles to Economic Progress - Imperialist Finance</i>	How did European powers deliberately engineer Africa's economic fragmentation, and what legacy remains?
3	July 8 – July 14	<i>Monopoly Capitalism and the American Dollar - The Truth Behind the Headlines</i>	How does Nkrumah describe U.S. economic dominance and its global implications for developing nations?
4	July 15 – July 21	<i>Primary Resources and Foreign Interests - The Oppenheimer Empire - Foreign Investment in South African Mining</i>	How do the case studies of Southern Africa illustrate the extractive logic of neo-colonialism?
5	July 22 – July 28	<i>Mining and Investment Companies</i> (Finance, Diamond, Coal, Copper, Gold, etc.) - <i>Monetary Zones and Foreign Banks</i>	What patterns emerge across these industries, and how do multinational interests maintain control?
6	July 29 – July 30	<i>The Mechanisms of Neo-Colonialism - Conclusion</i>	What solutions does Nkrumah propose for resisting neo-colonialism, and how might they apply today?