

Cambridge Elements

Elements in Publishing and Book Culture
edited by
Samantha Rayner
University College London

AFRICAN LITERATURE AND THE CIA

Networks of Authorship and Publishing

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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-72554-5 — African Literature and the CIA
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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India
79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

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www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108725545

DOI: 10.1017/9781108663229

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First published 2020

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-108-72554-5 Paperback

ISSN 2514-8524 (online)

ISSN 2514-8516 (print)

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First published online: December 2020

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ABSTRACT: During the period of decolonisation in Africa, the CIA covertly subsidised a number of African authors, editors and publishers as part of its anti-communist propaganda strategy. Managed by two front organisations, the Congress of Cultural Freedom and the Farfield Foundation, its Africa programme stretched across the continent. This Element unravels the hidden networks and associations underpinning African literary publishing in the 1960s; it evaluates the success of the CIA in secretly infiltrating and influencing African literary magazines and publishing firms, and examines the extent to which new circuits of cultural and literary power emerged. Based on new archival evidence relating to the Transcription Centre, *The Classic* and *The New African*, it includes case studies of Wole Soyinka, Nat Nakasa and Bessie Head, which assess how the authors' careers were affected by these transnational networks and also reveal how they challenged, subverted, and resisted external influence and control.

KEYWORDS: CIA, African literature, cultural cold war, Congress for Cultural Freedom, literary publishing, authorship, Wole Soyinka, Nat Nakasa, Bessie Head

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ISBNs: 9781108725545 (PB), 9781108663229 (OC)

ISSNs: 2514-8524 (online), 2514-8516 (print)

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