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# **KWAME NKRUMAH**

VISION AND TRAGEDY

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# KWAME NKRUMAH

VISION AND TRAGEDY

**David Rooney**



Sub-Saharan Publishers, Ghana

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Accra, GHA: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2007. p 4.  
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This edition first published in Ghana, 2007 by  
SUB-SAHARAN PUBLISHERS  
P.O. BOX LG 358,  
LEGON, ACCRA, GHANA  
saharan@africaonline.com.gh

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First Published as *Kwame Nkrumah: The Political Kingdom in  
the Third World* by I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd

ISBN 978-9988-647-60-5

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*Layout by Anne Yayra Sakyi*  
*Cover design by Kwabena Agyepong*

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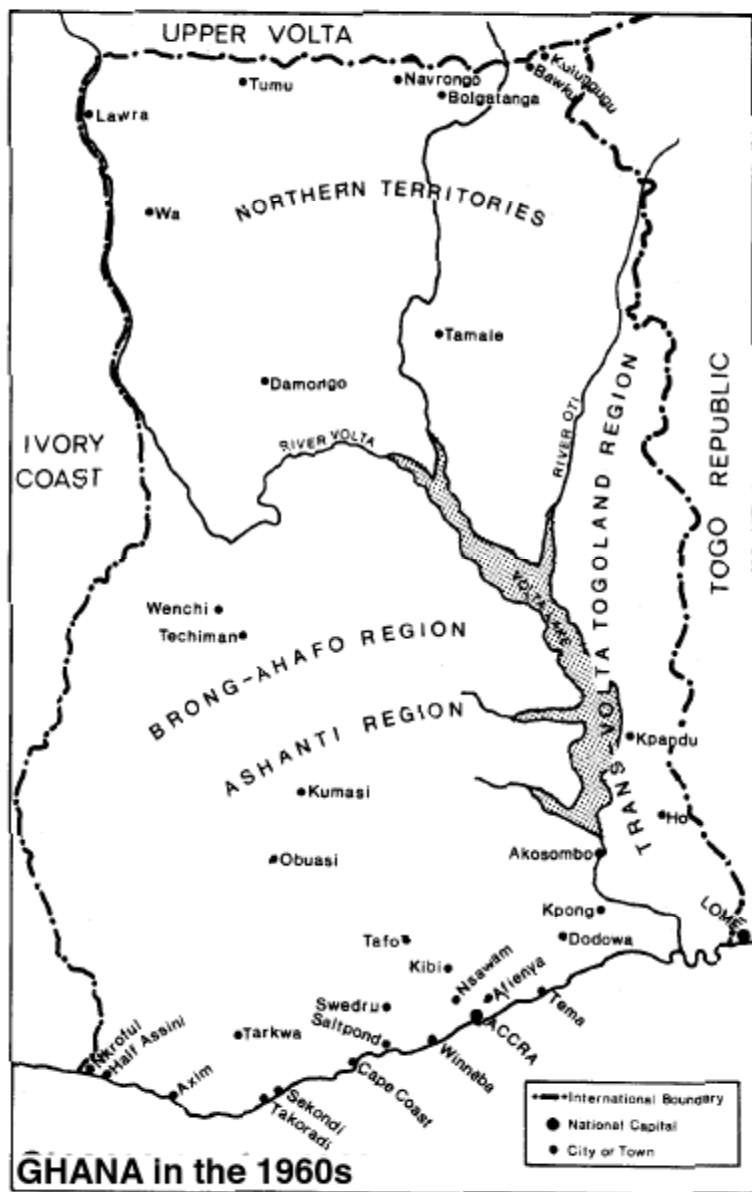
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## PREFACE

DURING THE RESEARCH FOR THIS BOOK I have been very conscious of the debt I owe to people I have interviewed, to librarians and archivists, and to those authors and scholars upon whose work I have drawn. I wish to express my gratitude to everyone who has helped in these different ways, and, firstly, to Lady Arden-Clarke for her permission to use the Arden-Clarke Papers. I am grateful, too, to Dr. Janet Seeley and the staff of the African Studies Centre, Cambridge, and to the staff of Rhodes House and of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies at Oxford. I should also like to thank the following distinguished people who either knew Nkrumah or were able to provide valuable information and comment: Professor Anthony Low and Dr. A.H.M. Kirk-Green for their help and encouragement: the Rev. Colin Russell, Erica Powell, Gorkeh Nkrumah (Kwame Nkrumah's son), David Williams (formerly editor of *West Africa*), Dr Davidson Nicol, Sir Robert Jackson and Franklin Williams. In Ghana, the staff of the National Archives in Accra, Jimmy and Rachel Phillips and their family, Jimmy Moxon, Komla Gbedemah, Kojo Botsio, Sir William Ofori Atta, Joe Appiah, Jimmy Aggrey-Orleans, Professor Sam Sey, Alhaji Alhassan (Tamale), Dr. A. Seini and M. Mahama of NORRIP.

In the United States, I had the privilege of working in the John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Massachusetts and in the L.B. Johnson Library in Austin, Texas. I wish to express my appreciation of the

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help provided by their staff. Also I express my sincere gratitude to William P. Mahoney and his family in Phoenix, Arizona for their hospitality and their helpful comments on the life and times of Kwame Nkrumah.

I am particularly grateful to the Leverhulme Trust which awarded me a Leverhulme Research Fellowship to enable me to carry out research in Britain, in Ghana and in the USA, I owe a deep debt of gratitude to my wife Muriel not only for her unfailing support but also for her supreme effort in mastering the wretched word-processor.

Kwame Nkrumah was a brilliant and highly controversial figure, who so nearly straddled the East-West divide, who dreamed in vain of a United Africa, and who, at the last, was loved and hated, worshipped and derided, misunderstood and distrusted. I have attempted to give a fair and balanced assessment of his life and achievement. In doing so, I have tried to follow the dictum of Nkrumah's idol, John F. Kennedy, who said 'The highest duty of the writer is to remain true to himself and let the chips fall where they may'.

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Clare Hall  
Cambridge 1988

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## INTRODUCTION

AT THE TIME WHEN KWAME NKRUMAH and the Convention People's Party (CPP) secured Ghana's independence, Ghana enjoyed the goodwill and support of countries all over the world. Nine years later, in February 1996, Nkrumah was ousted in a military coup, the CPP disintegrated overnight, and there followed a series of military regimes together with two ineffective civilian administrations. Throughout much of this time Nkrumah and his rule were ridiculed and derided. In the 1980s, however, the perspective is shifting. This book sets out to show how Nkrumah's hopes and dreams for Ghana and for Africa are once again coming to be seen as relevant to Africa's problem.

The achievement of Ghana's independence in 1957 gave hope to the leaders of independence movements all over Africa and inspiration to the civil rights leaders in the United States as illustrated by the enthusiastic reception Nkrumah received from black communities during his visits to America and by his correspondence with Martin Luther King until his assassination in 1968. In the decade after 1957, while many African countries moved towards their own independence, Kwame Nkrumah, almost alone among African leaders, saw the continent's future in a global perspective. What he knew of Africa reinforced the Marxist analysis he had absorbed during his years at Lincoln University, Pennsylvania. He envisaged a united and self-sufficient Africa as the ultimate objective of all the independence struggles and to achieve this aim he shaped a new philosophy – Nkrumaism

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or Scientific Socialism – relevant first to Ghana and secondly to Africa.

From a predominantly Marxist standpoint, he saw the power of the Western industrial countries and their multinational companies as the main threat to the economic prosperity of the Third World countries then moving towards independence. He therefore produced an ideology in which the government would take over the means of production and distribution, and use the expected profits to provide for further industrial and social development. This theory was rapidly demolished when the government enterprises produced no profits and instead became an endless drain on Ghana's revenues. In the same way, Nkrumah's zeal for African unity led him at every important stage in his career – at the creation of the Convention People's Party in 1949, at Ghana's independence in 1957, and at the establishment of the Republic of Ghana in 1960 – to insist that Ghana would be ready to surrender her sovereignty in the interest of African unity. But his passionate Pan African quest failed because it alienated other African leaders who saw it, wrongly, in terms of Nkrumah's own personal ambition.

Like his friend Martin Luther King, Kwame Nkrumah also had a dream - of a united Africa, strong enough to prevent petty military dictatorship and able to resist the multinationals and other neocolonialist forces and to create prosperity for all its peoples. Through the Volta River Project, he set out to make Ghana the nucleus of an industrial base for the whole of Africa, and to save the continent from the debt-creating attentions of the capitalist world. In pursuit of these great ideals, encapsulated in his Scientific Socialism, he, perhaps naively, looked for the support of both the capitalist and the communist worlds. In 1961, both Kennedy and Khrushchev invested heavily in Ghana's economy and success seemed to be almost within his grasp.

When the history of twentieth-century Africa comes to

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be written, Nkrumah will be seen as a man of vision whose achievements were undermined by the inadequacy of his administration. For the countries of Africa he tried to be both Marx and Lenin. He produced the new ideology and attempted to implement it – a task too big for any one man. His hopes of a united Africa contrast dramatically with his failure to curb corruption and to establish a stable regime in Ghana, and the euphoria which greeted his overthrow in 1966.

Nkrumah saw all the visions, dreamt all the dreams, and made all the mistakes. These mistakes cost Ghana dear, but the mistakes he made are, in their way, as valuable as his vision to an Africa still grappling with problems of poverty, exploitation and debt. Learning from his mistakes could still save Africa's leaders from futures blunders, while the inspiration of his idealism still impels them towards the elusive goal of a prosperous and united Africa.

Confidential documents not previously available have now made possible a more realistic, and at the same time sympathetic, portrait of Kwame Nkrumah, by any standards one of Africa's most controversial characters. The new material includes the Arden-Clarke papers which cover in detail the relationship between the last British Governor of the Gold Coast and Nkrumah, the man whom he released from prison and, on the same day, invited to form a government. These papers illustrate every step in the crucial handover of political power in Britain's first independent African colony. Another major source of new material comes from the Presidential Libraries of John F. Kennedy in Boston, and Lyndon B. Johnson in Austin, Texas. These valuable archives, which contain the National Security Files and the President's Office Files, throw new light on the role of the United States, and especially the CIA, in the aftermath of the 1960 Congo crisis, as the two sides in the Cold War began to woo Nkrumah. Further new material has been gleaned from research papers presented at a week-long symposium on *The Life and Times of Kwame Nkrumah* held in

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1985 at the University of Ghana, Legon, Accra. Finally, a series of interviews were undertaken in Ghana, in Britain and in the United States – including interviews with the US Ambassador to Ghana at the time, William P. Mahoney.

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FOREWORD TO 2<sup>ND</sup> EDITION

THE YEARLONG CELEBRATION OF GHANA'S GOLDEN JUBILEE provides a fitting context for the republication of the book *Kwame Nkrumah: Vision and Tragedy*. In the lead-up to the celebration and over the course of the year, the life and times of Kwame Nkrumah will receive unprecedented public attention, official and unofficial. Kwame Nkrumah's very wide name-recognition is, paradoxically, accompanied by sketchy, often oversimplified knowledge about the events and processes of his life and times. For most of those born after independence in 1957, such knowledge does not extend much beyond who Kwame Nkrumah was and vague notions about "he won us Independence". Among the older ones, who have some personal experience of the period, strong views are held, for or against Nkrumah and his role in Ghana's history. What is not in dispute is the iconic status that he occupies, even among those who hold negative views about him. Thus, while all agreed on the legendary and iconic status of Nkrumah in Ghana's history, the public discourse also reflects the views of a minority, that is quite anxious "to balance the picture" by emphasising what it considers the negative features of both Nkrumah and of the period.

Against this background of oversimplification, tending towards both deification and demonisation, the appearance of a book that sets out the record on the basis of sound research and objective comment, should contribute significantly to the quality of the academic and public debate. This book presents new material

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and new analysis, which helps to clarify aspects of the record, while advancing new perspectives. What comes across clearly throughout the book is the significant contribution of Nkrumah's vision and personality at a critical moment in the history of Africa and the Third World. He, perhaps more than any other, was able to identify, focus and catalyse the major factors and players driving the struggle for political independence in Ghana and liberation in other parts of Africa. In the process, he committed his life and work totally to a wide variety of activities and processes in Ghana, the continent and in the global Non-Aligned Movement.

Clearly demonstrated throughout the book was Nkrumah's insistence that the fight for independence went beyond anti-colonialism, involving, as it did, an uncompromising quest for autonomous and self-sustaining national development. This was to be attained through the transformation of a largely agrarian society and economy into one with the requisite political and social structures, and sufficient industry and scientification to assure dignified and adequate living conditions for all the peoples – goals attainable, in his view, only within the context of a united and independent Africa. This reflected a particular ideology and a sophisticated grasp of the social, economic and cultural preconditions for attaining the vision. Yet Nkrumah was no idle visionary. Not for him the passive acceptance of “global forces” as an excuse for abdicating policy to the “the market”, as if the market itself were not a social construct. The record shows a person of ideas, working ceaselessly, through political activity, economic planning, and continental and international diplomacy in the prosecution of a national and continental vision. The principal components of that vision could be summarised as:

- *national unity*, rejecting the centrifugal forces generated by regional, ethnic and other particularisms;
- a steadfast focus on *economic transformation*, not simply

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growth or development, such as would result in the autonomous development of society and the economy;

- and in pursuit of these, the *total liberation and unity of Africa* and its *non-alignment* in the Cold War between the super power blocs.

Without dwelling on the details of the life and times of Kwame Nkrumah as carefully set out in the book, one comes away with a sense of an epochal period, during which much was dreamt and attempted, and much achieved – from social and infrastructural development within Ghana; the consolidation of a *national* identity and sense of self-worth; the inspiration and active support of liberation movements throughout Africa and the promotion of continental unity; to the successful championing of non-alignment. At the same time, considering the impossible range of necessary engagements required by the situation, it is not surprising that Nkrumah and his colleagues were grievously over-stretched. This comes across clearly in Rooney's account, with very serious consequences for regime effectiveness and regime sustainability. As noted in the Introduction [to the first edition],

“... Nkrumah will be seen as a man of vision whose achievements were undermined by the inadequacy of his administration. . . He produced the new ideology and attempted to implement it – a task too big for any one man.”

In emphasising the serious flaws of the regime, Rooney makes particular mention of Nkrumah's failure to deal decisively with his followers and to make difficult and unpopular decisions. This was especially evident in the failure to address the question of corruption and the abuse of state power, particularly in relation to detention without trial.

Fifty years on, what marks Kwame Nkrumah out were the

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power and loftiness of his vision, and the single-mindedness with which he pursued it. To most people, the principal question is less whether the vision was attained or attainable under the conditions of the 1950s and 1960s; nor, even, whether it was pursued consistently and effectively. It is more whether that vision, or elements of it, continues to be relevant in our present circumstances, and what lessons are to be learnt from the successes and failures of the time.

*Akilagpa Sawyerr*  
Association of African Universities  
Accra, Ghana  
10 March 2007

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# 1

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## EARLY LIFE

IN ACCRA, ON 6 MARCH 1957, over six hundred reporters and photographers from the world's press corps were assembled to record the independence celebrations of Ghana – the first of Britain's African colonies to win its independence. Never before had so much of the world's attention focused on a single event in Africa.

The Cold War was briefly forgotten as Moscow and Washington vied with each other in offers of help. Vice-President Nixon led the American delegation, and in the United States every television network ran special features on Ghana, showing shots of Kwame Nkrumah's recent visit to President Eisenhower. The Soviet delegation invited the Ghanaian ministers to Moscow. From Britain, Prime Minister Macmillan promised all the help that was possible, and said it was a great day, too, for Britain, which rejoiced in Ghana's success. R. A. Butler and Sir Alan Burns a former Governor, joined the celebrations. Pandit Nehru, who had been the fiercest critic of Britain during the Suez crisis in 1956, pledged Indian support, and reminded the world that Britain deserved congratulations too for the part it had played in achieving such a happy, dignified and stable handover of power – so much more dignified than the unseemly scramble in India under Mountbatten ten years before. Canada, then as now, was ready with practical

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plans for aid on a substantial scale. From British Guiana, Chedi Jagan and his rival, Forbes Burnham – whose dispute Nkrumah had settled personally – made it clear that their country wanted to follow Ghana's lead towards independence. James Griffiths, Colonial Secretary in the Labour Government, who had done so much to forward Ghana's cause, and the Reverend Michael Scott – the stalwart opponent of apartheid – joined the celebrations.

The Earl of Dundee, showing remarkable prescience advised the new country to develop its own constitution from its own roots, and not to follow empty imitations of a European pattern. Ralph Bunche, who had observed that the drawback to gradualism was that it could not be enjoyed posthumously, represented the United Nations, and forecast that Ghana would be the eighty-first member. Countries from both sides of the East-West divide offered gifts and loans to assist this pioneering African country to achieve progress and prosperity. Britain and France, the Soviet Union and the United States, India and Poland, East and West Germany, all contributed. Multinational companies – Mobil, Shell, Elder Dempster and others – set up trust funds for technical education, founded new chairs at the University at Legon near Accra, and offered scholarships for Ghanaian students to go abroad for specialist training.

The Duchess of Kent – representing the Queen – and the British Governor General, Sir Charles Arden-Clarke, played their full part in the celebrations. But, for everyone there – the world's press, the diplomats from East and West, the exuberant Ghanaian people – there was one figure which outshone all others. This was Kwame Nkrumah. Less than ten years before, he had returned to the Gold Coast as an almost penniless student, but in that time he had electrified the people with his determination and charisma, and created and led the most effective political party in modern Africa. Finally, to start the independence celebrations, at midnight on 5 March – the moment of independence – he had stood before

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tens of thousands of deliriously happy supporters, and with tears streaming down his face, told his people 'Ghana will be free for ever'.

Few former colonies can have had a more auspicious start. Despite subsequent charges of neo-colonialist plots, there is little doubt of the genuine offers of goodwill and help – as if the whole world was willing Ghana to succeed. Most informed commentators expected that it would. The way had been carefully prepared. Arden-Clarke, a tough governor who would stand no nonsense either from Nkrumah's party, the Convention People's Party (CPP), or from interfering Secretaries of State in the Colonial Office, had played a key role. He had welded a close friendship and partnership with the CPP leaders based on mutual trust and respect, which enabled Ghana to have six years of serious preparation for independence.

The high hopes were based on very solid foundations. A robustly independent judiciary, upholding the best traditions of British justice and supported by a legal system staffed by able Ghanaian graduates, fulfilled its role with confidence and dignity, and with the full support of the people. A small, efficient and respected army, with mostly British officers who had been invited to continue their service, created an atmosphere of relaxed security. During the preceding years every care had been taken to train the Ghanaian Civil Service for independence. Battles had been fought over the position of expatriate Britons, and although many had accepted retirement terms, there was confidence in 1957 that the public service would continue to uphold the standard of integrity and efficiency in which it had been nurtured.

Economically the new Ghana was one of the most prosperous countries of Africa. Attempts to diversify the economy and to get it away from over-dependence on cocoa had not got far, but cocoa prices were buoyant and the prospects for other industries like bauxite and timber, and for agriculture, were good. More

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important, the CPP Government had built up substantial sterling reserves – nearly £200 million. Supporting the current prosperity and hopes for the future, were the great plans for the Volta River Project. This aimed to dam the Volta River, to create a huge lake which would stretch nearly as far as Tamale the northern capital, and produce enough electricity to industrialize the country and run an aluminum smelter. This, it was hoped, would complement the fluctuating hard – currency earnings of cocoa. These hopes and aspirations received further support when James Griffiths gained the agreement of the British Parliament to his proposal that, in spite of being independent, Ghana would continue to benefit from the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940.<sup>1</sup>

Ghana's independence in 1957 was the most untroubled and completely successful moment in the brilliant, dramatic and tragic life of Kwame Nkrumah. Then he had given pride and self-respect, not only to Ghana, but to the whole of Africa and to black people the world over. Ghana's move towards independence seemed to many like Africa's first attempt to claw back some of the power and dignity which had been lost to Europeans during the decades of colonial rule and economic exploitation. The revolution which took place in Africa in the ten years after 1957 – in which over thirty countries gained their independence – stemmed directly from Ghana's example and from Nkrumah's achievement. Yet, when he had returned to Ghana in 1947 after ten difficult years as a student in America and Britain, his prospects had seemed dim and limited. His total possessions had been a couple of suits and a change of shirts, shoes, and underwear which he carried in a small suitcase. He was then thirty-eight years old.

There is no official record of Nkrumah's date of birth, but by his own reckoning, it was Saturday, 18 September 1909, and by local custom, because it was Saturday, he was called Kwame. His mother lived in the village of Nkroful in Nzima, at the extreme south-west corner of the country. The international border had

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been decided as recently as 1901, and it divided the Nzima people between the French Ivory Coast and the British Gold Coast. Britain had had a long association with the coastal peoples – largely through the slave trade and, later, trade in cocoa, timber, gold and other commodities: its penetration into Ashanti and the Northern Territories was much more recent. After fiercely fought campaigns against the Ashanti people, the British eventually established control over the Gold Coast Colony and Ashanti in 1901, and agreed a protectorate with the Northern Territories in 1902.

Nkrumah had a happy and secure childhood spent in a typical African village. He enjoyed a close relationship with his mother he was her only child – but they lived in a large family of about fourteen people including the children of his father by other wives. Little is known of his father, who, during Nkrumah's early years worked as a goldsmith in Half Assini and did not live with the family at Nkroful. He died when Nkrumah's was still a boy. Many other relatives and friends frequently stayed with the family; they formed a large, jolly, good-natured group which had few rows or disputes. His happy carefree childhood centered on the village, the sea, the large lagoon and the endless excitement and interest of the surrounding bush. Certainly, Nkrumah was rather an unusual child who, while enjoying games with other children, spent hours alone often wandering in the bush. At this time, he developed a passion for animals – an interest which lasted throughout his life.

His mother decided he should go to the local elementary school run by a Roman Catholic Mission and there he suffered a severe regime with frequent canings. After initial rebellion, he found that he liked school, and he even reared chickens to help with his school fees of threepence per month. While at school, he came under the influence of a Roman Catholic priest and was baptized. Later he was to say 'Today I am a non-denominational Christian and a Marxist socialist and I have not found any

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contradiction between the two.<sup>2</sup> While this illustrates his attitude towards religion, his rejection of a village girl who fell in love with him illustrates his attitude to women at that time, and his fear of losing his independence by being trapped in marriage. Throughout his life he was to remain a sensitive and lonely man. Many years later when he did marry it still did not bring him any true companionship.

Nkrumah did well at school and at the age of sixteen or seventeen became a pupil teacher in the school at Half Assini. He might have stayed there for years, but in 1926, the school was visited by the Rev. A.G. Fraser, a noted educator, who recommended that Nkrumah should go to the Government Training College in Accra. This stroke of good fortune meant that Nkrumah's life was about to be changed by three of the most influential men of their time in the Gold Coast. Sir Gordon Guggisberg, a Canadian, and former Royal Engineers officer, was Governor from 1919 to 1928. He was determined to improve the lot of the Gold Coast people and to establish the prosperity of the colony. Convinced that a modern economy could not be founded on the surf boats of Accra and Cape Coast, and since the coast lacked any natural harbours, Guggisberg built Takoradi harbour- an artificial harbour which cost £1.2m. and which, with road and rail links, was to serve the whole colony. He established the nucleus of a health service and the hospital at Korle Bu in Accra. Perhaps his most remarkable achievement was to found Achimota College. A Christian Foundation and open to Africans of all ages, all races and all religions, its aim was to develop the best traditions of European and African culture.

In 1928, the Government Training College became part of Achimota. The Reverend A.G. Fraser, the first head of Achimota, gathered round him a team of able and dedicated young men and women – many from Oxford and Cambridge – who helped to establish the school, and many, including his two sons and

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other distinguished teachers like Lord Hemingford, Charles Woodhouse, Charles Deakin and others, devoted much of their lives to Achimota and the key role it has played in the history of Ghana. Fraser had picked out Nkrumah, and he came fresh and raw from his pupil teaching experience at Half Assini to join the first group in the Teacher Training Department at Achimota.

At first, he did not take kindly to the fierce discipline, but he soon responded to the challenge of Achimota. He joined the amateur dramatic society and played the lead in *Kofi Goes Abroad*, the story of an African boy who trained as a doctor and went back to his village to challenge the witch doctor. Nkrumah was also involved with groups of Nzima and Fanti students who performed their own local drumming and dancing. He rarely missed a debating society meeting and he took part, irrespective of whether he really supported the motion, but just for the challenge of winning people to his point of view. At this he excelled. One of his mentors in the Teacher Training Department, Mr. Andrew Fraser, who was also his housemaster in Aggrey House, recalls ruefully 'there is no doubt that as a teacher in training, he could go into a class without preparation, and keep its members enthralled as he waffled on. This impressed the young people and depressed his teachers.'<sup>3</sup>

Of more direct importance to Nkrumah than either Guggisberg or A.G.Fraser, was the first deputy head of Achimota, Dr Kwegyir Aggrey, the first black member of staff, the man who had conceived the idea of the great school, and the man who was to guide Nkrumah's mind towards the important issues facing every African – issues to which Nkrumah was to devote his life. (It is significant of the attitudes of the time that, in spite of Aggrey's distinction, a European was made principal of Achimota.) A man of immense energy and enthusiasm, Dr Aggrey was one of the great pioneers of African education, and was associated both with Achimota and with the provision of schools throughout the

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Gold Coast. He believed passionately in the closest co-operation between black and white, and he would say 'You can play a tune of sorts on the white keys, you can play a tune of sorts on the black keys, but for harmony you must use both the black and the white'. The crest of Achimota is a piano keyboard. Such views were controversial even in the 1920s. Aggrey played a crucial role in Nkrumah's development by introducing him to the heady and exciting ideas of W. E. B. Du Bois and Marcus Garvey.

In 1919, hoping to have Africa on the agenda for the Versailles Conference, the distinguished scholar from Trinidad, W. E. B. Du Bois – the doyen of the Pan African movement, who was proud of his African, French and Dutch ancestry – had said 'the African movement means to us what Zionism means to the Jews'. Later, helped by liberals in the USA, he founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). He continued to fight for the right of coloured people and eventually turned to communism.

In contrast to the intellectual Du Bois, the Jamaican Marcus Garvey, a more boisterous character, created the Back to Africa Movement and preached the doctrine of Africa for Africans. Garvey, who had founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association in Jamaica in 1914, raised large sums of money in America and the Caribbean to support his movement. He founded the Black Star Line to take Negro people back to Africa, but his finances were chaotic and nothing came of his grandiose schemes. He died a broken man in London in 1940. After Ghana's independence, Nkrumah paid him a belated tribute by using Garvey's title for Ghana's new shipping line.

Although Nkrumah disagreed with much of Aggrey's own philosophy, he revered him as an inspiring leader. They became very close, and in the summer of 1929, as Aggrey left for a visit to America, he told his students that when he returned he would satisfy their hunger. Tragically, he died in North Carolina during

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that visit, and the effect on his eager disciples was devastating. Nkrumah did not eat for three days, but found that even without food he could continue working – a discovery that was useful during his future student days in America. In commenting critically on Aggrey's philosophy, Nkrumah believed that there could only be harmony between black and white when the black race was treated as equal with the white race.

Like many poor students, Nkrumah often remained at the college during vacations and earned a shilling a day clearing up the campus. When he left Achimota in 1930, he considered that these had been his happiest days when he had been free to read, free to enjoy endless discussions with his friends, and free to enjoy the solitude of the extensive and beautiful campus. Before he left he had been reprimanded by the Bishop for failing to attend Mass, but in spite of this he was offered a teaching post at Elmina Roman Catholic primary school. He did well at Elmina and the following year was made head of the junior school at Axim. Here he began to get involved in politics and also founded the Nzima Literary Society. Two years later, in 1933, he was appointed to the staff of the Roman Catholic Seminary at Amisano near Elmina. Here he had to keep to the strict seminary rules. He reacted well to this firm style of discipline and for some time seriously considered joining the Jesuit order.

Nkrumah was backed up by the philosophy of Aggrey and of Achimota, and the relaxed relationship between black and white which it nurtured, but this was soon jolted by a new and important influence in his life. During his time at Achimota he had attended a lecture by Dr Azikiwe, a Nigerian journalist who had been to university in America, and who was later to become Nigeria's first president. Azikiwe had made a great impact on Nkrumah, and this influence increased through his regular articles on African nationalism in the *African Morning Post*, of which he was editor. In 1936, at the time of the Italian fascist invasion of Ethiopia,

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Azikiwe and a Sierra Leone nationalist, Wallace Johnson, were involved in a *cause célèbre* which resulted in their deportation from Gold Coast by the colonial authorities. The cause of this was an article in the *African Morning Post*, which was in stark contrast to the easy-going benevolence of Achimota. The article 'Has the African a God?' included the following words:

The European believes in the god whose name is spelt deceit. He believes in the god whose law is Ye strong you must weaken the weak. Ye civilized Europeans you must Christianize the pagan Africans with bombs, poison gases! ...Ye administrators make Sedition Bill to keep the African gagged, make Deportation Ordinance to send the Africans to exile whenever they dare to question your authority.<sup>4</sup>

Azikiwe had fired Nkrumah's enthusiasm for the nationalist struggle and he made a direct impact on the next phase of his life. Nkrumah had failed the entrance examination for London University in 1935 and he decided to try for an American university. Azikiwe had attended a number of colleges in the United States including Lincoln University, Pennsylvania, and he advised Nkrumah to try there. Even if he was accepted at Lincoln, Nkrumah had little prospect of raising the money from his teacher's salary for a trip to America, and his immediate family could not help. The African family system came to his rescue. In order to visit a prosperous relative in Lagos, Nkrumah stowed away in a coaster leaving Axim, the local port. In Lagos, the relative entertained him, gave him £100 for his American trip, and paid his fare back to Axim. Another relative, the chief of Nsuaem, gave him £50, and these gifts made it possible for him to undertake the trip to the US. He bade an emotional farewell to his mother, and went to Takoradi where he boarded the MV *Apapa* bound for Liverpool. On board, a telegram from Azikiwe awaited

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him: 'Goodbye. Remember to trust in God and yourself.'

He had an uneventful voyage except for an amusing incident when, with an Indian friend, he went ashore at Las Palmas. They went to have a drink in what he thought was a hotel, but which turned out to be a brothel. When a scantily clad girl came and sat on Nkrumah's knee, he was so taken aback that he bundled her and the drinks on the floor and ran all the way back to the ship.

In England, en route to America, once again the extended African family came to his aid. The relatives of a timber merchant from Nzima looked after him in their house and this helped him to adjust to the England of 1936. The timber merchant was Pa Grant who later became the first president of the United Gold Coast Convention - UGCC - the first active political party in the Gold Coast. Nkrumah stayed in London and Liverpool for a few weeks. During that time he saw a newspaper headline announcing that Mussolini had invaded Ethiopia. He sailed for America and on the voyage became friendly with a Dutch theology student. In New York they attended a service in a negro church. Nkrumah's attitude is interesting. During the service the congregation was wound up to a high pitch of excitement, with frequent exclamations of 'Hallelujah'. Nkrumah was embarrassed by this and felt it necessary to apologize to his white friend. This seems to show some confusion about his identity as a black man forced to operate in a world dominated by whites - a personality trait which took him time to overcome. His heroes may have been the black leaders of the age, but his role models - the Roman Catholic missionaries - were mostly white.

Once in America, Nkrumah stayed a few days with friends in Harlem and then travelled to Lincoln University, Pennsylvania, which had been founded in 1854 to provide higher education for negroes. He had only £40, which was totally inadequate for his fees, but he was enrolled, temporarily and on probation: he soon won a scholarship which helped him through his course. Throughout his time in the United States he remained short

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of money, and often experienced real hardship. Within the University, he obtained the post of library assistant – spending more of his time reading books than arranging them – and to increase his meager income, he wrote summaries of books for other students at one dollar a time. He took part in a growing range of political activities and won second prize in a speech-making competition. He kept up a phenomenal rate of academic work on top of working at a whole range of sordid and degrading jobs during term and vacations just to make ends meet. These were the post-depression years in the US and it was difficult for blacks and white alike to find employment.

He tried to make some money by selling fish in Harlem, but the fish caused a serious skin complaint. He next took a job handling rotting animal entrails in a soap factory. Things improved when he went to Philadelphia and got a job as a waiter on a ship plying from the port. The supervisor soon discovered that he was not a trained waiter and demoted him to washing dishes. On subsequent voyages he rose to better jobs, and even became a bell-hop – considered one of the plum jobs because it brought in tips. Often, during these difficult days, he slept on railway stations until the police moved him on, he slept in parks until heavy rain forced him to move and he even slept on the subway between Harlem and Brooklyn. He joined a religious group called Father Divine. This offered cheap meals, and was also a good example of revivalist techniques in mass meetings. Nkrumah's most unfortunate job was working in a shipyard in Chester, Pennsylvania, on the night shift during the depths of winter. One night he collapsed and was rushed to hospital by ambulance, suffering from pneumonia.

In 1939 he graduated with a BA degree in economics and sociology. He was still desperately poor, but after graduation he was helped by the offer of a post at Lincoln University as an assistant lecturer in philosophy. Gradually things improved and in spite of his Roman Catholic background he began to

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receive invitations to preach in different Presbyterian churches in Philadelphia and New York. This often resulted in the offer of a meal and of some welcome social contact. He recorded that he had various girl friends – including one called Portia – but he never treated them very well, because he was too hard-up and preoccupied with his studies and his political activities. The Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia invited him to undertake a sociological and economic survey of negro life in the city, and this gave him a sound understanding of racial problems in an urban context.

Nkrumah's reading included the traditional philosophers Kant, Hegel, Descartes and Nietzsche, together with Marx, Engels, Lenin, Freud and Mazzini. After graduating in 1939, he enrolled at Lincoln Theological Seminary, and also at the University of Pennsylvania for two master's degree courses. He kept up his work rate and in 1942 passed out as top student in the Bachelor of Theology class. He was invited to give the graduation oration and took as his title 'Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hands unto God'. In the same year he gained an MA in philosophy, and in 1943 an MSc in Education from the University of Pennsylvania. By this time he was a lecturer in philosophy and negro history. Once his financial problems were solved, he devoted more and more of his time to political activity. He became involved with the Democrats, the Republicans, the Trotskyists and the Communists. In Pennsylvania he joined a group of African students, and through his organizational drive, helped it to become a continent-wide movement called the African Students Association of America and Canada, of which he was elected president.

This soon involved him in first brush with the Lincoln authorities. Nkrumah had been deeply distressed when Dr Aggrey had died during a trip to the US in 1929. Now, by a strange coincidence, as President of the African Students Association, he took part in a memorial service to Aggrey in November 1942 in Salisbury,

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North Carolina, where Aggrey had worked. Nkrumah unveiled the memorial which had been covered with the traditional Gold Coast Kente cloth, poured a libation, and said prayers in Fanti, a Gold Coast vernacular language. He then removed some soil which was later taken to the Gold Coast, to make it possible for the dead man's spirit to return to Africa. The Dean of Lincoln, when he heard about the service, severely reprimanded Nkrumah – an outstanding theology student – for taking part in pagan rituals. Nkrumah replied in a disarming manner and concluded with a sentence not noticeable for its modesty: 'The burden of my life is to live it in such a way that I may become a living symbol of all that is best in Christianity and in the laws, customs and beliefs of my people'.<sup>5</sup>

In spite of this setback, Nkrumah continued to make an excellent impression at Lincoln. He wrote a number of papers – 'Primitive Education in West Africa'; 'The History of Religion in a critique of West African Fetishism'; and 'Akan Society'. His doctoral thesis, which was never completed, was entitled 'Mind and Thought in Pre-literate Society. A study in Ethno-Philosophy with special reference to the Akan people of the Gold Coast'. He also wrote an article for *Educational Outlook* entitled 'Education and Nationalism in Africa'. This touched on the problem of bringing the African people effectively into the modern world without uprooting them from their tribal background. These writings were attributed to Francis Nkrumah, a name he had adopted at the Roman Catholic Seminary, and it was not until 1945 that he reverted to using the name Kwame – a more authentic African name.

Helped by two Gold Coast students, Ako Adjei and Jones Quartey, he became involved in the African Students Association newspaper – *The African Interpreter*. Within the movement he was already showing those qualities of enthusiasm and organization which were to prove vitally important to him on his return to the

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Gold Coast. However, he was soon in dispute with the Nigerian members over the general philosophy of the Association. They wanted each colony to conduct its own struggle for freedom, while Nkrumah was already moving toward a wider Pan African philosophy. He threw himself into political activity, not so much for the content or the ideology, but to study the method and the organization. He had realized that if the colonial struggle was to be won, it would depend, above all, on the ability of the leaders to organize effectively. His vigorous political activity began to put him in touch with some of the big names in the Pan African movement. The key figure was George Padmore, who was born in Trinidad in 1902, and who in the 1920s worked with Ralph Bunche and Azikiwe in various communist groups in America. Padmore went to Moscow in 1930 and then to Hamburg, but he was expelled from Germany in 1933. He also broke with the Communist Party and began to work with many leading figures on the British left who were sympathetic to African issues – Arthur Creech Jones, Rita Hinden and Fenner Brockway in particular. Padmore, writing of this period, when he also worked with a school friend from Trinidad, C.L.R. James, commented that in their discussions ‘The general tone was Marxist but non-Communist’.<sup>6</sup>

The outbreak of war in 1939 had little effect on Nkrumah except that he no longer got jobs on ships. Even Pearl Harbor made little impact, but in 1942 some of his writings do make reference to the Atlantic Charter and to the anti-fascist struggle. In his message as President of the African Students Association in 1942, he called on Africans to hold to their ideals ‘against the barbaric totalitarianism of the fascists and the perverted colonial democracy of the imperialists.’<sup>7</sup> Prompted by Azikiwe’s original article, Nkrumah also took up the issue of the Atlantic Charter. This had been drawn up by Roosevelt and Churchill in August 1941 as a general statement of principle, and included the sentence ‘They respect the right of all peoples to choose the

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form of government under which they will live'. Churchill later rejected the suggestion that this was relevant to African issues, but Azikiwe's interpretation was supported by Attlee, Churchill's wartime deputy prime minister. In an article written in 1943, Nkrumah called on the young people of Africa to support the fight against fascism and to build a world based on the principles of freedom expressed in the Atlantic Charter.<sup>8</sup>

When the important Pan African Conference was held in New York in April 1944, Nkrumah played a major role, virtually his debut on the Pan African stage. The conference resolved to call on the US Government to uphold the Atlantic Charter and to encourage the independence and development of Africa. It also laid the foundations of a conference to be held as soon as possible after the end of the war, which would have full representation from black organizations all over the world. From this initiative sprang the Manchester Conference of 1945.

C.L.R. James encouraged Nkrumah in the study of political organization and in further and deeper study of Marxist and other revolutionary philosophers. Nkrumah's own philosophy was now clearly emerging and James played an important part in it. The most important influence of all, as Nkrumah himself testifies, was the work and writing of Marcus Garvey whose book, *The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey*, published in 1923, made a profound and permanent impression on him. When the time came for him to leave America, and to turn his back on the comfortable niche which he had carved in the academic world, he had a firmly rooted philosophical base from which to tackle the urgent problems facing Gold Coast and Africa.

The clearest exposition of Nkrumah's views at this period is contained in a booklet which he began to assemble before leaving the US and which he completed during his stay in London in 1945. Entitled *Towards Colonial Freedom*, it was the product of his formative years in the US and relied heavily on the writings

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of Garvey, James and Padmore. It was not published until 1962. Then, Nkrumah insisted in a foreword that it was exactly as it was written twenty years before, without any alterations whatever. In it Nkrumah recorded how, in America, he was revolted when he realized the ruthless colonial exploitation and political oppression of the people of Africa, and this had prompted him to write down his views. If Nkrumah's assertion is taken at its face value – and there is no reason to doubt its authenticity – this is a significant document which outlines his philosophy when he came to London, on the eve of his return to the Gold Coast.

He began the book by emphasizing 'the unshakeably inhuman nature of imperialism and colonialism' and his uncompromising opposition to all colonial policies. He rejected the idea of a colonial power preparing colonial people for independence because imperialism knew no law beyond its own interest, and because there was a fundamental contradiction between imperial interests and the aspirations of the colonial peoples. Because all imperial powers used colonies to exploit their raw materials and as a dumping ground for manufactured goods, the colonies must stand together to achieve political independence as the only way of securing economic independence. He rejected all ideas of trusteeship as imperialist chicanery, and suggested that it was incoherent nonsense to say that Britain had good intentions of developing its colonies for self-government.

In an outline of colonialism, which he defined as the means by which the mother country binds its colonies to promote its own advantage, he made a number of selective but effective quotations. Jules Ferry, the French Prime Minister, speaking in 1885, had agreed that European nations sought colonies in order to get access to raw materials, to obtain markets for manufactured goods, and as a field for investments. Examples from the colonial activities of Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, Portugal and Spain during the scramble for Africa in the 1880s, showed that these were indeed

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the chief aims in every case. Later, in 1923, Sarraut, the French Colonial Secretary, admitted that colonization was a one-sided egotistical imposition of the strong upon the weak.

After a brief outline of the theory and history of mercantilism, Nkrumah went on to commend the Marxist-Leninist viewpoint as the most penetrating analysis. This showed that economic imperialism was the highest stage in the capitalist system and was doomed to break-up and demolition. In rather more detail he outlined the colonialist's method which was to kill the indigenous arts and crafts of a colony by importing cheap machine-made goods, and then to thrust capital upon the colony for major developments like railways, roads and harbours, thus fusing industrial and finance capital. He reverted to Lenin's 'Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism' and employed the argument that the takeover of a colony started with the missionaries bamboozling the natives into laying up treasure in heaven, while the traders got in, acquired mineral and land resources and destroyed native crafts and home industries. The aim of the colonizers was to exploit the country's natural resources for the maximum profit, and to exploit human resources as a commodity which could be thrown away after use.

Returning from the Marxist-Leninist thesis to examples from his own experience, Nkrumah made a significant comment on the operations of the British-run Cocoa Control Board. This organization had amassed capital of over £3m. which was held in Britain and from which Britain took the interest, the stated purpose of this fund being to protect the cocoa farmer by providing stable prices in a wildly fluctuating market. This system continued until 1951. Nkrumah made serious criticism of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act 1940, which, he maintained, merely lent money to a colony thus putting it deeper into debt, while Britain gained all the profit. He argued that the colonial subject was being economically strangled by the very

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trustees who were meant to be preparing him for self-government. Political independence was therefore the only way of breaking the economic stranglehold.

He provided a Marxist analysis of the expropriation of land, but with more specific examples of West Africa. In British West Africa the colonial power had generally respected the African land tenure system, but had appropriated land in mining areas. Nkrumah quoted the example of the Ashanti Concession for the Ashanti Goldfields which produced fabulous profits for the owners, while paying a derisory rental to the local chiefs.

He was equally critical in his comments on the different colonial systems operating in Africa, including the Trusteeship system which the United Nations had inherited from the League of Nations. He totally rejected the Trusteeship doctrine, considering it merely the extension of capitalist exploitation in order to perpetuate the thralldom of the colonial territories. Referring to the British record in Africa, he maintained that they only built hospitals in order to keep the colonial labourers fit for work; they only built schools to produce clerks for trading companies; they only built roads and railways to assist in the exploitation of the country's resources; and 'any humanitarian act... was merely to enhance the primary objective - economic exploitation'.<sup>9</sup>

In more specific criticisms of Britain, he stated that it would never give colonial subjects equal status with those from the white dominions. 'It's the British presence that has brought war, oppression, poverty, disease and perpetual mass illiteracy upon colonial peoples. It is the British presence that bleeds them white by brutal exploitation in order to feed the British lion with red meat'.<sup>10</sup>

In a final chapter entitled 'What must be done' he argued that the intensification of the colonial crisis, the growth of liberation movements, and co-operation between colonial liberation movements and the proletarian movements in capitalist countries

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were inevitable. The answer was to organize the colonial masses, to organize labour and youth, to organize mass education, to organize a revolutionary press, and to eliminate the intelligentsia who were the architects of colonial enslavement. He put forward the following programme.

Political Freedom – complete and absolute independence  
Democratic Freedom – freedom from political tyranny with  
sovereignty vested in the broad mass of the people  
Social Reconstruction – freedom from poverty and economic  
exploitation  
Peoples of the Colonies unite  
The working men of all countries are behind you.<sup>14</sup>

The influence of Marxism and of the Communist Manifesto is clear enough in *Towards Colonial Freedom*, but the book is both interesting and significant for other reasons. When it was written in 1945, Nkrumah had been away from home for nine years and had been strongly influenced during that time by left-wing authors and teachers – particularly C. L. R. James who recognized what a receptive pupil he had – but the views he expressed in the book do not equate with the views he expressed in public or in his autobiography. It was, for example, unnecessary in 1962 to support in every detail (as he did in the foreword) the statement that Britain would never give its African colonies equal status with the white dominions, when by that time Ghana and many more colonies were already completely independent members of the Commonwealth. Similarly, his inconsistency is illustrated in his comment that Britain only founded schools to provide clerks for trading companies. This is completely at variance with his published views of Achimota. It was as though in his writing he was caught up and carried along by his own rhetoric, which on occasion was separated from reality by a great divide.

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*Towards Colonial Freedom* demonstrates that the seeds initially planted by Aggrey in the 1920s, and nurtured in lectures, articles and personal discussion by Azikiwe in the 1930s, and matured in the succeeding years in America. The influence of Marxist and other revolutionary philosophers is clear, while the example of the Communist Manifesto is copied closely, even down to the words and phrases of Nkrumah's conclusion. *Towards Colonial Freedom*, then, can be considered a reasonable statement of the views of Nkrumah when he left New York and arrived in London in June 1945.

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## LONDON INTERLUDE

THE MAIN SOURCE OF INFORMATION about Nkrumah's stay in London is his autobiography, and it must be remembered that this was not a carefully researched work of scholarship but was dictated in odd moments when he was already Prime Minister and leading his country towards independence. Consequently, there are understandably a number of minor inaccuracies and there is a tendency to over-emphasize the role he played in certain situations, and to give a messianic flavour to his recollections. In describing how he sailed out of New York, he states 'I saw the Statue of Liberty with her arm raised as if in personal farewell . . . You have opened my eyes to the true meaning of liberty. . . I shall never rest until I have carried your message to Africa.'<sup>1</sup>

Nkrumah arrived in Liverpool on June 1945 and travelled to London. He had written to George Padmore, who met him at Euston Station and obtained a room for him in the West African Students Union hostel. Padmore was by this time a giant on the Pan African scene who wielded great influence in the milieu that had shaped Nkrumah's views in America. Yet, surprisingly, Nkrumah merely refers to him at this stage as a West Indian journalist who lived in London and who had aroused his interest. Finding the students' hostel cold and unwelcoming, Nkrumah set about looking for lodgings. In the immediate aftermath of VE

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Day and before the general election of early July, London was enjoying a phase of euphoria and hope, but it still presented a hostile image to a black man looking for lodgings. The devastation caused by German bombing raids and the V1 and V2 attacks on London was all too obvious, and greatly exacerbated the post-war shortage of housing and accommodation. Like many others, Nkrumah trudged round north London suffering one rebuff after another. During his wanderings he met Ako Adjei whom he had known at Lincoln University and who was now reading law in London; Adjei was later to play a key role in Nkrumah's future career. Eventually, they found a sympathetic landlady at 60 Burghley Road, Tufnell Park, where Nkrumah stayed until he left for the Gold Coast in November 1947. He appreciated the kindness and thoughtfulness of the family. In spite of the severity of food rationing in post-war England, they usually left him food when he was planning to come home late, and in return he did all the washing-up.

In London, he aimed to read law and complete a doctoral thesis. He therefore enrolled at Gray's Inn and also at the London School of Economics. He met Professor Harold Laski and also started to study logical positivism under Professor A. J. Ayer. Almost at once he became deeply involved in the political and welfare activities of the West African Students Union, and when Padmore asked him to help with preparations for the Pan African Conference, he readily neglected his academic studies.

The Pan African movement, after the highlight of the second conference in Paris in 1919, how slowly extended its influence. In 1931 a conference in London resolved that 'black folk be treated as men' and also passed a resolution highly critical of General Smuts who 'preached goodwill, while standing on the backs of millions of Africans'. In the 1930s Padmore had seen the Popular Front period as a great opportunity for the Pan African movement to achieve its aims of independence for black people without

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being tied to either fascism or communism. During the Second World War the Pan African Federation had flourished under the leadership of T. Ras Makonnen and Dr. P. Milliard – both from British Guiana (Guyana) – but it fell to Padmore to play the main role in organizing the important Pan African Conference of 1945. Nkrumah was joint secretary with him.

At the planning stage, Du Bois, who was still in the US, felt strongly that the conference should be held in Africa. However, this problem, together with the differences between the traditionally cautious views of Du Bois and the more radical views of the group around Padmore and James, was skillfully ironed out by Padmore. Eventually, through the generosity of Makonnen, the conference took place in Manchester from 15 to 19 October 1945, with ninety delegates and eleven observers – not 200 as Nkrumah states. This was the most significant of all the Pan African conferences. Du Bois, now aged seventy-three and revered by all as the leader, presided, ably backed up by Padmore and James.

The old traditions of Pan Africanism represented by these and other figures were about to be blended with a new and more explosive generation of African leaders. There were powerful contingents from West Africa and the West Indies, but few from East Africa or South Africa, and no official representation from the US. Even though Du Bois was present, he failed to obtain the financial support which he had expected from organizations in America. Among the delegates were many, like Nkrumah, who were to play leading roles in bringing their countries to independence. A large Gold Coast contingent included Joe Appiah and Ako Adjei; from Sierra Leone the veteran campaigner Wallace Johnson, from Nigeria Obafemi Awolowo – later to be leader of the Action Group Party and Premier of the Western Region; from Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta who had already established himself as a powerful figure in the movement; from Nyasaland, Dr. Hastings Banda who was to lead his country to independence

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as Malawi; from South Africa, the black novelist Peter Abrahams; and finally Mrs Amy Garvey, the widow of Marcus Garvey. Previous conferences had been generally supported by middle-class intellectuals and academic leaders – often the product of mission school education. This conference had the support of workers, trade union leaders, a radical student element, and significantly, no representation from any Christian organization. While Garvey's aim, supported strongly in the West Indies and the US, had been Black Nationalism, this conference veered strongly towards African Nationalism.

Discussions at the conference generally followed the teaching of Ghandi for Positive Action, preferably without violence. There were demands for economic independence to prevent imperialist exploitation, and hopes of a resurgence in Africa and Asia to break the chains of colonialism and to resist both imperialism and communism. The conference called on Africans everywhere to organize themselves into political parties, trade unions, co-operatives and other groups, in order to achieve political independence and economic advance. Du Bois proposed the first formal resolution, that the colonial peoples should determine to struggle for their freedom – if necessary by force. Nkrumah proposed the second resolution: a demand for independence for all colonial peoples to put an end to imperialist exploitation, a demand to be backed up by strikes and boycotts if necessary. He also coined the final phrase 'Colonial and Subject Peoples of the World Unite'.

The conference was a landmark in the history of Pan Africanism for it brought together leaders who were to change the face of Africa in the ensuing decades. It also sent out a clear message to Africans everywhere to organize themselves for political change. Nkrumah was in his element, and the influence he had on the resolutions is clear. The conference, encouraged by Padmore, decided to found a permanent Pan African Congress,

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together with the West African National Secretariat (WANS) which had been set up in London in 1945 to co-ordinate plans for independence in British, French, Portuguese and Belgian territories. Wallace Johnson became chairman, with Nkrumah as secretary. Two other Ghanaians, Kojo Botsio and Awooner Renner, also helped. In Manchester at the same time and with the enthusiastic support of Makonnen, Kenyatta continued to work for Pan African Federation, and published the booklet *Pan Africa*.

Forty years later in November 1987, in an interview with the author, Kojo Botsio described his first meeting with Nkrumah. Botsio had just finished at Oxford and was planning to read law in London. He said 'I was immediately charmed by him and captivated by his brilliant views and arguments on how to fight the colonial system'. Thus Botsio, who with his Oxford background had a promising career ahead of him, did not hesitate to follow Nkrumah's leadership. Through the next twenty turbulent years and afterwards, he remained totally loyal. He said that he found Nkrumah as a colleague to be cheerful, confident, relaxed, and well organized. He worked at a terrific speed, and his mind seemed to race ahead of everyone else's. He worked immensely hard and expected all his staff to do the same.

Working as secretary of WANS, Nkrumah again embarked on a period of intense activity and total poverty. A Gold Coast barrister, Koi Larbi, gave WANS a room in his office, and some well-to-do English girls did the typing for nothing, but Nkrumah and his friends were forced to spend valuable time scavenging for food and coal. Occasionally they would sit for hours huddled over lonely cups of tea in the drab cafes of Camden Town. In his role as secretary, he visited Paris to link up with the leaders of the French movement. He met Leopold Senghor of Senegal, and Houphouet-Boigny of the Ivory Coast. Both these men were to have long careers as leaders of their independent countries, but neither showed any great enthusiasm for Nkrumah's suggestion

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of a Union of African Socialist Republics.

The Secretariat and the West African Students Organization encouraged their African students to demand African nationalism and independence, and many of their members had campaigned for the Labour Party in the 1945 election. They had imagined that there would be very rapid advance towards independence under Labour, and they were disappointed and disillusioned when this did not happen. Indeed, Labour appeared to them to have much the same policy as the Conservatives.

Nkrumah's role in the Secretariat and the Students Union was first to try to bridge the deep gulf which separated the student section from the workers section. After the end of the war, many West African seamen had been left destitute in the ports of London, Liverpool, Manchester and Cardiff; Nkrumah's responsibility was to rescue these men who had no one to help them. He wrote 'In the East End of London particularly, the meanest kind of African mud hut would have been a palace compared to the slum that had become their lot.'<sup>2</sup> Their destitution often led to fights and petty crime, and Nkrumah visited many in Wormwood Scrubs and the prisons of other big ports. He founded the Coloured Workers Association to operate parallel to the Students Union and as a welfare organization for these unfortunate people.

Nkrumah and Padmore continued to work closely together. They set up a special discussion group called The Circle, the purpose of which was to train effective activists among their members. It had as its motto 'Service, Sacrifice, and Suffering' and it saw itself as the revolutionary vanguard in the struggle for West African unity and national independence. Its aim was to create a Union of African Socialist Republics. Details of its organization, laws, duties of members, secret signs and the oath of allegiance were included in the membership document. A copy of this document, with its aims of a Union of African Socialist Republics, was found on Nkrumah when he was later arrested in Accra in

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1948. The British authorities substantially misrepresented and misquoted it, and in view of its significance the main details are given here.

Members had to swear to accept the following:

1. I will irrevocably obey and act upon the orders, commands, instructions, and directions of the Grand Council of THE CIRCLE.
2. I will always serve, sacrifice and suffer anything for the cause for which THE CIRCLE stands, and will at all times be ready to go on any mission that I may be called upon to perform.
3. I will always and in all circumstances help a member brother of THE CIRCLE in all things and in all difficulties.
4. I will, except as a last resort, avoid the use of violence.
5. I will make it my aim and duty to foster the cause for which THE CIRCLE stands in any organization that I may become a member.
6. I will fast on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of each month from sunrise to sunset and will meditate daily on the cause THE CIRCLE stands for.
7. I accept the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah.

The Oath of Allegiance, to be sworn by all members, was positively masonic in tone and substance.

On my life, honour and fortunes, I solemnly pledge and swear that I shall always live up to the aims and inspirations of THE CIRCLE, and shall never under any circumstances divulge any secrets, plans or movements of THE CIRCLE, nor betray a member brother of THE CIRCLE; and that if I dare to divulge any secrets, plans and movements of THE CIRCLE, or betray a member brother or the cause, or use the influence of THE CIRCLE for my own personal interests or advertisement, I do so at my own risk and peril.

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During 1947 Nkrumah became so completely involved in the work of the Secretariat that he gave up his studies altogether. He was beginning to prepare for another international conference when Ako Adjei, his friend from Lincoln days, wrote to him from Accra. The letter contained the offer of the post of secretary of the United Gold Coast Convention, with a salary of £100 per month and a car. Nkrumah saw that this could be a wonderful opportunity, but he hesitated, because he realized that he had been away from home for eleven years and was out of touch with the situation.

In 1946, Sir Alan Burns, the Governor of the Gold Coast from 1941 to 1947, had introduced a new constitution which gave an African majority on the Legislative Council. This had caused much excitement and was seen as a great constitutional step forward. Nevertheless, by 1947 there were only two, virtually moribund, political organizations in the country, neither working effectively, and both bedeviled by tribal divisions between the Akan and the Ga peoples. The two parties – the Gold Coast People's League and the Gold Coast National Party – were dominated by barristers and wealthy merchants, but the organizations lacked any drive or excitement, and meetings were poorly attended. Eventually, on 4 August 1947, the day after Sir Alan Burns retired, there was a meeting at Saltpond (a town near Cape Coast) at which the two parties amalgamated and adopted the title 'The United Gold Coast Convention' – UGCC. George (Pa) Grant, the merchant who had helped Nkrumah in 1936, was elected chairman and J.B. Danquah gave the opening address. In this he outlined the way the Gold Coast people had always cherished their freedom and asserted that the colonial government, by the system of Indirect Rule, had divided the chiefs and the people. He demanded changes which would mean that 'the chiefs and their people will have the reality of power in their hands . . . We must fight with the weapons of today, constitutional, determined, persistent, unflinching, unceasing, until the goal of freedom is attained.'<sup>3</sup>

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The leading figures at this historic meeting came from wealthy and respected families which had enjoyed long associations with the colonial hierarchy, with the law, the church and commerce. They included J.B. Danquah who was considered the doyen of Gold Coast politicians, William Ofori Atta, Akufo Addo, J.W. de Graft Johnson and V.B. Annan. They all supported Danquah's demand for substantial changes to the constitution introduced in 1946. They confidently expected that their education, their social standing, their background and their leadership qualities would make them the natural heirs when the colonial government handed over power. They hoped that the UGCC would become a truly national party and would appeal to a wide cross-section of the people. All successful professional people, none of them could afford the time to run the new party, and they gladly accepted the suggestion of Ako Adjei, then a barrister in Accra, that Kwame Nkrumah should be invited to become the paid party secretary. They intended to take on someone fairly modest to run the office, and did not for a moment expect their new young secretary to emerge as their most dangerous rival. They did not realize what a deep gulf separated their views and their aims from those of the revolutionary leader they were about to invite to join them. The situation is aptly summed up in a comment by Ofosu-Appiah:

This invitation proved a tragic error and cost Danquah and Obetsebi Lamptey their lives in Nkrumah's prisons, William Ofori Atta and Ako Adjei terms of imprisonment, and Akuffo Addo dismissal from the Bench. But at that time only the gods could see so far.<sup>4</sup>

Meanwhile, in England, Nkrumah still hesitated. He realized that the UGCC was controlled by the elite, reactionary, middle-class intelligentsia which all his Marxist training taught him to distrust, and that they would be totally at odds with his views. On

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the other hand, being secretary of a new party would give him great opportunities, for which all his experience in America and in London had been ideal training. After lengthy discussions with the committee of the West African Secretariat, and after receiving a personal letter of invitation from Danquah, he accepted the offer and was sent his passage money by the UGCC. On 14 November 1947, with his close friend and colleague Kojo Botsio, he travelled to Liverpool. At the docks, he was questioned about his communist affiliations, but was allowed to board the MV *Accra* for his voyage home.

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## SECRETARY OF THE UGCC

Nkrumah had been inspired by the teachings of Gandhi and by the newly won independence of the Asian Dominions, but in Whitehall in the late 1940s, few saw this as having any relevance to Africa. The Labour Government was more preoccupied with the disastrous financial situation in which the Second World War had left Britain. In assessing its strategic priorities it put security and resistance to communism first, and second, the economic development of Britain's overseas territories to create markets for British goods and thus improve the domestic economy and standard of living after the losses of war. Britain realized that the United States was opposed to imperialism, but remained suspicious that it might well move in to any area Britain vacated. Successive British governments looked on Africa as a valuable asset with vast mineral resources, which could be developed to counterbalance the economic dominance of the United States. Ernest Bevin as Labour Foreign Secretary, aiming at Western defence co-operation, saw Africa as a huge reservoir of manpower for the struggle against communism. Conservative elements hardly expected any major political changes in Africa, but Whitehall kept a flexible and pragmatic attitude. This received positive direction from Arthur Creech Jones the Labour Colonial Secretary, and the pattern which he established was not substantially changed by any succeeding government. No British government could now

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seriously consider trying to hold a colony by force against the wishes of its people. The issue which governments had to decide was the pace at which power should be handed over. Not so quickly that the successor government would land in chaos – as the Congo was to find. Not yet so slowly as to be driven out at the barrel of a gun – as the French were to find at Dien Bien Phu and in Algeria, and the British in Aden.

West Africa which, under Nkrumah, led the way to political independence, was fortunately free of the complication of white settlers. Sir Charles Arden-Clarke, who established a historic partnership with Nkrumah, once suggested the mosquito as the symbol for independent Ghana, since it had kept white settlers away! West African political advance took place within an overall British policy which had to cope with apartheid in South Africa after 1948, and with the white settler regimes in the Rhodesias.

Having accepted Danquah's offer, Nkrumah decided to make the most of his voyage home and decided to hold meetings and make speeches at all the major ports along the way. The ship did not call at the Gambia, and his first opportunity came at Freetown in Sierra Leone. Here he contacted Wallace Johnson who had worked with him on the West African Secretariat after the Pan African Conference. Nkrumah spent two weeks in Sierra Leone and then went to Liberia, where William Tubman, whom he had met in America, was the newly elected President. In both places Nkrumah found people sympathetic to the cause of political change leading to independence.

When the ship at last reached Takoradi harbour Nkrumah experienced a mixture of conflicting emotions. He felt apprehensive after the attentions of the security forces at Liverpool, but he also felt a surge of happiness at returning home after twelve years' exile and the prospect of being re-united with his mother. At the docks he was quickly reassured when an African official grasped his hand and whispered that the people of the Gold Coast had

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been anxiously awaiting his return. After he landed he travelled to Tarkwa, a small mining town, where he stayed quietly with an old friend, Ackah Watson.

There was to be no joyful family reunion. The fundamentally lonely and isolated figure that Nkrumah was to become was already taking shape. Only his mother came to Tarkwa from Nzima where she still lived, and she gave him a warm and emotional welcome. Even this reunion, after eleven years, was not without its pathos. At first she failed to recognize him. In America he had had two front teeth replaced and this had changed his appearance. From the time of their Tarkwa reunion, Nkrumah remained very close to his mother. In later years she stayed in his house in Accra, and at the end she attended his funeral in Conakry.

Soon after his return to the Gold Coast, Nkrumah had to face up to another responsibility. Before he left for America he had a girl friend, Fanny Miller, and she became pregnant; it appears that her pregnancy hastened his departure for the US. He had no contact with her while he was away and took very little interest either in her or in their son: this was not an unusual situation in Gold Coast society at that time. The son, Francis, proved to be clever, and later won a scholarship and went on to study medicine. After he came to power, Nkrumah's relationship with Fanny Miller appears to have been relaxed but fairly distant. She contacted him occasionally but did not pester him either for money or favours – which in the circumstances would have been understandable. Nkrumah appears to have been neither positive nor generous in his attitude towards Fanny Miller and their son at this time. Later, when Francis returned from medical studies in Germany, he practised in Accra but had little contact with his father.

At the end of 1947, Nkrumah was about to embark on a remarkable political career which was to change the face of his country. He had had valuable experience in America and Britain,

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and he possessed important personal qualities as well. Of medium height, he was a very black handsome man. He had an intelligent and expressive face, a very high forehead, soulful eyes and a ready smile. He was well-knit and slim in build and, though not athletic, he moved gracefully. To women he appeared extremely handsome and attractive. Forty years later, a friend from this period, Mrs. Nancy Tsiboe, addressing a conference which was honouring his memory, claimed to be the first woman to live with him. To a huge round of applause she said, 'Kwame Nkrumah was very shy, unassuming, and very handsome'.<sup>1</sup>

At the end of 1947 the Gold Coast appeared superficially to be a happily and contented colony enjoying more prosperity than most parts of Africa. The cocoa farmers, the backbone of the economy, still produced two-thirds of the world's cocoa, and the price was rising after the restrictions of the war. Sir Alan Burns, the experienced reforming Governor of the Gold Coast, addressed the Empire Parliamentary Association in London on 24 October 1947 and said 'The people are really happy'. At this juncture the colony had reached a level of political sophistication unmatched elsewhere in Africa, and was the pioneer of political change.

The chiefs had always played a significant role in the administration of their tribal areas, and their power had been increased under the system of Indirect Rule established by the British, who found it convenient and prudent to exercise their power through local hierarchies already in place. The system, introduced by Lord Lugard who annexed Northern Nigeria at the turn of the century and became the first British High Commissioner, was copied widely in Africa. It enabled Britain administer vast territories with minimum staff and at minimum expense. Indirect Rule upheld the power of the chiefs, and respected local customs provided they were not repugnant to British law. For many African peoples, it brought peace, prosperity and progress. Several governors, including Guggisberg and Burns,

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had passed laws upholding the chief's power. On the other hand, the chief was no local despot, and the people enjoyed the democratic right to remove him, if necessary, from his 'stool' – the symbol of his power, as the throne is for a king. This right had for decades involved the common people in the democratic process, and many African critics of the imperialist system looked back to the pre-colonial era when great indigenous empires ruled large parts of Africa in peace and prosperity.

In the more remote Northern Territories, the system of Indirect Rule worked more happily than in the south. A District Commissioner (DC) who exercised ultimate power would work in close and generally amicable co-operation with the local chiefs. The DC and his small team of doctor, veterinary officer and Public Works (PWD) officer devoted their lives to the welfare of the people in their charge. After the war as the pace of political progress and excitement increased – well before the return of Nkrumah – the northern people became apprehensive about being taken over by the sharper and more advanced people from the south. In fact, this is precisely what happened. When the British left, because education in the north had lagged behind the south, educated southerners did move in and take over most of the administrative posts. The power of the chiefs declined at the same time when, as agents of the imperial power, they often had to oppose the democratic movement.

Soon after his return, Nkrumah was quick to grasp the potential importance of a new element in society referred to locally as the 'young men'. They were mainly people who had completed elementary education, but then had few opportunities to obtain employment commensurate with their educational level. These 'young men' formed many discussion groups and debating societies and became highly critical of the chiefs and the colonial regime. The system of Indirect Rule gave them few opportunities to progress, and they became increasingly frustrated. During

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the 1930s and 1940s they engineered many disputes to get rid of reactionary chiefs. In Ashanti, the strong hierarchy of chiefs which formed the basis of the Ashanti Confederacy Council and which was presided over by the Asantehene (the Paramount Chief of Ashanti) was even more unassailable. This resulted in increasingly active youth groups which eventually joined together as the Ashanti Youth Organization. Formed in 1947, this organization quickly took on a political role, and before Nkrumah and the UGCC had time to make any impact, it had passed a resolution seeking the replacement of the chiefs on the Legislative Council, and demanding self-government within five years – self government based on a democratic system which would give greater opportunities to the common man.

During the governorship of Sir Alan Burns the chiefs had gained increasing power in their own areas, on the Joint Provincial Council, and on the Legislative Council. These changes had been confirmed by the Native Authority Ordinance 1944. Burns thought that the chiefs were the best representatives of the rural areas, but their position was frequently attacked by the intelligentsia led by J.B. Danquah. This serious and prolonged rift between two powerful groups added to the criticism of the chiefs which was coming from the youth organizations all over Ashanti and the south.

Underneath the superficial calm and prosperity, several other worrying factors emerged in the years immediately after the war, which were to contribute to the dramatic speed with which Nkrumah overthrew the *status quo*. In spite of Burns' confident public gestures, he had already alerted the Colonial Office to the low morale of his senior staff. Many of the younger staff had joined the services during the war, while the older ones who remained had seldom had home leave and were grossly overworked. This situation was perhaps typified by T. R. O. Mangin, who had served in the colony since 1918 and was later to be responsible for its

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administration prior to the arrival of Sir Gerald Creasy in January 1948. When new men began to arrive after 1945, they found the old guard despotic, reactionary, insensitive and unaware of the urgent political, economic and social problems facing the colony. Many of the old guard considered such matters as security and public relations to be new-fangled nonsense. This already difficult situation was exacerbated by the post-war shortage of supplies, which frustrated many schemes for reform and development.

The biggest single threat to the administration, and to the Gold Coast as a whole, came from a disease called swollen shoot which attacked the cocoa trees and was carried by the mealy bug. It had first been identified in 1943 in Ashanti, but in spite of prolonged research in the West African Research Institute at Tafo, no remedy could be found, and the only way to prevent the spread of the disease was to cut out the infected trees. Unfortunately, infected trees continued to produce healthy looking pods for some time, and the cocoa farmer bitterly resented the cutting-out policy: this threatened his whole livelihood just when, after years of low prices during the 1930s slump and then the war, the price of cocoa was at last improving.

The government rightly saw swollen shoot as a dire threat to the entire industry. There had been around 400 million cocoa trees; by 1947, 2.5 million had already been cut down and destroyed, but it was estimated that 45 million could still be infected. The government first tried to persuade the farmers to cut down and burn the infected trees; next came threats of compulsion, then legal compulsion, and finally direct action by the Agriculture Department which sent groups of labourers to the farms to cut down the infected trees. The effects of the swollen shoot crisis have been vividly described by Polly Hill in *The Migrant Cocoa Farmer* and the picture is one of devastation, despair and anger, with violence and intimidation spreading through whole communities.<sup>2</sup> The cocoa farmers had been fairly well organized

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since the turn of the century, and in the 1930s they had been sufficiently powerful to organize a hold-up of cocoa supplies in order to obtain a better price for their crop. They had made many attempts to break the monopoly of the government agency, and of the big expatriate cocoa firms like Cadbury and Fry. During 1947, throughout the cocoa-growing areas – centred mainly in Ashanti – a flood of complaints began to come to the chiefs, to the DCs, to the Provincial Council and to the Legislative Council. The wildest rumours passed from village to village. It was suggested that Britain was destroying the cocoa industry in order to set up a new one in another part of Africa. Some people believed that Europe was going to start growing cocoa. The Agriculture Department, and especially its public relations section, grossly mishandled this dangerous situation and simply continued the policy of cutting out. The fury and frustration of the cocoa farmers increased. When the UGCC was formed, many of its leaders, including Danquah and Ofori Atta, had very close links with the cocoa growing areas. The farmers quickly fell into line with the UGCC – temporarily overcoming the gulf between the intelligentsia and the chiefs.

Swollen shoot certainly created a crisis in Ashanti and in the cocoa-growing areas, but the next problem – inflation – affected the whole colony. The government handled this problem with even greater ineptitude. After 1945 inflation was world-wide, but local factors made its effects more severe in the Gold Coast. Shortage of shipping meant that many imported goods which had become essential to everyday life – sugar, cotton goods, paraffin, canned fish – could not be obtained. The increase in the price of cocoa meant that there was more money in circulation, but there were few things to buy – a classic inflationary situation. The prices of everything, even locally produced food, more than doubled while the level of wages fell far behind. In this situation the culprits clearly were the European trading companies which handled the

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majority of imports and exports, and which had joined together after the war into a group called Association of West African Merchants (AWAM).

A substantial part of the retail trade throughout the colony was handled by Lebanese, Greek and Syrian merchants. Many of these, like A.G. Leventis, were well established and wealthy. As middlemen, they could always offset inflation, and their continued prosperity caused deep resentment. Anti-European and anti-Syrian feelings were exacerbated by the system of import control based on 'Past Performance', which favoured the well established European and Syrian traders and militated against Africans trying to set up or to develop their own businesses. One man, a Ga chief in Accra called Kwabena Bonne, who was not only a prosperous and successful business man but also a strong civic leader, came forward and channelled the anger and frustration which most people in the country felt. He spoke effectively. 'The white men and Syrians are tricking you out of your money', he said. He gained fervent support across the country when he proposed that, unless the British and Syrian stores reduced their prices, he would instigate a complete boycott of imported goods. In this potentially explosive situation, the Accra Government – in the interregnum before the arrival of the new Governor, Sir Gerald Creasy, in January 1948 – was incompetent and out of touch. Bonne warned the government and the AWAM that his proposed boycott would start on 24 January 1948. He followed this with a New Year message which strongly opposed the exploitation of the people by the Europeans, and called on the people to fight and die for their freedom. This prompted an enthusiastic response in support of the civil war against the common foe. Still the government did nothing.

The boycott of all imported goods and of British and Syrian stores started on 24 January 1948 and held up remarkably well. The government took no action until well into February, when Robert

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Scott, the Gold Coast Colonial Secretary, met with Kwabena Bonne, the committee of AWAM, the Chamber of Commerce and the Council of Chiefs. AWAM members agreed to cut their profit margins from 75 per cent to 50 per cent. At this critical juncture the government failed again, in not explaining what sort of price cuts this would mean. The general public – including the European community – were expecting very substantial price cuts under the agreement when the boycott was to be lifted on Saturday 28 February.

This was a period of growing tension, with every town and village in the southern part of the country conscious of the intense feelings of anger and frustration over the boycott and the swollen shoot campaign. During these days, Danquah and Nkrumah were together touring the country speaking to excited meetings. They began to bring together many strands of opinion, including those of the youth groups who were actively supporting Bonne. Bonne did not support the UGCC political aims and rejected formal co-operation with Danquah, but in the towns and villages the activists supported both causes.

Strong feelings about the boycott and swollen shoot then amalgamated with the third great issue of the day – the grievances of the ex-servicemen. Both Nkrumah and Danquah addressed a meeting of the Ex-Servicemen's Union at the Palladium Cinema on 20 February. It had been called in order to discuss their grievances prior to presenting a petition to the Governor.

Out of a total of 63,000 ex-servicemen, the majority had served in the Middle East or in the Burma campaign against the Japanese in the 81<sup>st</sup> or 82<sup>nd</sup> West African Divisions. These men, many of whom had risen to senior NCO or Warrant Officer rank, had returned home with high expectations for their future. They had been given small gratuities but these had rapidly disappeared, and the civilian world seemed to have scant interest in their wartime skills. One of the fine traditions of the Royal West African Frontier

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Force was that any group of men with a grievance could go to their colonel and talk things over. Thus in February 1948, after their meeting with Nkrumah and Danquah, whose son was a Burma veteran, they wanted to talk over their grievance with the Governor. Their march to present their petition had been planned for 23 February, but was postponed to 28 February. Thus it was pure chance – or perhaps malevolent fate- which made the ex-servicemen's march and the end of the boycott coincide.

While these events were moving to a climax, Nkrumah had travelled to Saltpond in early January 1948 to meet the leaders of the UGCC. He found that they had no funds, no bank account, and could not pay the £100 per month that he had been promised as his salary. To the amazement of the well-to-do members of the committee, he offered to work for nothing but eventually they offered him £25 per month. Nkrumah encouraged the impression that he was indifferent about money, and later in his career this was to have unexpected and tragic consequences. He soon organized an office which he rented from the United African Company. He then called the first committee meeting for 20 January, and to the surprise of the members, put forward a detailed plan of action. This included the establishment of a shadow cabinet, the establishment of branches in every town and village, preferably with the local chief as patron, and the arrangement of weekend training courses for activists. He suggested that they should test out their organization by staging demonstrations before calling a constituent assembly to draw up an independence constitution. Finally, he proposed strikes and boycotts to support the demand for self-government. Some of the committee were impressed with this highly professional approach, but others were apprehensive. Immediately after the meeting, Nkrumah started an intensive programme of travel, setting up new branches and collecting donations in order to put the UGCC on a sound financial basis.

Even in those early days, differences of aim and of philosophy

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became apparent. The UGCC leaders intended to operate in the south, but not in Asante or the Northern Territories, while Nkrumah was determined that a political party should be countrywide. Later, the view of the UGCC cost them dear. Similarly, the lawyers of the UGCC argued pedantically against the idea of a party flag, and after hours of discussion failed to agree on a design. Nkrumah was busily occupied with these problems and with party organization during the period of the Bonne boycott and the fateful days leading up to the riots.

The events of Saturday 28 February 1948, which started a dramatic chain of events affecting the whole of Africa, were quite straightforward. Against the background of Bonne's boycott and of the swollen shoot crises, the ex-servicemen's procession was due to march to the government offices in Accra. The European and Syrian stores had promised to reduce their prices from that morning. As a precaution, the government had put both troops and police on the alert. Unfortunately, the ex-servicemen's procession, which had started in an orderly way, was quickly joined by rowdy elements, and become a menacing and threatening mob. The procession should have marched towards the Secretariat offices, but instead took the road leading towards Christiansborg Castle, the residence of the Governor. At the fatal crossroads their way was barred by a European police officer, Superintendent Colin Imray, and a small detachment of armed police. Imray has since described how he faced the advancing procession and how after due warning had been given, and when the marchers continued to advance, he grabbed a rifle from one of his men and personally fired at the leaders of the march.<sup>3</sup> Three ex-servicemen were killed – Sergeant Adjetey, Corporal Attipoe and and Private Odartey Lampitey. After they had been shot and others injured, the marchers turned back to Accra in an ugly mood. In the centre of Accra, the crowds were already incensed because the European and Syrian shops had not reduced their prices as much as had been expected.

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When the first marchers reached the centre of Accra, violence erupted at once. The mob attacked the United Africa Company shops and offices, and other European and Syrian stores. They set fire to cars and rapidly looted the stores. The violence, arson and looting continued through the night, and in the morning the mob moved against the prison at Ussher Fort, battered down the doors, and released the prisoners. Over the weekend, as the troops and police restored order in Accra, the looting spread to Kumasi, Koforidua and other provincial towns. In all the riots, twenty-nine people were killed and over 200 injured.

On that Saturday afternoon, Nkrumah and Danquah were attending a meeting at Saltpond when Akufo Addo telephoned with the news of the riots. They immediately drove to Accra and held a committee meeting at Akufo Addo's house. Here again, Nkrumah clashed with the rest of the committee. They supported Danquah in sending a telegram of over 1,000 words to the Secretary of State in London, while Nkrumah sent a separate one demanding the recall of the Governor and the appointment of a commission to supervise the setting up of a constituent assembly. This he also sent to the United Nations, *Pan Africa Magazine*, *The New York Times*, *The Daily Worker* and the *Moscow New Times*. Danquah also wrote a lengthy article entitled 'The Hour of Liberation has Struck', in which he demanded the liberation of the country from the thralldom imposed by the treaty of 1844 and a constitution 'which will regulate the affairs between us and Britain in the daylight of freedom'.<sup>4</sup>

Fearing arrest, Nkrumah went into hiding with two women supporters in Accra, and for a few days quietly typed out his plans for the future. Then, realizing that under the state of emergency he might endanger their lives, he left Accra and returned to Saltpond. Here he discovered that the United Africa Company had closed down his office, so he moved to Cape Coast and opened an office there. A few days later he heard that the UGCC leaders were to

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be arrested, and that night, 18 March 1948, the police came to his house. Amongst his meager belongings they found an unsigned Communist Party Card and also a membership document of The Circle (see p.46). When questioned by the police, Nkrumah maintained, quite honestly, that these documents were of no great significance, and that he was not a member of the Communist Party. He explained that, in England, he had contacted most organizations, both left and right, in order to assist in planning a nationalist party. The police did not accept his protestations, and the Gold Coast Government, which had been profoundly shaken by the extent and severity of the riots, eagerly pounced on these documents as proof that a communist conspiracy had been their cause.

The UGCC leaders were therefore to be arrested and removed from Accra until the arrival of a Commission of Inquiry – the Watson Commission – from London. After his midnight arrest in Saltpond, Nkrumah was threatened and taunted by the police, bundled into a police van and driven for several hours before arriving at Accra airport. Here he joined the other UGCC leaders, and they were all flown to Kumasi.

In Kumasi prison the 'Big Six' leaders of the UGCC – Danquah, Ofori Atta, Akufo Addo, Ako Adjei, Obetsebi Lamptey and Nkrumah – were all housed in a compound where they could meet and discuss matters. During this enforced proximity, Nkrumah realized how deeply his views differed from those of the other five. They blamed him for causing the riots and for their own detention, and even criticized Ako Adjei for recommending him in the first place. After three days, the group were woken in the middle of the night and taken by bus to Tamale, because – as they discovered later – Krobo Edusei (who was later to become the leading CPP supporter in Ashanti) had roused the youth of Ashanti to rescue them. From Tamale, the six were dispersed to separate places. Nkrumah was held at Lawra in the extreme north-west. He almost enjoyed his six weeks of lonely exile in Lawra, an improvement

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on the fierce bickerings with the others in Kumasi prison, and also befriended a tame mongoose which kept him company. At the end of six weeks, the group were reassembled at Tamale, then flown to Accra, and held there in custody in a hotel at Accra airport. Here they met Dingle Foot KC, whom the UGCC had engaged to represent their leaders before the Watson Commission.

The Watson Commission reported in June 1948. It had investigated the causes of the riots and the events of February 1948, and it proposed substantial constitutional changes. It was severely critical of the Gold Coast Government and highlighted the inadequacies of Creasy, who had no previous field experience, of Scott, the Colonial Secretary who had just arrived from Palestine, and of Mangin, the Chief Commissioner who was aloof, autocratic and out of touch. These three were criticized for being ill-informed and for passing on alarmist reports. These reports in turn coloured the view of the British Government, which in a House of Commons debate on 1 March 1948, hinted at a communist conspiracy.<sup>5</sup>

The Commission interviewed Nkrumah who assured them that 'The Circle' was just a dream. They commented: 'Suffice it to say we are satisfied, having seen and heard Nkrumah, that, given the smallest opportunity, he would quickly translate his dream into reality.' 'In an accurate and impressive report, the Commission made one serious error. In a more general comment on 'The Circle' and on Nkrumah's activities in London where he had openly campaigned for a Union of West African Socialist Republics, the Watson Report significantly added the word 'Soviet' to the title. This created further misunderstandings when the press reports took up the cry of a 'Union of West African Soviet Socialist Republics'. Against the background of increasing intensity in the Cold War, this misunderstanding was to have serious repercussions.

Finally, the Watson Commission recommended the appoint-

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ment of another commission to propose a new constitution. This was set up on December 1948 under Justice Coussey – later Sir Henley Coussey – and had forty nominated members. There was immediate criticism that many important elements in society had been omitted – the farmers, the market women, the miners and the trade unions. Significantly, most of the UGCC leaders were members of the Coussey Commission, but not Nkrumah.

The deep rift between Nkrumah and the UGCC leaders, which had been apparent in Kumasi prison, became more noticeable after their release in April 1948, when they returned to Accra. During their imprisonment, there had been demonstrations in their support in various parts of the country, and because of this, a number of teachers and pupils had been suspended from their schools. Nkrumah returned to Cape Coast, where, after discussing the problem with the UGCC committee, he set up the first Ghana National College. Because the committee did not give it their full support, he used his own salary to hire a hall and to buy tea chests, boards and kerosene tins to equip a makeshift classroom. The sacked teachers offered to work for no salary. Nkrumah certainly imbued them with his fiery enthusiasm, and he spoke of his goal of establishing such colleges all over the country.

In August 1948, Nkrumah asked for a meeting to discuss the working of the UGCC. To his surprise, he discovered that Ofori Atta and Lamptey had secretly searched the files. The committee then confronted him with a number of charges – including the founding of the Ghana College – which, they said, justified their demand for his resignation because he had acted without the full authority of the committee. The dispute simmered on. Some of the committee thought Nkrumah might be too dangerous as an opponent, and suggested that, as a compromise, he should remain as honorary treasurer. This he later accepted.

Even when he was a student in America, Nkrumah had realized the value and importance of a newspaper to spread political ideas.

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As soon as he had taken up his UGCC post, he had suggested to Danquah and his colleagues that the party should start a newspaper. They rejected the idea, so he set up his own paper the *Accra Evening News*, with Komla Gbedemah, who was to be his right-hand man throughout the independence struggle, as the editor. On an old press in the office of a sympathetic printer, they produced the first copy on 3 September 1948, just when Nkrumah had ceased to be secretary of the UGCC. Devoted entirely to the struggle against imperialism, and hard hitting in its criticism, it made a considerable impact throughout the country – often being read and reread to illiterate groups. The caustic columns by 'Agitator' and 'Ramble' gained an enthusiastic audience throughout Africa, but Danquah's supporters took a different view. 'This paper set the tone for the filthy journalism which characterized the Convention People's Party ... Vilification, abuse and character assassination were its distinctive features.'<sup>7</sup> During the next few months several libel cases were brought against the paper, but generous public financial support always enabled the cases to be settled.

While the *Accra Evening News* was gaining immense popularity for Nkrumah, his close colleagues Gbedemah and Kojo Botsio were working hard to set up a nationwide youth organization. This was initially part of the UGCC, but as it became more radical in its views, a rift developed between it and the UGCC, hierarchy. Its nucleus was the Youth Study Group which Nkrumah had started in Accra and which met in Gbedemah's house. This developed into the Committee on Youth Organization (CYO). Encouraged by Nkrumah, it adopted the slogan 'Self-Government Now', which upstaged the more ponderous UGCC slogan 'Self-Government in the Shortest Possible Time'. Helped by Gbedemah's outstanding organizing ability, the CYO rapidly gained momentum. He arranged a meeting in December 1948 at the King George V Hall in Accra. Nkrumah had taken a few days' holiday in Nzima to visit his mother, and on his return journey reached the ferry on

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the Ankobra river at 4 am. To his amazement, Gbedemah was on the other bank yelling to him to hurry up. They leapt into Gbedemah's old car and after a hectic drive reached the meeting with only a few minutes to spare.

Nkrumah spoke to a packed audience on 'The Liberty of the Colonial Subject', and because there had been a charge for admission, the CYO raised £200 for its funds. Nkrumah was able to operate under the CYO banner while still nominally in the UGCC, though the rift grew steadily wider.

After the success of the Accra meeting, the CYO arranged a youth conference in Kumasi, and invited all the youth organizations to attend. The police banned the conference on the morning it was due to start (23 December), but those who did arrive met in secret session and produced a manifesto entitled 'Towards Self-Government'. This also included the slogan 'Self-Government Now'. The committee submitted the manifesto to the Coussey Committee which was collecting opinions on the proposed new constitution. The CYO also decided to protest to the Colonial Secretary in London over the banning of their meeting. They realized that a telegram would be stopped by the British authorities, and they therefore drove to Lome in French Togoland, only to find that the authorities there had been alerted and refused to accept the telegram.

The CYO continued to grow in power and to widen the rift between the UGCC leadership and Nkrumah. He stole a march on Danquah by visiting the Northern Territories in March 1949, where to the chagrin of his rivals he was treated like a chief. His views had changed and matured by this time and he spoke with a confident and independent outlook. He promised that when he came to power he 'would turn the Gold Coast into a paradise in ten years'.<sup>8</sup> He also used the slogan popularized by the *Accra Evening News*, 'Seek ye first the political kingdom and all else will be added to it'.

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In June 1949 Nkrumah called a CYO conference at the mining town of Tarkwa. Two issues were debated: the possible effect of Nkrumah's expected sacking by the UGCC, and whether the CYO should break away and form a separate political party under Nkrumah's leadership. One group argued that they should stay in the UGCC and eventually grasp power from within the party. Nkrumah, knowing his total estrangement from the views of Danquah and the UGCC Working Party, strongly urged a complete break. He chose the name Convention People's Party (CPP) – in order to carry over those who identified with the word 'convention'.

He also drew up the CPP programme:

1. To fight relentlessly by all constitutional means for the achievement of 'Self-Government NOW' for the Chiefs and people of the Gold Coast.
2. To serve as the vigorous conscious political vanguard for removing all forms of oppression and for the establishment of a democratic government.
3. To secure and maintain the complete unity of the Chiefs and people of the Colony, Ashanti, Northern Territories and Trans-Volta.
4. To work in the interest of the trade union movement in the country for better conditions of employment.
5. To work for a proper reconstruction of a better Gold Coast in which the people shall have the right to live and govern themselves as free people.
6. To assist and facilitate in any way possible the realization of a united and self-governing West Africa.

It is significant that even before the new party had been formed, Nkrumah ensured that the aim of a united West Africa was incorporated into its fundamental strategy.

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The showdown between the UGCC and the CYO reflects the chasm between the personalities of Danquah and Nkrumah. Danquah looked back to the 1930s and the war years when he had been the doyen of Gold Coast politicians. Born into a wealthy chief's family in Kibi, educated at London University and the Inner Temple, he had played an important role in bringing together the chiefs and intelligentsia of that time. For years he had led the movement for Gold Coast nationalism as opposed to the wider West African aims of the Gold Coast leader J. E. Casely-Hayford, or the Pan African aims of other leaders. Up to 1949, as a distinguished scholar and intellectual, Danquah had spearheaded the nationalist movement, and he confidently expected to inherit the mantle of the colonial power when, in due course, the handover of power was accomplished. From his elegant and arrogant position, he now saw this dignified process being challenged by Nkrumah, whose views and attitudes were anathema to him. Nkrumah organized the masses, he roused them with fiery oratory, he slept on their verandas, he shared their hardships, and he captivated them with his charm, enthusiasm and passion. He inflamed the people with demands for 'Self-Government Now', while Danquah would have condescendingly dispensed his views on political change from an aloof aristocratic pinnacle.

A meeting in Accra on Sunday 12 June 1949 brought the final clash very close. Nkrumah announced to a huge crowd the formation of the Convention People's Party. In a long speech, he outlined the struggle since 1947. He stressed the importance of 'Self-Government Now', and warned the people that if a Conservative government was returned in Britain in 1950, it would be less sympathetic to their aims than the current Labour Government. Using skilful rhetorical questions, he gained the overwhelming and vociferous support of the crowd to break away from the UGCC and to form a new party.

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# 4

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## BIRTH OF THE CPP

THE SHOWDOWN BETWEEN NKRUMAH AND DANQUAH, between the old guard and the radical masses, was not long delayed. The UGCC realized the danger that the formation of the CPP posed, and they quickly sent an offer to reinstate Nkrumah as secretary. He tentatively accepted the proposal, and a UGCC delegate conference was called to meet at Saltpond in July 1949. The conference took place with thousands of Nkrumah's excited supporters outside the hall. The delegates passed a resolution of no confidence in Danquah and the Working Committee. Later, Nkrumah described the next emotional moments in the messianic tone which he tended to adopt when describing his early successes. He was called out of the meeting to face an excited crowd.

'Resign!' they shouted as soon as they saw me, 'resign and lead us and we shall complete the struggle together!' I realized at once that they were sincere and determined. Above all I knew that they needed me to lead them. I had stirred their deepest feelings and they had shown their confidence in me; I could never fail them now. Quickly I made up my mind. 'I will lead you,' I said. 'This very day I will lead you!'

He returned to the conference room and announced that he

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had resigned from his post as secretary and from the UGCC. In this highly emotional atmosphere a woman supporter jumped up and began to sing 'Lead kindly Light'. Thereafter the hymn was sung at most CPP meetings.

The Saltpond meeting and Nkrumah's split from the UGCC proved to be of momentous significance in Ghana's history. In contemporary film clips and radio recordings Nkrumah appears as a rather flat and diffident speaker, but he undoubtedly had an amazing magnetism which could whip up his people's enthusiasm and maintain it. The emotional impact of that moment in Saltpond is substantiated by those who were present including Kojo Botsio. After Saltpond, Nkrumah dramatically made his mark on the Gold Coast scene; he was also about to be caught up in the wider issues of policy emanating from the Colonial Office.

The Colonial Secretary, Arthur Creech Jones, had had a long-standing interest in African affairs and had been an active member of the Fabian Society. He, more than anyone else, had guided the Labour Party towards a responsible and constructive African policy. He believed that Britain should give positive help and leadership in guiding the colonial people towards political independence, and he eagerly embraced the long-standing British tradition going back to the Statute of Westminster and the Durham Report. By 1949 Creech Jones was a well-established and respected Colonial Secretary. At that particular time he had many urgent responsibilities, including the Palestine crisis and the communist insurgency in Malaya. Consequently, considerable authority fell to Andrew Cohen, the radical young head of the Africa division of the Colonial Office.

Cohen, from a wealthy background and with a first class degree in classics from Trinity College, Cambridge, was determined to implement radical and forward-looking policies while Creech Jones was still Colonial Secretary. He deliberately set out to encourage independence movements and to overcome the reactionary forces

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in the Colonial Office, the Colonial Service and at Westminster. He believed that, in the changing African situation, the future lay with young educated people participating in modern democratic local government, rather than with reactionary chiefs and their councils. This was the reasoning behind the important Colonial Local Government Ordinance of 1947. Creech Jones and Cohen put their views to a conference of governors at Queen's College, Cambridge in 1947. Most of the governors – notably Lord Milverton (Nigeria) and Sir Philip Mitchell (Kenya) – objected to the proposals on the grounds that irresponsible nationalists would seize power. Cohen argued that 'Self-government is better than good colonial government', and he believed that responsible Africans given power now would remain friendly towards Britain and the West.<sup>2</sup>

In dealing with the Gold Coast crisis, against the growing intensity of the Cold War and the suspicion of Nkrumah's communist links, Creech Jones and Cohen were again in agreement on their approach. It was 'the shared approach of Creech Jones and Cohen to strengthen the hand of Danquah and the moderate leaders of the UGCC by giving them a full share in government before it was too late.'<sup>3</sup> Cohen viewed the situation pragmatically and realized that he had to overcome reactionary attitudes among the civil servants in the Colonial Office, among many expatriate staff and among politicians. He decided that he would be more likely to achieve a smooth handover of power to the Danquah group than to the newly emerged, more radical and more dangerous elements represented by Nkrumah.

The Colonial Office plans were soon overtaken by the events at Saltpond and the rapid developments in the CPP, Nkrumah became chairman, Gbedemah vice chairman, and Kojo Botsio secretary of the Convention People's Party. The formation of the CPP in July 1949 totally changed the political situation. Nkrumah no longer suffered the frustrations and restraints imposed by

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Danquah and his committee. At last he was able to use all his skills and charisma, to draw on his experience in Britain and the US, and to put over the message in which he believed so passionately. The seeds sown by Aggrey and Azikiwe in the 1930s had finally borne fruit. The wild excitement of the scenes in Accra and Saltpond rapidly spread to the rest of the country. Given a free hand at last, Nkrumah rapidly organized an effective modern political party, radical, forward-looking and aggressive. Soon the party colours of red, white and green appeared in every village; vans painted in party colours brought party newspapers and party leaflets from Accra, Cape Coast and Sekondi. Loudspeaker vans toured the villages calling for Self-Government Now, and party members spoke to the people in their own language. Women flocked to support the Charismatic new leader, and were effectively used to organize branches in every community. The writing on the wall was 'S-G Now'.

No normal political message, even with revolutionary overtones, could have kept up the verve and excitement of the early days of CPP. Nkrumah not only had a clear simple message – S-G Now – but he touched a deep fundamental chord in all the people. He offered dignity, self-confidence and self-respect to every African man and woman; he gave the young men the chance to kick over their frustrations with a vision of a new democratic society in which an elected council would replace the chiefs and their elders; he gave women the chance to play a full part in a new society. Above all, he gave confidence to the people to challenge the age-old superiority and arrogance of the white man and his racist attitude. He gave the African the confidence to show the world what the African could achieve. It was this wave of enthusiasm and anger which swept him to power and swept the elite and outmoded UGCC to one side. Their fears about hooligans, communists and veranda boys made no impact on the triumphal progress of the CPP.

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The slogan S-G Now was backed up by the threat of Positive Action, and soon after the formation of the CPP, Nkrumah had the opportunity to state what this really meant. He was called upon to do this in October 1949, at a special meeting of the Ga State Council in Accra, presided over by the paramount chief, and there he found himself confronted by many of his old UGCC adversaries. Nkrumah accepted the challenge and was glad of the chance to state his case publicly. During his formative years, one of the great heroes of the anti-imperialist struggle had been Gandhi. Gandhi's philosophy, his teaching, and his example of non-violent struggle in India in the 1930s and 1940s formed the basis of Positive Action.

Nkrumah based Positive Action on the premise that no colony had been given its freedom without a serious struggle against the imperial power. Such a struggle could either be armed, or peaceful and non-violent. Positive Action was proposed so that the independence struggle would remain peaceful and within the law. Nkrumah presented his view of Positive Action while the country was awaiting the publication of the Coussey Report, which would decide its political and constitutional future. He emphasized that there would be no Positive Action until the report had been published. The first phase of Positive Action would be a concerted campaign to support the demand for self-government through newspapers, by public meetings, by education, by party activity and by party propaganda. Only if all these failed would the Party launch the next phase: this would include strikes, boycotts and mass non-co-operation. In practical terms, Nkrumah made it plain that the CPP would study the Coussey Report when it came out and would put forward necessary counter-proposals; and only if these were rejected would he launch Positive Action. His opponents had hoped to use the Ga State Council meeting to silence Nkrumah. It had the opposite effect. Working through the night on a creaking printing press, he quickly produced several

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thousand leaflets set off to stump the country, addressing packed political meetings.

The long-awaited Coussey Report was made public at the end of October 1949. The Coussey Commission had been deeply divided over the role of the chief in the new constitution, and presented a report which offered two alternatives. First, a two-chamber system including a senate of chiefs and an elected assembly; the second, which was accepted by the Secretary of State, provided for a single chamber of seventy-eight members. This included three officials – the Gold Coast Colonial Secretary, the Financial Secretary and the Attorney General: also three representatives of commercial and mining interests. The seventy-two elected members included twenty-four indirectly elected from the territorial councils of chiefs, and forty-eight directly elected members. The Executive Committee, which rapidly developed into a cabinet, had the Governor as Chairman, with three officials and eight members of the Assembly who would be the senior ministers of the government.

The Coussey Report was a revolutionary document which totally changed the role of the Governor – in spite of his veto – and gave real and effective responsibility to African ministers backed by an elected Assembly. Its publication presented a dilemma to Nkrumah, who was, to some extent, trapped by his own rhetoric. He had demanded Self-Government Now, but he had to consider whether it was wise to reject the undoubted leap forward towards self-government which the Coussey Report offered. His initial reaction was summed up in two well-known phrases: first, it was 'bogus and fraudulent' and secondly, with delightfully mixed metaphors, it was a 'Trojan gift horse'.

His real problem was to decide what action to take to retain the momentum of his movement and the support of his more extreme members who were still riding high on the wave of euphoria which he had created. His immediate remarks, widely

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disseminated by the three CPP newspapers, gave him a short breathing space, during which there were demands for Positive Action.

Nkrumah also had to face a totally new factor in the situation – the new Governor, Sir Charles Arden-Clarke, whose career was to be totally bound up with his own. Arden-Clarke was no deskbound Whitehall official like his predecessor, Sir Gerald Creasy. He was a tough and experienced governor who had carried out pioneering work in Central Nigeria in the 1920s, who had achieved success in Bechuanaland with Tshekedi Khama in the 1930s, and who, after further service in Basutoland, had been an outstanding Governor of Sarawak as it faced political upheaval and the threat of armed communist attack. Tutored by Malcolm Macdonald, the Commissioner General for south East Asia, Arden-Clarke had a flexible mind, an awareness of complex issues, and an immense and cheerful self-confidence.

Creech Jones, relying on the panicky reports of the previous administration, had warned Arden-Clarke before he flew to Accra, that the Gold Coast could be lost. Soon after his arrival he was presented with a draft copy of the Coussey Report, and spent the next few weeks in urgent preparation for its publication. His inaugural speech made a good impression. He promised to get out and about and meet the people and, referring to the Coussey Report, stressed the importance of local government and strong leadership from the chiefs. He warned that any violence would be dealt with severely. Appealing to all the people, he declared that progress would depend on partnership between all sections of society working for the common good. After a few days he visited Sekondi and Takoradi. He then went on to the more backward area of the Northern Territories, where there was little support for Nkrumah's radical ideas. Next he visited Kumasi, the capital of Ashanti, where he addressed a durbar of Ashanti chiefs. Here he referred again to the Coussey Report which would

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bring the country towards responsible self-government within the British Commonwealth. He pointed out the substantial new developments which were taking place in Kumasi – a new hospital, a new technical college, and other public works. Finally, he gave a stern warning against violence and exhorted the chiefs to do their duty, as he would do his.

Nkrumah quickly realized that he would have to take some action. He therefore called for a Gold Coast People's Representative Assembly to meet on 20 November, and invited representatives of over fifty organizations. The UGCC and the chiefs' Councils refused to attend. Nkrumah and the CPP leaders had decided that, to keep up the momentum of their movement, they would oppose the Coussey Report; and they hoped through this meeting to unite public opinion against it. After stormy discussions, the Assembly passed a resolution declaring the Coussey Report unacceptable, and it demanded 'immediate self-government, that is, full Dominion Status within the Commonwealth of Nations based on the Statute of Westminster'.<sup>4</sup> It also proposed a constitution with a separate house of chiefs and elders, but in other respects similar to that put forward in the Coussey Report. The chiefs, led by Nana Ofori Atta II and Sir Tsibu Darku, roundly rejected the Assembly proposals. On 15 December, the CPP sent a letter to the Governor warning him that, if the Assembly resolution was ignored, Positive Action would follow. Nkrumah supported this by an article in the *Accra Evening News* entitled 'The Era of Positive Action Draws Nigh', and by a mass meeting at which he outlined the article's main features. The meeting demanded a constituent assembly to decide on a full self-government constitution. Nkrumah gave the Governor two weeks to accept the idea of a constituent assembly in principle.

The Governor could not ignore such a public challenge and he therefore addressed the Legislative Council. He reminded them of their long partnership with Britain, and Britain's determination

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to grant self-government as soon as practicable. African ministers could soon be taking office, he said, with the genuine help of senior British staff. He concluded with a severe rebuke to those who painted distorted pictures of an enslaved people struggling to be free from an oppressive tyrant.

He called on all men of goodwill to counteract the evil effect of political creeds based on, in the words of the Litany, 'envy, hatred, malice and all uncharitableness'.<sup>5</sup>

By the end of 1949 the Governor had instituted a new security system. George Sinclair, a senior member of the Administration, took charge and liaised with the police, the military and the Special Branch. He led a three-man security committee which operated with reliable under-cover agents. Often ex-servicemen, they were active in Accra, Kumasi, Takoradi and other main towns. Paid from police funds, the agents' highest priority was to investigate the activities of Nkrumah and the CPP leaders and to monitor the increasing violence. Reports from local agents were rapidly transmitted to Sinclair who collected them and reported directly to the Governor. Security reports showed that in the main towns the CPP were gaining more and more influence, encouraged by tough elements who were beating up their opponents and threatening Europeans and chiefs. It became clear that the UGCC were being outsmarted and outmaneuvered at every turn. At the same time, senior officers in Ashanti and the Northern Territories were making it plain that their areas were in no way ready for the rapid political advance which the events in Accra seemed to portend.

Industrial strife added to the tensions of that fateful December. The Union of Meteorological Workers had called a strike, and the strikers had been dismissed. They appealed to the Gold Coast TUC where CPP influence was strong and the TUC then

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threatened a general strike. At this sensitive moment, Nkrumah attempted a compromise because a general strike would pre-empt the effectiveness of Positive Action.

Before further action took place, Arden-Clarke arranged for Reginald Saloway, the new Gold Coast Colonial Secretary, who had had experience of high-level negotiations during the independence campaign in India, to meet Nkrumah in Accra and discuss the situation. There are conflicting accounts of this meeting from Arden-Clarke, Nkrumah and Saloway, all of whom wrote about it years later. Arden-Clarke and Saloway suggest that during the meeting Nkrumah accepted the argument that the elections under the Coussey Constitution would be conducted fairly and that the CPP would have a good chance of winning, and that he agreed not to start Positive Action. Later Nkrumah was forced by the extremists both in the CPP and the TUC to go back on that decision. In Arden-Clark's phrase, 'The tail wagged the dog'.<sup>6</sup>

Nkrumah gives a different version. He quotes his conversation with Saloway, who took the line that order had to be restored, and that Nkrumah would be personally held responsible if Positive Action resulted in violence and death. Nkrumah had argued that the whole country was roused and would not be suppressed until its grievances were redressed. He had kept to the simple argument that the demand of the Gold Coast People's Representative Assembly of November 1949 for a constituent assembly to decide the constitution was perfectly reasonable, and that, if the Government did not accept this, he would keep his word to the people and call for Positive Action.

Wherever was said at that meeting, it resulted in an extremely tense and confused situation in which announcements about Positive Action were made, only to be countermanded shortly afterwards. From all the evidence available it would appear that Nkrumah accepted Saloway's argument and this prompted the

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Government's radio announcement that Positive Action would not be started. Shortly afterwards, because the TUC would not call off the threatened general strike, and because the CPP were angered by a jibe from Danquah that they had sold out to the imperialists, the CPP changed their minds, and Positive Action was declared. The TUC did call the general strike from 6 January 1950, the CPP committee met on 7 January, and on Sunday 8 January 1950, Nkrumah announced the start of Positive Action as from midnight. He then left Accra and travelled to Cape Coast, Sekondi and Tarkwa to announce Positive Action. He returned to Accra to find that the Government was using the radio to encourage the people to return to work. He therefore called another meeting at the Arena on 11 January, which thousands of people attended and where he spoke for two hours, stirring them up and urging them to support Positive Action.

Faced by the threat of Positive Action and a general strike, Arden-Clarke called an emergency meeting of the Legislative Council on 10 January, to consider the imposition of a state of emergency. From his travels around the country he judged that the majority of the people were pleased with the very substantial progress offered by the Coussey Report, and that they rejected the intimidation and violence of the CPP. He believed that the general strike had been fomented by the CPP and he exhorted everyone to support peace, order, and good government. He called on them to reject those who tried to coerce the Government by force, to intimidate the people, and to undermine the authority of the chiefs. The Legislative Council – which under the Burns Constitution, already had an elected African majority – debated the Governor's speech. There was unanimous support for his policy and for the declaration of a state of emergency. Yet again the great gulf between the attitudes of the old hierarchy, even those elected under the Burns Constitution, and the new elements Nkrumah was effectively bringing into the political arena, yawned wide.

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By 11 January 1950 Positive Action had been declared and the country lay under a state of emergency and a curfew. The three CPP newspapers continued to support Positive Action until they were shut down and their editors arrested. In an attempt to resolve the crisis the Joint Provincial Council of Chiefs invited the CPP, the TUC, and the Ex-Servicemen's Union to attend a meeting at Dodowa. The TUC declined, the Special Branch, attempting to curb support for Positive Action, arrested the Ex-Service delegates on their way to the meeting, but Nkrumah and three CPP members attended. At the acrimonious meeting, Nkrumah held to the demand for a constituent assembly. Before he left, he warned the chiefs that if they did not support the freedom struggle, 'they will run away and leave their sandals behind them'. This was a grave insult to the chiefs which he was not allowed to forget. For the next few days, the CPP suffered constant harassment by the police, with their offices being searched and their members arrested. On 21 January there was a wave of arrests and the following day Nkrumah himself was arrested.

After the arrest of the CPP leaders, the country settled down fairly quickly and economic activity revived. Creech Jones congratulated Arden-Clarke on his resolute handling of a very difficult situation. Two comments illustrate Arden-Clarke's view at this time. In his address to the Legislative Council he had warned them of the tactics of the communists who tried to create chaos in order to seize power; and in a letter to his family he admitted that he had been 'rather preoccupied in dealing with our local Hitler and his putsch'.<sup>7</sup> In contrast, Nkrumah in his autobiography reiterates that in his articles and speeches at the time of Positive Action he had constantly stressed that there must be no violence. In fact, verbatim reports, even in his own *Accra Evening News*, make little mention of any appeal for non-violence. There is no doubt that from the start of the CPP, because the movement swept up many tough and unruly elements, violence became an

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integral part of their political activity, and leadership from the top did not effectively curb it.

When Nkrumah and the CPP leaders were arrested the Party engaged two British barristers to defend them, though Nkrumah thought that this was a waste of money since they would be convicted anyway. Saloway was the chief Crown witness. He told the court that Nkrumah had been made personally responsible for any violence that Positive Action might produce, and he submitted evidence of the two policemen who had been stabbed to death by a CPP mob. The court charged Nkrumah with inciting people to take part in an illegal strike, and with trying to coerce the Government, and he was sentenced to one year's imprisonment on each charge. He was then taken to Cape Coast and in court there received a further year's sentence for sedition in connection with a newspaper article. The three one-year sentences were to run consecutively. After the trial at Cape Coast Nkrumah was brought back to James Fort prison in Accra, where he joined ten other CPP leaders.

As a political prisoner he had expected to be given special treatment, but all the CPP members were herded into cells like common criminals, and had to share the one latrine bucket in the cell corner. They followed the normal prison routine and ate the appalling food. Nkrumah's friend and colleague, Komla Gbedemah, had been imprisoned some months before for publishing false news in the *Accra Evening News*, and he was just about to leave prison as Nkrumah came in. They had a brief discussion and Gbedemah agreed to organize the party while the others were in prison. The CPP group were able to have discussions while in prison and they formed committees to plan the future. But they suffered all the boredom and discomfort of normal prisoners, and shared all the anguish whenever a prisoner was hanged. After this experience, Nkrumah strongly opposed capital punishment. Later, as leader of the country, he maintained that no-one had been sentenced to

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death under his regime, even after attempted coups. Maintaining that Western culture had brought many bad things to African society, he wrote 'Offences like forgery, bribery and corruption, for instance, were practically unknown in our early society.'<sup>8</sup>

Nkrumah insisted that the CPP should contest all the seats in the forthcoming election of February 1951, under the Coussey Constitution. Next, he ensured that his name appeared on the electoral roll, since as an elector he was entitled to stand as a candidate. He therefore got Gbedemah to step aside so that he could stand for the constituency of Accra Central. All this was possible because his prison sentences were each for one year, and under the Coussey Constitution only a sentence of more than one year disqualified a person from voting or standing in an election. He soon managed to get hold of a pencil and was able to write messages on toilet paper, which were successfully smuggled out to Gbedemah. This means of communication played a vital role in their election plans, and the ubiquitous toilet paper was even used to draft the CPP election manifesto.

From January 1950 Nkrumah spent fourteen months in prison, and during that time significant developments took place. In co-operation with the Governor the Legislative Council helped in the immense task of setting up, from scratch, a completely new electoral system, suited to a predominantly illiterate electorate. The Council was made up largely of chiefs, lawyers and merchants who had played a prominent and dignified role in the affairs of the Gold Coast. They were accustomed to dealing with the affairs of their village or locality but were unaware of the revolution in which they were now taking part, or of the political storm which was about to hit them. The Colonial Government faced a major task in convincing even the Legislative Council that, after the first election, there would be eleven African Ministers, each responsible for running a ministry, and each with a European civil servant to help him – not the other way round. The Ewart

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Committee, which included Danquah and other members of the Coussey Commission, undertook the task of setting up the new system, and took on hundreds of new staff to help.

Initially, the officials trying to carry out the constituency demarcation and registration met with opposition and obstruction. Gradually, as the CPP, through its reopened newspapers, exhorted its members to register, the civil servants were able to work in close co-operation with the CPP representatives. During this period Komla Gbedemah masterminded the CPP organization, and he tried to set up a party branch in every constituency. In spite of his leadership, the CPP faced formidable problems. There was no traditional party discipline, and local branches often took the law into their own hands and severely damaged the image of a responsible party ready to take over the government of the country. The government's drive to inform the people by leaflets, cinema vans, loudspeaker vans, and public meetings was matched by the CPP. In contrast, the UGCC, which had been given a wonderful opportunity with the majority of their rivals in prison, totally failed to benefit from this advantage. They failed to set up a countrywide network, and showed no inclination for the crude rough and tumble of local politics. Although many of the party leaders had served on the Coussey Commission, they signally failed to recognize what a revolution the Coussey Report had achieved. They were quite unaware that they could no longer expect dignified nomination from a provincial council, but instead had to campaign in the towns and villages, seeking the support of the illiterate masses, whom many of them viewed with a condescending and apprehensive distaste. In contrast, the CPP under Gbedemah's leadership was already showing that it understood the workings of power in a modern political context.

In many communities, political activity inflamed old divisions and uncovered serious deficiencies in the native administration, which resulted in chiefs being 'de-stooled'. Frequently, as news

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filtered through to the villages from Accra, Kumasi or Cape Coast, the young men – teachers, clerks, drivers, petty traders – took the initiative and, relying on their experience in youth movements improvement societies, set up branches of the CPP. They were happy to challenge the ruling element in the village. In many parts of the country, they were frustrated by the native administration with its traditional courts and badly managed treasuries. In 1950, in Bekwai Ashanti when the native authority broke down, a management committee was set up, comprising a chief, a cocoa broker, a priest, a teacher and two local store-keepers. They used the opportunity to install a fairer and more effective administration in place of the old chaotic regime. Increasingly they turned for support to the young men who in their turn tended to support the CPP. The type of problem which beset the previous native authority may be gleaned from the warning given by the elders to the new chief: 'Do not take advantage of your position to run after women, drink or rebel against your elders. Listen to our advice, don't be rude to or abuse your elders, and don't gamble with state property.'<sup>9</sup>

While the CPP leaders languished in prison, the Governor, with the solid support of the Legislative Council, supervised the constitutional changes and vigorously prepared the country for the election. He toured the country, reinforcing the message that a prosperous future could only come from hard work and a law-abiding attitude, and could not be achieved by cutting off trade, letting the cocoa trees die, and closing down all the country's industry. He reminded the people that the eyes of the world were upon them, and begged them not to jeopardize the high hopes which Britain and the Commonwealth entertained for them. He announced a new Ten Year Plan, backed by £31m. of investment, with an additional £15m. for educational and the social services; and he gave encouraging reports on the progress of the project to dam the great Volta river.

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As the election approached, the hard work and expertise of the CPP improved their standing still further. They shrewdly built up the cult of Nkrumah's martyrdom, and from 1950 onwards, backed this up with the idea of the 'Prison Graduate' that is, those who had suffered imprisonment for The Cause. When Thomas Hutton-Mills and Botsio were released from prison there were Prison Graduate ceremonies, which built up even greater support. Other events gave them further encouragement. In the 1950 municipal election in Accra, the CPP won all seven seats. In the Cape Coast, municipal election it won both seats. In a by-election at Cape Coast, Kwesi Plange became the first CPP member on the Legislative Council. The Kumasi municipal election resulted in a clean sweep of the six seats – and that was in an area where there was substantial opposition to the CPP. All these elections were seen by the party and the administration as trial runs, and were used to improve their systems ready for the general election of 1951.

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## LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

THE ELECTION – as important in the history of Africa as the 1948 election in South Africa in which the diehard Nationalist Dr Daniel Malan defeated Field Marshal Jan Christiaan Smuts – took place on Thursday 8 February 1951. By the early hours of Friday 9 February, it was known that Nkrumah had been elected with a majority. He had gained 20,780 votes out of a total of 32,122. Accra was a two-member constituency, and Hutton-Mills, another Prison Graduate, also won convincingly. Both CPP candidates had individually polled more votes than Ako Adjei, the UGCC candidate. In the prison, Nkrumah had been receiving regular reports on the progress of the election, and learned of his own success early on the Friday morning. The CPP acted quickly and wrote to the Governor asking for a meeting to discuss Nkrumah's release. Sir Charles Arden-Clarke, who had decided to take the momentous decision to release Nkrumah, was determined to do this as an act of grace, and not as a result of political pressure. He therefore replied that he could not make the decision until the territorial elections, which were due to take place on the Saturday, were over. He offered to meet the committee the following morning. He did this deliberately, knowing that they would want to attend the elections in Dodowa, and probably ask for the meeting to be postponed. This they conveniently did, and it was rearranged for the Monday afternoon.

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In fact, Arden-Clarke gave no prior warning and Nkrumah was released from prison at 1 pm on Monday 12 February before the CPP could bring pressure to bear. Nkrumah has described how at 1 pm the door opened and he was confronted by the largest crowd ever seen in Accra. Gbedemah met him and he was carried shoulder-high to a car, and then took two hours to reach the Arena where a sheep was ritually slaughtered. He stepped in the blood seven times to cleanse himself of the contamination of prison. Arden-Clarke's description of these events conflicts with that of Nkrumah. Arden-Clarke maintained that in order to avoid a demonstration he deliberately released Nkrumah unannounced, and when he left the prison there was no-one there to meet him. It seems likely that as soon as he was released, the CPP rapidly organized their Prison Graduate routine and this was when the pictures of his triumphal release were taken.<sup>1</sup>

On Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> February, Nkrumah was invited to Christiansborg Castle to meet the governor. In view of his dramatic release from prison, Nkrumah wondered how he would be treated. He later wrote:

Had I known this man before, I should not have doubted the courtesy that would be shown me. A tall, broad-shouldered man, sun-tanned, with an expression of firmness and discipline, but with a twinkle of kindness in his eyes came toward me with his hand outstretched... a man with a strong sense of justice and fair play, with whom I could easily be friends.<sup>2</sup>

At this historic meeting, Arden-Clarke asked Nkrumah to form a government. As he left the castle Nkrumah wondered if it was not all a dream, from which he would awake to find himself back in his prison cell.

For the next two weeks there were constant discussions about the appointment of ministers, and in this Arden-Clarke

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and Nkrumah worked closely together. The Executive Council – or Cabinet – had eleven members, three of whom, the Chief Secretary, the Financial Secretary and the Attorney General, were officials nominated by the Governor. The remaining eight would be elected members of the Assembly. On a parliamentary basis, the CPP were entitled to hold all eight posts, but Arden-Clarke and Nkrumah together got the CPP leaders to agree to offer two of them to the Territorial Council members – one from the Northern Territories, and one from Ashanti.

Nkrumah selected an able team who could cope with the responsibilities of office. As well as Gbedemah and Botsio, there were Tom Hutton-Mills, Archie Casely-Hayford and Dr Ansah Koi- all of whom were university graduates and came from well-known and respected Gold Coast families. Arden-Clarke remarked ruefully that he was the only non-graduate in the Cabinet. The two Territorial Representatives, Asafu Adjaye for Ashanti and Kabachewura Braimah for the NTs, were able and respected men. Some of the UGCC leaders, who were now Territorial Council members, again revealed that they were quite unaware of the revolution that had taken place. They demanded four of the eight ministerial posts, and it took Arden-Clarke to explain bluntly that party government had arrived, whether they like it or not.

On Monday morning 26 February, the House of Assembly met for the first time, and voted almost unanimously for the eight ministers who had been proposed. There were eighty-four members in the Assembly returned from municipal seats, from rural electoral colleges, and from the Territorial Councils. The CPP won thirty-three of the thirty-eight rural and municipal seats, and with the support of some representatives of the Territorial Councils had a working majority.

In the afternoon the Governor called the first meeting of the Executive Council and the eight ministers were confirmed in office:

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## LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS 95

<b>Nkrumah</b>	Leader of Government Business
<b>Gbedemah</b>	Health and Labour
<b>Botsio</b>	Education and Social Welfare
<b>Hutton-Mills</b>	Commerce, Industry and Mines
<b>Casely-Hayford</b>	Agriculture and Natural Resources
<b>Ansah-Koi</b>	Communications and Works

Non-CPP **Asafu Adjaye** (Ashanti) Local Government

**Braimah** (NTs) Without Portfolio

Nkrumah had a serious responsibility to educate the Assembly members and members of the party in their new roles. He therefore drafted a document and presented it at the Arena, the scene of so many stirring CPP meetings. It was the first time he had addressed a public meeting since leaving prison. He had to tread a delicate path, for, having won the election on an anti-imperialist ticket, his government had to operate a colonial style system, and could be open to jibes from the opposition. He explained to his members that going to the Assembly and taking part in government was the best way of achieving their continuing object of self-government. The CPP would keep up the fight and would totally reject any coalition with its adversaries. He warned that bribery and corruption, which was part and parcel of the colonial system, must be stamped out. Ministers and members must renounce self-interest and always remember their responsibility to the people. He warned against fraternization with the imperialists who might use cocktail-party tactics to suborn the independence objective. He suggested that all ministers and Assembly members should surrender their salaries to the party and draw an agreed allowance which would enable them to live modestly and simply and to keep contact with the people. Finally, he reminded them that colonial people everywhere were looking to them for hope and inspiration.

Effective political negotiations had started the day after

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Nkrumah had been released from prison, but the official formal opening of the Legislative Assembly did not take place until 29 March – just five weeks later – when it was carried out with all the colour, pomp and panache for which Ghana is famous. The Governor arrived in full ceremonial dress with police outriders, and inspected a full guard of honour. African members wore their colourful Kente cloth or their dignified northern robes; military and civilian officers wore formal dress with medals; judges appeared in legal robes and wigs; and the ladies outdid them all in their finery.

The ceremony started with a message from King George VI which was preceded by a fanfare of trumpets. Next came a seventeen-gun salute followed by a greeting from the Secretary of State. The Speaker, Mr. Quist, welcomed a delegation from the House of Commons which brought a message from the Speaker of the House. Finally, the Governor read the equivalent of the Speech from the Throne. The impressive dignity of the occasion was reported around the world and boded well for this great constitutional experiment. The ceremonies were to conclude in the evening with a formal dinner at Christiansborg Castle with the Governor as host to the CPP ministers and the British Parliamentary delegation. A temporary hitch occurred when the ministers, following the rule of no fraternization with the whites, refused the invitation. The Governor remonstrated with them and they changed their minds. He had the last laugh when he placed Nkrumah, so recently out of prison, next to the British head of the Appeal Court. Nkrumah, with his charm and good humour, coped easily with this situation, just as he was to do with the world's leaders during the following decade.

Arden-Clarke and Nkrumah created an historic partnership over the next six years, but at first they were naturally wary of each other. Arden-Clarke's first impressions appear in a letter to his family written just after the Assembly first met:

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I do not know what to make of Nkrumah. My first impressions, for what they are worth, are that he is an idealist, ready to live up to his ideals, but I have yet to learn what those ideals really are. Unlike most of his colleagues he seems quite genuinely to bear no ill-will for his imprisonment and is not venal. He has little sense of humour but has considerable personal charm. He is as slow to laugh as he is quick to grasp the political implications of anything he discusses. His approach to questions is more that of a psychologist than a realist. He has proved he can give inspiration and I find him susceptible of receiving it but I fear there is a streak of weakness that might be his undoing. A skilful politician, he has, I think, the makings of real statesman and this he may become if he has the strength to resist the bad counsels of the scallywags by whom he is surrounded.<sup>3</sup>

This sensitive and shrewd assessment picks out two fundamental aspects of Nkrumah's character which, to a large extent, decided his destiny. He had the idealism, the vision and the charisma to be a world-class statesman but he did lack the strength to overcome not only the bad counsels but also the corrupt practices of many doubtful characters who joined the CPP and, in the end, destroyed most of what he hoped to achieve.

On assuming office, Nkrumah faced an immediate and difficult problem. All his reading and his revolutionary mentors had made it plain that a new revolutionary government must immediately get rid of the old civil service with its dangerous imperialist attitudes, yet he had formed a government not one of whose members had had a single day's experience of the government machinery or system, and who all depended totally on the support and guidance of their senior civil servants who, to a man, were British. In practice, the Governor and, through him, the Secretary of State in Whitehall, controlled the civil service, so Nkrumah did not have the power

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to get rid of them even had he wished. Yet all the officers of state – Saloway, the Commissioner of Police, magistrates, police and prison officers who had pursued and imprisoned him – were still in office. He decided that 'It was essential from all points of view to bury the hatchet',<sup>4</sup> but whether other ministers and party members would do so, or whether the colonial civil servants could give up the mental attitudes of a lifetime, remained to be seen. From the start it was an extremely sensitive and dangerous situation which could have led to a breakdown of government. The problem was solved by Nkrumah and Arden-Clarke together. They rapidly established a relationship of trust and, each in his own sphere, gave very positive leadership, so that civil servants on the one side, and African ministers and members on the other, worked together for the public good.

A few, on both sides, found it difficult to adapt, but the majority co-operated in facing the daunting task. Before the election it had been assumed that since no single party would win a majority, the Attorney General would become Leader of Government Business – hence the clumsy title. So Nkrumah had to start from scratch, even to setting up an office and establishing the basic procedures for the Assembly, for none of his ministers had even served on the legislative council. Faced with such severe problems, Nkrumah established a routine which he followed more or less throughout his life. He rose at 4 am and began work on files or speeches. By six o'clock a stream of visitors started, and this occupied him until eight o'clock when he went to the office or to Party Headquarters. He was indifferent to food, and would eat nothing until returning home in the late afternoon. After a brief break, he would then start on a programme of meetings and interviews which would last until midnight. He rarely slept for more than four hours. At this period of his life he had already installed his mother in his house, but because he was so busy he saw little of her. He had a Nzima youth, Nyameke, who acted as his 'boy' – cleaning

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the house, looking after his master's clothes, and providing the indifferent meals on which Nkrumah then survived. Later in his life, Nkrumah developed a reputation for womanizing, but at this period he seems to have followed an extremely ascetic regime.

Nkrumah always had a flair for publicity, and from the morning of his release from prison he was rarely out of the limelight. The hectic scramble to establish a new government and administrative system was still at its height when he received an invitation to Lincoln University, Pennsylvania, to become an Honorary Doctor of Law. He decided that, in spite of the pressure of work at home, this was a great opportunity to put the case for his government and country before the world stage. Therefore, at the end of May 1951, less than three months after his election, he flew from Accra accompanied by Kojo Botsio. He made a brief stop in London. 'In a gay mood, I made a tour of the Tower of London, Kensington Palace, Buckingham Palace – all buildings I had attacked in my more fiery speeches as monuments of imperialism!'<sup>5</sup>

After two days in London, where, surprisingly, Nkrumah made no contact with any British politicians, they flew to New York. Nkrumah had already sensed that, as far as the West was concerned, influence in Africa was already shifting towards America. In New York, he was welcomed by a State Department delegation and by the President of Lincoln University. At a press conference which gave him countrywide coverage he explained that, apart from receiving an honorary degree, his first priority was to obtain technical help for the Gold Coast. Everywhere he received an enthusiastic reception and encouraging offers of help. In Philadelphia, where so recently he had slept rough in the parks and railway stations, the Mayor presented him with the keys of the city. In his reply, Nkrumah promised that the Gold Coast, with American and British help, would strive to become a truly democratic state. Late in the evening of their first busy day, he took Botsio to see his old landlady. She gave him an emotional

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and tearful greeting, and, as they left, he gave her a hundred dollar bill to repay all her kindness when things had been difficult for him. Sometime after midnight they called on his former girlfriend, Portia, where he received a similarly ecstatic welcome. She had kept all his books, which she gladly returned to him. They all went out for a meal, joking that she would not have to pay this time.

The next day, after addressing thirty West African students who were studying at Lincoln, he was the guest of honour at the Commencement Exercise. After paying generous tribute, the Dean concluded:

I remember when Mr. Nkrumah applied for admission to this University he quoted in his letter from Tennyson's 'In Memoriam' 'So much to do, so little done...' I would like to conclude by saying that I feel, that as far as he is concerned, this should now read 'so much achieved in so short a time'.

After receiving his Doctorate, Nkrumah, knowing that he had maximum press coverage, made one of the most important speeches of his life. He outlined the events of his student days in the United States, his political activity in London, his return to the Gold Coast, and the formation of the CPP with the motto, 'We prefer self-government with danger to servitude in tranquility'. He also spelt out his policy 'Seek ye first the political kingdom and all things shall be added unto you'. This received enthusiastic applause. He explained how, after his election victory, he had decided to accept office, even under a bogus and fraudulent constitution, because that was the best and quickest way to achieve full Dominion status within the British Commonwealth. He felt no bitterness against Britain, but would not tolerate imperialism in any form in his struggle to create a truly democratic state. He spoke of the needs of the Gold Coast for technicians, machinery and capital to develop its great natural resources, and he explained

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that he was appealing to the democracies of Britain and the United States in the first place, but that, if this help were not forthcoming, he would be forced to turn elsewhere. He made a special appeal to the black people of the United States to help in the great venture, and he concluded by saying that he considered his Doctorate as a tribute to all the people of the Gold Coast and of Africa.

His speech received an enthusiastic response, and the following day when he visited the Mayor of New York and the UN Headquarters, he was overwhelmed with offers of help. He met Sir Alan Burns, the former Governor of the Gold Coast, then chairman of the UN Trusteeship Council, and also Trygve Lie, the UN General Secretary, and his deputy Dr. Ralph Bunche, with whom he discussed finance for the Volta River Project. Washington and New York feted him again, and the Mayor of New York put on a special dinner for all the black dignitaries of the city. Speaking at the dinner, Nkrumah recalled how in his last sermon in 1945 in the Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia he had preached on the text 'I saw a new heaven and a new earth'. How prophetic that had been.

Nkrumah and Botsio returned to London well satisfied with their American trip. They were pleased with the favourable impression they had made in Washington. Through the media coverage their message of hope for the future of the Gold Coast and their appeal for help from the black community reached a wide audience. The Gold Coast was now firmly on the agenda of foreign policy experts where it would count – in America. In London they met Prime Minister Attlee and most of the Labour Cabinet, and were able to request the grant of self-government as a matter of urgency. They also met Lord and Lady Mountbatten, who had valuable experience in the handover of power in India, and Alan Lennox-Boyd who later, as Colonial Secretary, was to play a significant role in the events leading to independence.

After a busy schedule of meetings, they flew back to Accra,

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totally exhausted. As the plane neared Accra, Nkrumah felt slightly apprehensive, having been away for several weeks, but as they landed a huge crowd surged forward and mobbed him to joyful shouts of 'Doctor Nkrumah', showing that he personally epitomized all their hopes and aspirations. He wrote:

I stood in silence as I gazed down at that thickest of gatherings, a great body of human beings that neither pain nor discomfort could distract from their purpose, proof in its most concrete form of their solidarity, and I was deeply moved at the thought that it was I who had the honour of leading them.<sup>6</sup>

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## CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

As soon as he returned to Accra, Nkrumah plunged into the complicated negotiations on a new constitution. His visit to America had brought him favourable publicity, and his homecoming had shown how strongly the people as a whole supported him, but already some of the euphoria of the election success had evaporated, and problems were beginning to appear. Lengthy discussions led to the White Paper of 1953 and to the new constitution which formed the basis for the 1954 and 1956 elections. These discussions took place against a background of serious developments in both the country and the party.

When Nkrumah, despite his criticism of the Coussey Constitution, had taken office in 1951, Danquah and the UGCC taunted him that he had sold out to the imperialists. In order to silence these taunts, he challenged Danquah to join in a demand for Self-Government Now, but Danquah had backed off. In fact, there was opposition to Nkrumah from within his own party. A growing rift had begun to develop between Nkrumah, Gbedemah, Botsio and those who held office on the one hand, and on the other, an increasingly large group with more extreme socialist views, which demanded more rapid progress towards self-government. This group included a number of able and intelligent men, who were to play an important role in the party and the country in the years after independence – Eric Heymann, Kurankyi Taylor,

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Turcson Ocran and Anthony Woode. Some of the left-wing criticism suggested that those who were at the top of the party or who held office seemed to be doing well and had lost some of their revolutionary fervour. Other critics demanded an inquiry into corruption among party and government members. These demands led to the appointment of the Korsah Commission, which found that, while the allegation of widespread corruption among members of the government was not substantiated, there were cases where individuals had fallen below any acceptable standard of probity for people in the public service, Krobo Edusei, then a junior minister, was sacked as a result of the report, though he was brought back into office after the 1954 election. A. Y. K. Djin, an astute businessman, who was to feature in many inquiries, was singled out for lending Nkrumah £1,800 to buy a Cadillac. The public was convinced that there was corruption over the award of contracts, and J. A. Braimah, the highly respected member from the north, resigned because a contractor had given him £2,000 for election expenses. There was considerable sympathy for Braimah who had evinced naiveté rather than anything more sinister.

Continuing criticism within the party over certain aspects of the Volta Project, over expatriate civil servants, and over the independence issue, led to the resignation or expulsion of a number of able and senior party members, including Saki Schek, Kwesi Lamptey and Dzenkle Dzewu. These divisions featured prominently in the CPP Conference in Sekondi in 1952. *The Evening News*, still Nkrumah's mouthpiece, and Nkrumah himself, appealed to the conference to hold together in order to defeat their enemies, and to continue their drive towards self-government. Nkrumah set up a committee of the party to discuss proposals for the new constitution, but even in this committee a division emerged between the ministers and a more radical group including de Graft Johnson and Kurankyi Taylor. Nkrumah, Gbedemah and Botsio still enjoyed great prestige and popularity, and they were

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not seriously threatened at this time, but there were sufficiently serious disagreements for trusted and valued colleagues to resign.

After 1951, the CPP had grown rapidly to over 700,000 members. Many saw membership of the party as the most likely way of gaining profit or advantage in their own community, since the party soon became the main source of patronage. Such rapid development demanded a clear structure and an efficient system. Gbedemah once again played an important part in the organization of the party, and the establishment of an effective financial system. Increasingly, CPP headquarters found that party dues were paid in the local areas but were not forwarded to Accra. Even Nkrumah had to be used to chase up financial defaulters.

As early as 1952, the government, spurred on by both party and opposition criticism, led the way in initiating discussion with the chiefs and people about a new constitution. Over 130 organizations replied to an official questionnaire. Nkrumah considered the main issues to be the establishment of direct elections based on separate constituencies; the elimination of three *ex-officio* members; the question of a second chamber or house of chiefs; and the role of the chiefs in central and local government. Before a new-style election could take place, a commission under Justice W.B. Van Lare drew up a completely new plan for 104 constituencies covering the whole country. This difficult task was tackled conscientiously and sensitively, but none the less it provoked outcries in many areas, because communities had either been divided or else lumped together with people they did not trust. The strongest opposition to the Van Lare Commission came from Ashanti, where many of the proposed boundaries were challenged. Ashanti had been allocated twenty-one seats, and their members, led by CPP minister Krobo Edusei, demanded thirty. The debate on this issue, which ended in uproar, roused very strong feelings about the role Ashanti should play in the country, and it presaged the deep divisions which came out

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later in the National Liberation Movement.

The CPP victory of 1951, and the clear move towards a new and more democratic constitution, prompted other parties and groups to combine together to protect their interests. In the Northern Territories, the CPP victory had caused widespread alarm. The Territorial Council, the chiefs, the DCs, and other groups had all warned that the north was not ready for Self-Government Now. The north was more backward, the people were different, and they enjoyed the status of a protectorate which had special links with the Crown. There was a real fear that, when the British withdrew, the territory would be handed over to the nationalists from the south. All these factors assisted in the formation of the Northern People's Party – the NPP.

In many towns of the Gold Coast, immigrants, on a national, tribal, or religious basis, formed their own groups in the Zongos – areas occupied by immigrant groups. Among these, the Muslims now came forward and organized their own Muslim Association Party which strongly opposed the CPP and co-operated with the NPP throughout the northern area.

The proposed constitutional changes highlighted another intractable problem, the Trust Territory of Togoland. After 1918 the German colony of Togoland had been divided from north to south by the League of Nations. This decision – neat and convenient for the League of Nations administrators – divided the Ewe people between the Gold Coast, British Togoland and French Togoland. After 1945, the United Nations took over the mandates and became highly critical of the colonial powers; it listened readily to complaints and seemed to encourage local protesters.

During the 1950s demands grew for a separate Ewe state, and this appeared to be encouraged by the UN. Arden-Clarke, co-operating with the French authorities, was critical of the UN which appeared to encourage agitators to play it off against the

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administering authorities. Nkrumah did not believe that a separate Ewe state was a viable proposition, and he had other reasons for opposing the idea. He was totally committed to the Volta River Project, and if there was a separate Ewe state, the scheme would be impossible. His government therefore created a new regional authority of Trans-Volta-Togoland, with its headquarters at Ho.

Under this arrangement, a considerable sum of money was invested in the area in order to encourage the Gold Coast connection. This met with little success, however. The Togoland Congress Party - a fairly active party which was seeking a separate Ewe state - strongly opposed the CPP and encouraged the people not to pay taxes. Sporadic violence occurred for several years, and increased after independence. A delegation of interested parties, including representatives of the Ewe people, went to the UN in 1954 and succeeded in convincing the Trusteeship Council that the CPP proposals were not simply a British imperialist trick, since Trans-Volta-Togoland would only be incorporated into Ghana after the latter's independence. The Togolese leader, Sylvanus Olympio, led Togoland itself to independence in 1960, and after this, relations between Togoland and Ghana deteriorated to a state of almost open warfare.

In an attempt to bring together all the elements in the country which were opposed to the CPP, Dr Busia formed the Ghana Congress Party in May 1952, hoping to unite all the UGCC members, northerners, Muslims and Ewes. He called on the Congress Party to be 'A party of lofty ideals and to combat tendencies, or even actual activities which if allowed to continue unchecked might lead to the establishment of a dictatorial or totalitarian government.'<sup>1</sup> On another occasion he claimed that 'In the Congress Party, the CPP has met its match and no doubt its Waterloo'. Busia's academic and rather negative approach failed to have any effective impact on the electorate, and his indecisive leadership allowed the Congress Party to squander its energies in

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internecine squabbles.

This was the political background to the White Paper of 1953 and the new constitution. Following the work of the Van Lare Commission, there were 104 constituencies based on direct elections. The franchise was open to people aged twenty-five and over who paid basic-rate tax, and could produce evidence of six months' residence or the ownership of property. The position and power of the chiefs received a further blow. Under the new constitution, there were no indirect elections, and most chiefs declined to stand as candidates for the Assembly. Few politicians in the Gold Coast realized what important changes this constitution introduced. Except for the age and property restrictions, which Nkrumah supported, it was very close to a democratic adult franchise – a far cry from the Burns Constitution of 1946 which Nkrumah had called 'bogus and fraudulent'.

Almost immediately after the publication of the White Paper in July 1953, Nkrumah put forward what became known as the 'Motion of Destiny' in the Assembly. This significant speech clearly sums up his views and attitudes at the time when the Gold Coast was poised on the brink of independence; and with the support and encouragement of Arden-Clarke and the British Government, he was taking the final steps towards that goal. The motion proposed that action should be taken to declare the Gold Coast a sovereign and independent state within the Commonwealth. More immediately, it was to ensure that elections would be by secret ballot and that all members of the Cabinet would be responsible to the Assembly, thus removing the *ex-officio* members. In a dignified and moving speech, Nkrumah called on all members to exercise statesmanship of a high order and, quoting Edmund Burke, 'to cultivate every sort of generous and honest feeling' and to be patriots and gentlemen. He called for the debate to be national not regional, patriotic not partisan, and conducted in a spirit of co-operation and goodwill. Next, he

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quoted Aristotle on practising virtue, and as with virtue so with self-government. He outlined the achievements of his government in the two years they had been in office, and quoted the party motto 'Forward ever, backward never'. There had been detailed discussions on constitutional reform with the Asanteman Council (the ruling council of Ashanti chiefs), with the Gold Coast Trade Union Congress, with the Territorial Councils and with the Council of Chiefs in the north. The views and opinions of the northern people had been deliberately accommodated by CPP policy. He quoted Arthur Creech Jones, James Griffiths and Oliver Lyttelton, all of whom had stressed that the central purpose of British colonial policy was to guide the colonies towards responsible self-government within the Commonwealth, in conditions that would ensure a fair standard of living and freedom from any oppression. Nkrumah backed these views by referring to the philosophy of the Durham Report which had led to the Canada Act of 1867 and to the independence of all the other Dominions.

We have here in our country a stable society. Our economy is healthy, as good as any for a country of our size. In many respects, we are very much better off than many sovereign states. And our potentialities are large. Our people are homogenous nor are we plagued with religious and tribal problems.<sup>2</sup>

He pointed out that long before England was united, Ghana had established a great empire which stretched from Bamako to Timbuktu, and to the Atlantic coast. Covering its history after that time, he quoted Padmore's *Gold Coast Revolution* arguing that, in claiming self-government, the people were only re-asserting their rights under the Bond of 1844, which the British had misused.

He reminded the people that the eyes of the world were upon them, and that the people of Africa were looking to them with

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desperate hope. They must give hope and inspiration to the whole African continent. He paid tribute to Sir Charles Arden-Clarke and the expatriate members for helping them to make a success of their political advance. He quoted the famous statement of Casely-Heyford when he addressed the National Congress of British West Africa in 1925. Co-operation would lead to new developments in their society, and would 'help to build in our rich and fertile country a society where men and women may live in peace, where hate, strife envy and greed shall have no place'. He concluded:

Mr. Speaker, we can only meet the challenge of our age as a free people. Hence our demand for our freedom, for only free men can shape the destinies of their future.

This speech showed Nkrumah at his most effective and set him head and shoulders above everyone else in his party and, with the possible exception of Danquah, in the country. His appeal for patriotism and restraint reassured many who had felt doubts about certain aspects of CPP activity. His broad sweep, including references to Aristotle and Burke, and his approval of British policy under Creech Jones, Griffiths and Lyttelton, made a strong impact in Whitehall and Westminster. His oratory, which suggested a confident grasp of the wider issues faced by his government, gave a great boost to the CPP as it prepared for a more difficult and complex electoral struggle.

Nkrumah's obvious pre-eminence among his colleagues only added to the isolated and essentially lonely nature of his life. He spent his days from early morning until after midnight surrounded by people who drew inspiration from him, and by colleagues who looked up to him and admired him. Yet in spite of his charm and cheerfulness, to which Botsio and others have testified, he never felt close to them, and never fully confided in them. He

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kept his own counsel because he dared not fully divulge his long-term plans for the left-wing socialist state. Also, he was loath to trust colleagues who might emerge as rivals. Later he was to say to Erica Powell who became his secretary that she was the only person he could really trust or turn to for unbiased advice. The pattern of his working day and his total dedication to the party and to the country meant that at this time he lived a spartan existence.

During the 1951 election, there had been one single issue - Self-Government Now. No other policy, no other factor had been considered. There had been no heartsearching about different policies, no clash between local and national issues. By 1954, the situation had changed completely and, although the CPP alone operated on a national scale, it faced severe problems. Hoping to overcome its difficulties by effective propaganda and efficient organization, the party launched a flamboyant manifesto which concentrated on Nkrumah's role. He had drafted the manifesto under four main headings:

Vote CPP to finish the job

Forward with the Common People - this section dwelt on the achievements of the previous two years, including the doubling of the school population

Materialize your Dreams through Operation 104 - this referred to the CPP aim of winning each of the 104 seats

Always First - this final section paid tribute to Nkrumah as a world figure and as a leader in the African Freedom Movement

The manifesto concluded 'NOW THE GOAL IS IN SIGHT.  
It is only Kwame Nkrumah, the tried and experienced Captain

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and his crew of 104 that can pilot the mighty ship GHANA into the port of FREEDOM:

The manifesto gave the party leadership an initial advantage, but it soon discovered difficult problems in many areas. Every applicant wishing to stand as a party candidate in a constituency had to apply and be appointed by the central committee in Accra. The committee had expected this to be a routine operation, but found, to its dismay, that instead of one or perhaps two candidates being put forward, there were often as many as twenty candidates for each seat. With 104 new constituencies, it had no effective way of deciding on the best candidates. In many areas the local CPP activist was not the most highly respected figure and, perhaps through his arrogance or ineptitude over the previous two years, had not endeared himself to the community. Rival candidates therefore decided to stand. They were astute enough to realize not only that an Assembly member received a large salary – £960 per annum – but that, as independence approached, a member would have untold opportunities of wealth and power, both for himself and for the community. These reasons lay behind the disputes in many communities over choosing a candidate. They realized that a good candidate could bring all sorts of advantages to his town or village – roads, bridges, wells, schools, markets, hospitals. There was often intense rivalry between two towns, or perhaps between three or more villages, in a constituency, because they knew that if their own man was nominated, the benefits would come to them and not the rival town or village. These issues weighed much more heavily with a local community than even an appeal by Nkrumah for party discipline or personal loyalty. They brought to the surface all the old divisions between the chief, the traditional elders, the young men, the tribal groups and other rival interests. The *Ashanti Pioneer*, famous for its pungent comments, made a point that was lost on most communities. 'The CPP first entered the Legislative Assembly as tramps, but in a

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short time they were driving luxurious American cars, living in mansions, and going about in 'tails and toppers.' Dennis Austin in *Politics in Ghana* added (p.212) 'No longer was there a martyred leader in prison: on the contrary, he was now to be seen in his cadillac'. Certainly the CPP presented a very different image from that of 1951.

CPP headquarters had little chance of success in trying to appoint candidates who would satisfy all local competing interests. As the selection committee blundered on, inevitably making unpopular decisions, it virtually created the situation which produced over eighty rebel CPP candidates.

Nkrumah saw this, wrongly, in terms of disloyalty to him. In the end, out of over 300 candidates, more than 160 independent candidates stood - over half of them CPP rebels. Nkrumah called a meeting in Kumasi where local feeling and local opposition had been strongest, and personally expelled eighty-one rebels. He said:

I turned a deaf ear to pleas and excuses. They had known the rules of the game, but they had chosen to put their own interests before those of the party; they lacked the team spirit, and they should be made an example of.<sup>3</sup>

The nomination disputes caused serious damage to the party when even such staunch leaders as Pobee Biney and Anthony Woode defected, but the party continued to campaign and stress the role of Nkrumah. He personally announced the selected candidates at a grand formal ceremony in the Arena on May 2 1954. He followed this with a gruelling campaign, during which he visited over seventy of the constituencies. Party leaflets increasingly referred to him in extravagant terms as Man of Destiny, Star of Africa, Wonder Boy of Africa. This encouraged a tradition which ultimately had unfortunate consequences.

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While the CPP struggled with its internal problems the other parties published their manifestos. The Ghana Congress Party, under Busia, warned that the adulation of Nkrumah could lead to dictatorship. It put forward sensible and practical policies, and in order to gain support in Ashanti promised to put up the price of cocoa. However, once again it failed to make an effective impact and to profit from the internal divisions of the CPP. In contrast, the Northern People's Party genuinely represented the issues facing its people and, unlike the CPP, only chose candidates of sound quality. They demanded a special development plan for the north because, they argued, Britain had neglected their area; it included a rapid increase in the number of schools and specialist colleges, progress in the railway project from Kumasi to Tamale, and rapid agricultural development. Out of twenty-six constituencies in the north, NPP candidates stood in fifteen and supported the Muslim Association Party in the others.

By 1954, the Gold Coast was enjoying the height of the boom in cocoa prices, and in the run up to the election the country appeared happy, contented and prosperous. Arden-Clarke had been on leave in Norfolk in the spring, and when he returned in May and embarked on a tour of the country he remarked that he had never known it so peaceful. Nkrumah could not share this easy optimism. The pressures on him built up relentlessly. In the 104 constituencies, although the CPP was fielding a full team, there were eighty rebel CPP candidates and another eighty independents. Most of these were powerful and respected people in their own communities and often enjoyed the backing of their local chiefs. The Ghana Congress Party, though it still smacked of the superior attitude of the old UGCC, had worked to unite the opposition groups. In several areas it was likely to benefit from the local pull of the Northern People's Party, from Ashanti particularism or from the Ewe movement. If all these rival groups were successful, 1954 could have seen the end of CPP rule.

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The election took place on 15 June, with the police and army deployed in strength to prevent violence. Fears of violence proved groundless and the whole day passed peacefully without a single untoward incident. In the evening huge crowds gathered at the old polo ground – one of the great traditional meeting places in Accra – where the results were to be displayed.

Realizing what was at stake, Nkrumah became increasingly restless and nervous as the evening wore on. He telephoned Erica Powell who invited him round to her flat for supper. During the meal he seemed too excited to eat and suddenly burst out:

You know sometimes I would give anything to be an ordinary person again. Wouldn't it be fun to go to the polo ground and mix with the crowds, to be one of them, to feel the throb of excitement ... wouldn't it be marvellous?<sup>4</sup>

Erica suggested that he could hide his well known high forehead with a red beret in her car, and so they set off in her baby Fiat and slowly edged their way through the crowds to the polo ground. People surged all round them, a policeman shouted at them to move on, but no-one recognized the man who had made it all possible. Together they savoured the excitement and ebullience of the milling crowds and then they drove back safely to Nkrumah's house. To share such a moment with his people recharged his batteries and reassured him after all the weeks of worry. Soon afterwards the party faithful came to take him to the polo ground, no longer to wait for the results but to join the celebrations because the CPP had won another resounding victory. In the final count, the party won 72 out of 104 seats, including 9 of the 21 seats in the Northern Territories.

The CPP had won a comfortable majority and the Governor immediately asked Nkrumah to form a government. However, these results displayed several factors of significance for the

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future. The CPP had gained 60 percent of the votes cast, but this represented only 30 percent of the adult population. In the Northern Territories, although the Northern People's Party had emerged at the last moment, they had won a majority for their region with 12 out of the 21 seats. Nkrumah cheerfully claimed 9 seats as a great success, but when regional issues became more prominent in the following few years, the NPP became an increasingly serious threat to the CPP.

Although the Congress Party had fielded some distinguished and well-known candidates – Busia, Danquah and Willaim Ofori-Atta – it had gained only one seat. The CPP campaign under the capable leadership of Gbedemah, and with access to party funds and patronage, had won the day, but in general the results illustrated the growing importance of local issues once the question of independence was more or less settled.

The opening of the new session of the Legislative Assembly brought a message of congratulation from the Queen on the progress the Colony had made in the last three years towards full independence within the Commonwealth. The Secretary of State echoed the good wishes. The congratulations were hardly over when Nkrumah raised an issue which caused immediate discord. He stated that for the opposition parties to be recognized as the official opposition – with a salary for the leader, as in Britain – they had to be in a position to take over if the government was defeated. This would not be possible for the present opposition, notably the Northern People's Party, which was based on a single region. Nkrumah's statement caused an uproar and the opposition parties walked out of the Assembly. As a result of the new constitution, the power of the governor had been severely curtailed, but Arden-Clarke, using his experience and skill, worked behind the scenes. He managed, by reference to British parliamentary procedure, and by using the good offices of Sir Emmanuel Quist, the Speaker, to get the Assembly to accept

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the Speaker's ruling that the NPP should be recognised as the official opposition. The incident, trivial in itself, raised the more significant issue of tribalism or ethnicity. Soon the Gold Coast was to face a crisis over this issue. Simultaneously in Nigeria, the development of tribal-based parties had seriously weakened and complicated the drive for independence. Nkrumah charged the imperialists with sacrificing the objectives of independence on the altar of tribalism, and claimed 'A middle class elite, without the battering ram of the illiterate masses, can never hope to smash the forces of colonialism'.<sup>5</sup>

Nevertheless, having achieved the energy and support of the people for the CPP, and having achieved the backing of a substantial majority for the new and more democratic constitution under which the election had been held, Nkrumah had sound reason for feeling satisfied with his achievements.

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## THE ECONOMY AND THE WORLD STAGE

When the CPP came to power in 1951, detailed studies had already been made for a ten-year plan to deal with the country's outstanding economy problems. This plan had been drawn up with the help and advice of the economists Seers and Ross, whose report on 'The Financial and Physical Development of the Gold Coast' came out in 1952. The 1951 plan is significant largely because of the contrast between its aims and achievements and those of the many plans launched after independence, which usually had an ideological basis. This plan must also stand as the last statement of the colonial power on economic development in the Gold Coast. Its approach and ethos have been criticized by Marxist economists and historians, some of whom saw it as the last attempt of the imperial power effectively to exploit the down-trodden Gold Coast people. Brief details of the plan are therefore important. The Plan-to spend £73m. over ten years – was launched in a promising economic situation. The government had a revenue of £29m. and an estimated expenditure of £25m. Trade was flourishing, and with exports at £90m. – one-third higher than imports – the future looked promising, though the danger of over-dependence on cocoa was well understood.

Nkrumah approved the plan in principle when he took office, but he reduced the time span from ten to five years, so as to

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hasten the social and economic revolution demanded by the CPP. It is remarkable that in his *Autobiography* no section is devoted to the economic developments of the early 1950s and only indirect references are made even to the Volta River Project.

Plans to develop the infrastructure included major schemes to link up with the Volta River Project. £16m. was allotted to build a new town and harbour at Tema, fourteen miles east of Accra which was designed to be part of the Volta River Project and also to be the major port for Accra, the Eastern Region and much of the cocoa industry. Takoradi, at that time the only port in the country, was also to be improved and extended with a grant of £2m. To encourage the development of the whole country, £8m. was allotted to roads. This provided a modern trunk road from Tema to Accra and from Accra along the coast to Takoradi. Also a substantial proportion of the money went to building a trunk road from Kumasi to Tamale, the capital of the Northern Region, its main aim being to help the agricultural producers of the north send their products to the big markets at Kumasi, Techiman and the south. This allocation also provided for bridges over the Volta to replace the quaint old ferries which were such a drawback to vehicles traveling to and from Tamale.

The Plan placed its main emphasis on road transport but the run-down railway which trundled very slowly from Accra to Kumasi and from Kumasi to Takoradi was improved with new rolling stock and diesel engines. Also, a new railway line from Accra to Takoradi cut the journey by 160 miles. These plans thus provided the infrastructure for rapid industrial and agricultural growth throughout the country.

The excitement of Nkrumah's political victory in 1951 and the prospect of independence created a momentum which roused the whole population. Demands for improvements came in from all over the country, and were supported by positive community action. The most urgent was for piped water, wells, reservoirs and

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sanitation, and by 1952 most towns had low-cost housing schemes backed by the government.

The Gold Coast prided itself on a number of excellent schools, teacher training establishments and the University at Legon. Nevertheless, the schools catered for an elite minority and did not conceal the fact that 90 per cent of the population was illiterate. Achimota, where Nkrumah had trained as a teacher, had produced other leaders like Daniel Chapman, Fred Mate-Kole, A.L. Adu and Emmanuel Quartey who had helped put the Gold Coast in the vanguard of Africa progress. However, Nkrumah rightly saw the education problem from the viewpoint of this old village school at Nkroful. He was aware of the appalling illiteracy figures. He saw that the education system, substantially copied from the British, had gravely neglected all aspects of technical education. He realized that the social and technological revolution he sought would be seriously hampered by the shortage of mechanics, technicians and skilled tradesmen of every kind. Every sector of the population from the government down gave active support to the nationwide education programme. New primary schools were built all over the country and a crash programme for teacher training was carried out. In the five years from 1951, the number of primary school trebled from 1,000 to 3,000 and the total number of pupils in schools rose from 200,000 to 500,000. New technical schools, backed up by the College of Technology at Kumasi, made a brave and belated assault on the shortage of skills. The Kumasi College offered London degree courses in agriculture, applied science, engineering, architecture, pharmacy, business studies and other subjects. Soon the old and new colleges alike were producing their own graduates to carry forward the social revolution.

The Five Year Plan linked an improved health service closely with the new educational provision. The British colonial system had provided a skeleton service of able and dedicated doctors and

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nurses who, even in remote areas, had operated small hospitals and health centres. In some parts, this service had been augmented by the medical service provided by the large companies in the cocoa industry, the mines and timber industry. Because of the acute shortage of doctors and other trained medical personnel, it was not possible to make a sudden advance; all communities were therefore encouraged to set up health centres, and the public were educated in modern concepts of hygiene and sanitation. Slowly, the provision of doctors and nurses through the country's own medical schools began to overcome this problem. Nkrumah identified himself fully with these programmes and to support them, he made one of his most clear and unequivocal policy statements:

My first objective is to abolish from Ghana poverty, ignorance and disease. We shall measure our progress by then improvement in the health of our people; by the number of children in school and by the quality of their education; by the availability of water and electricity in our towns and villages; and by the happiness which our people take in being able to manage their own affairs. The welfare of our people is our chief pride, and it is by this that my government will be asked to be judged.<sup>1</sup>

Having invested heavily in the infrastructure, the government's next target was agriculture. Urgently conscious of its over-dependence on cocoa, it made substantial investments to develop other export crops. Research institutes were set up to encourage the growing of coffee, copra, palm kernels and rubber on a commercial scale. The Northern Territories with its searing heat and near-desert conditions was the most backward and least productive part of the country and much of it was scourged by the tsetse fly which made cattle-raising impossible. The government therefore set up large-scale schemes to try to bring the north into

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line with the rest of the country. The Gonja Scheme, based on Damongo, aimed to bring 30,000 acres under cultivation. This attempt to create a large-scale agricultural enterprise in an area of primitive subsistence farming was helped by advisers from the Sudan Gezira Scheme and from Russian collective farms. Its aims were purely agricultural and were not at this time caught up in the ideological struggles which bedevilled so many later schemes. The scheme encouraged the growing of groundnuts, maize, guinea corn and rice on a large-scale commercial level so that the farmers of the north could use the new roads and improved transport system to carry their produce to the major markets further south. Other projects included a veterinary school at Tamale and pig-breeding, chicken-raising and other livestock development centres scattered across the country. Because of this major effort by the government, the country received substantial help from the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN and from many agencies in the United States.

While agriculture received deserved propriety, the Five Year Plan also backed up the various agricultural enterprises by developing fisheries. On the coast the government surveyed fishing grounds, trained crews in modern techniques and, where possible, built small harbours. The new harbour at Tema included provision for large-scale fisheries. The coastal areas had always enjoyed the advantage of eating fish – a valuable addition to a diet which was otherwise dangerously deficient in protein – and fisheries were now set up wherever the rivers could be dammed or reservoirs built. The provision of piped water to the villages often accompanied the development of fisheries and irrigation, and this revolutionized living standards.

All these excellent schemes not only brought real benefits to the entire population, they also brought political benefit to Nkrumah whose dynamism and leadership had sparked so much of the momentum. During the 1950s both he and Arden-Clarke,

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separately and together, spent many days encouraging, inspecting and finally formally opening these new schemes. Here was an effective development helping to provide the people with an improved quality of life and a greater measure of prosperity. This aspect of the drive towards independence brought Nkrumah – as well as Arden-Clarke who shared his hopes and aspirations in this field – a great and deep satisfaction. It tied in with Nkrumah's endless concern for the ordinary man and woman and their families who flocked to see him in his office, at home or whenever he visited their towns or villages. And like the effective performer that he was, the adulation and idolization of his audience gave him back a vitality and vigor which kept him going through an endlessly demanding schedule.

At the same time his image as a world figure was constantly being built up by the CPP. As local political problems mounted, the party apparatus stressed his role as a great African leader, as the leader with the ideas and the dynamism not only to solve local problems but to achieve the unity of the African continent. Nkrumah had expressed this philosophy as early as 1947 in his book, *Towards Colonial Freedom*. From 1951 onwards he never lost an opportunity to make contacts abroad or to put over the idea of a united Africa. In 1953 he made a State visit to Liberia, where he was overwhelmed by the cordiality of the arrangements made by President Tubman, and by the sincerity of the welcome he received wherever he went in the country. Towards the end of his two-week visit he made one of his most famous speeches in which he referred to his concept of Africa as a free and independent country: 'We want to be able to govern ourselves in this country of ours without outside interference – and we are going to see that it is done.'<sup>2</sup> He concluded by announcing that the struggle for West African unity had already begun.

Nkrumah's sudden rise to power and his appointment as Prime Minister had caught the attention of the world press. His

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restrained performance as a Commonwealth member, and his reception by the American establishment during his visit in 1951, had built for him a sound reputation as a positive leader with forward-looking ideas for the Gold Coast and for the whole of Africa. Elsewhere in the Commonwealth and the Third World the example of Nkrumah and Ghana encouraged the new nationalist leaders. In Kenya, the outstanding new member for Nairobi, Tom Mboya, acknowledged his debt. In Cyprus, Enosis leaders cited Ghana's example. Farther east, Tunku Abdul Rahman and his more brilliant rival, Lee Kuan Yew, quoted Nkrumah to forward their own cause. In backward Portuguese Guinea, a glimmer of hope came to Amilcar Cabral from his example.

The need to return the hospitality he now received, made it necessary to review his domestic arrangements. After coming to office he occupied a ramshackle rented house and was looked after by Nyameke, who ran his household and went everywhere with him. In this rather difficult situation he was saved by the care and concern of Erica Powell.

Erica Powell had been secretary to Sir Charles Arden-Clarke. After 1951 she had fairly frequent contact with Nkrumah when he called to see the Governor. Some time later, and much to her surprise, Nkrumah invited her to his house for supper. She informed Arden-Clarke who encouraged her to accept Nkrumah's invitation – expressing his concern that Nkrumah appeared to be a very lonely man. Erica returned the hospitality and from time to time Nkrumah came to her flat. Often he was so exhausted that he fell asleep as soon as he sat down. It was as if he had found a much-needed sanctuary of peace and quiet where he could relax and not be disturbed. Erica kept Arden-Clarke informed of this friendship. However, Special Branch, which monitored Nkrumah's movements, reported these visits and in September 1954 Arden-Clarke suddenly told her that she could no longer remain as his secretary because of her close association with Nkrumah. Erica

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was flabbergasted at the implications of this decision and, in a state of severe distress, got in touch with Nkrumah. He remained calm and begged her not to worry. He went immediately to Arden-Clarke and obtained his agreement to the proposal that Erica, after a short home leave, should return as the Prime Minister's secretary. The general opinion in Accra at that time was that Erica was Nkrumah's mistress. This allegation was based entirely on circumstantial evidence elaborated by gossip, and was a totally false accusation.<sup>3</sup>

Nkrumah was certainly indiscreet, thoughtless and short-sighted to have created a situation which was so acutely embarrassing both for Erica and himself. He failed to foresee that it could also be politically damaging for him, and could give ammunition to future critics like Adamafo. This incident also illustrates an admirable facet of his character - he had no colour prejudice. He judged people for what they were, irrespective of the colour of their skin. On another occasion, when he was going to the airport to greet African leaders attending the 1958 Accra Conference, the senior army officer, who was white, suggested discreetly that the senior Ghanaian officer should attend the welcoming ceremony. Nkrumah rejected this suggestion and could not understand why it had been made.

As his secretary Erica was aware of how intensely hard he worked and also how totally indifferent he was to food. She had seen the unappetizing meals Nyameke had left out which he would often start to eat four or five hours later. For years he had been accustomed to an extremely spartan regime. He confessed that as a penniless student in America he had frequently survived on cods' heads and Babe Ruth chocolate bars! Erica almost despaired of achieving any useful change, when by chance; they met Amoah - a cook who had worked for George Padmore. At about the same time she suggested that Nkrumah should take a small bungalow near his office, and to her delight and relief

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he agreed, and shortly afterwards moved in with Amoah and Nyameke to look after him.

In this much more congenial domestic situation he was able to entertain and also get some respite from the constant stream of callers who pestered him at his house and office. Among the first guests to the bungalow were Louis Armstrong and his wife Lucille. Under Erica's benevolent prompting Nkrumah, from being almost entirely indifferent to food, became a food and exercise fanatic. He began to see that if he was to achieve all his ambitions for Ghana and for African unity, his mind and body needed to be extremely fit. His new health regime included fasting on Friday - though not for any religious reason. He also admitted that, in spite of its imperialist connotations, he always enjoyed Cadbury's milk chocolate.

During these hectic years, perhaps because he had no immediate family of his own, or because he set himself such a punishing work schedule, he rarely had the chance really to relax. In 1955 he put this right at last. He took Erica Powell and Daniel Chapman and his wife Efua for a cruise along the coast on the *MV Nigerstroom*. This proved to be one of the happiest interludes in his life; the Dutch crew made him welcome and he captivated everyone by his charm and enthusiasm. During a stop in Lagos he was entertained by the Governor General of Nigeria, Sir James Robertson. While in Nigeria he also organized a trip to see the generous man who, in 1936, had provided the money for his passage to America. On their return to Takoradi, the ship had to anchor off Accra for cocoa to be loaded from the surf boats. With Chapman, Nkrumah watched the powerful men at work, but grieved to learn that although they appeared to be strong, they were pitifully prone to infection and heart attacks. He determined to do something about this problem. The ship arrived at Takoradi a day late, but huge crowds were there to welcome Nkrumah and he was feted in every town and village from Takoradi to Accra.

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During the early 1950s Nkrumah made the most of his natural flair for publicity – backed up now by the resources of both the party and the government. His timely invitation to Lincoln University, Pennsylvania, so soon after the 1951 election victory had brought him a wide audience, and in the succeeding months and years he built on this foundation. Because of the great constitutional experiment being carried forward by Nkrumah and Arden-Clarke, pioneering the way towards African independence, and backed by the British Government, the Gold Coast found it easier than most African countries to obtain investment from abroad. The American Kaiser Corporation, major British construction companies like McAlpine, and many West German chemical and construction companies, led the way in showing confidence in the great political and economic experiment.

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## ASHANTI AND THE NLM

The 1954 election which was expected to usher in a period of calm in the final progress towards independence, instead brought a period of such bitterness, crisis and division that the colony was in danger of breaking up. The crisis centred on the key factor in so much of Ghana's life - cocoa. In their earliest struggles, Nkrumah and the CPP had cleverly used the issue of swollen shoot disease, in the cocoa trees to strengthen their political demands. The bitter resentment of the cocoa farmers against Britain's policy of 'cutting out', i.e. cutting down infected trees, was used by Nkrumah to swing the cocoa-growing areas of Ashanti behind him in the 1951 election. Immediately after that election, as Leader of Government Business he had to tackle the problem from a very different angle.

He realized that, without cocoa, the Gold Coast would lose two-thirds of its revenue and, therefore, as its leader he had to take action on swollen shoot. Within weeks of the CPP taking office, the Governor chaired a committee meeting to discuss swollen shoot, and argued strongly that compulsory cutting out must continue. Nkrumah and Gbedemah expected him to use his veto and impose a decision but, for political reasons, Arden-Clarke felt that it was imperative that the new government should be seen to take the responsibility. The committee - again for political reasons

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decided to suspend compulsory cutting out pending an official inquiry. After a short interval, Nkrumah, backed up by a UN and a local inquiry, launched a New Deal for Cocoa, which reimposed compulsory cutting out but gave more compensation and help to the cocoa farmers. Nkrumah added that he would not allow an uncooperative minority to jeopardize the whole industry. Thus the cocoa industry was belatedly saved from disease but, more directly relevant to the crisis of 1954, so were the powers of the Cocoa Marketing Board which had been inherited from the colonial government.

The Board had been set up to protect the farmers from the violent price fluctuations for which the cocoa industry was notorious. Each year the Board fixed the price to be paid to the farmers and marketed the crop. The motive of the colonial government was to protect the farmer, but from 1951 onwards the motive of successive CPP governments was to give the cocoa farmer as low a price as possible and to use the balance of the revenues from the sale of cocoa for development purposes. Under successive CPP governments the price per load was reduced to as little as 40 shillings in the 1960s. This was, perhaps, a justifiable philosophy, but it was never presented positively as part of a political programme. Instead, the Cocoa Marketing Board and the Cocoa Purchasing Company, which was closely linked to it, increasingly appeared as organs of the Convention People's Party - organs which became more and more corrupt, as they scattered largesse to party supporters. This caused a growing fury among the Ashantis, who grew most of the cocoa but saw most of the benefits going to corrupt CPP supporters and to extravagant projects in Accra and the south.

It is on this crucial issue of honesty and integrity in public accounting, that Nkrumah must personally bear a considerable burden of blame for so much that went wrong in Ghana both during his time and afterwards. He left himself open to the charge

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of permitting blatant corruption to flourish in the government, in the CPP and in the organizations it controlled. Because of his example of indifference to financial matters, he was saddled with responsibility for the corruption which flourished so widely.

So in 1954, against a background of increasing criticism, and with much greater power in the hands of Nkrumah and his government, the ominous issue of the cocoa price had to be tackled. Finance Minister Gbedemah had shrewdly decided that the price of cocoa should be announced after the June election. By this time the world price of cocoa had risen to £450 a ton, and there were high expectations that the producer's price would be substantially higher than the previous one of 72 shillings a load. In August, Gbedemah, announced that for the next four years the price would be 72 shillings - exactly the same as before. This decision, which Gbedemah justified on the grounds of the government's needing the revenue and needing to keep down inflation, caused an immediate uproar and led directly to the formation of the National Liberation Movement in Ashanti.

The more conservative elements in Ashanti viewed Nkrumah's philosophy with grave concern. Ashanti society, with the King, the Asantehene, at the apex of the pyramid, depended for its stability on the system of chiefs, from the Asantehene down to the smallest village chief. The chiefs were bolstered by powerful institutions like the Asanteman Council on which all chiefs were represented. They also wielded considerable power through their control of land. The Ashanti land tenure system was complex, but the chief had the power to allocate land. This was merely a right of use and, since the land belonged to the tribe or stool, it could not be bought, sold or permanently alienated. Nkrumah criticized this system as feudal, but it was basically democratic, since a chief had to obtain majority support for his appointment and could be, and frequently was, removed by public demand - destooled. The chief occupied the tribal stool, the main symbol of power and of

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the beliefs and customs of the tribe. Such views were epitomized in the wide reverence felt for the Golden Stool of Ashanti which was believed to contain the soul of the Ashanti Nation. While the issue of swollen shoot had helped to bring the CPP to power in 1951, the issue of cocoa and the way its revenue was used became the catalyst for every shade of opinion and every political and economic issue in Ashanti. For his part, Nkrumah saw the issue in simple terms. As the head of a government elected on a platform of radical reform, he had to have a major source of revenue to carry through those policies. Only cocoa produced money on that scale, and he felt that he was entirely justified in using it.

A serious crisis quickly ensued. It was not entirely unexpected because, even before the election, Arden-Clarke and Nkrumah had received worrying security reports from Loveridge, the Chief Regional Officer in Ashanti. He reported the growing anger in the community and the growing number of violent incidents in Kumasi, and throughout Ashanti.<sup>2</sup> He warned as early as May 1954 that any provocation could unite all the frustration into a single dangerous movement. Nkrumah underrated these warnings and concurred with the decision on the cocoa price.

In the early struggle for power, Nkrumah, trying to get the young men on his side, had been highly critical of the feudal power of the chiefs. He had aimed at a modern democratic society and with the 1954 constitution, had largely established this. In taking this stance, he had misjudged the role of the chief and the strength of the stool which had such a powerful influence in traditional Ghanaian society. In Ashanti these traditional values could not be lightly brushed aside.

The Ashanti were a proud and warlike people who, until the advent of the British, had controlled a substantial part of the country. They had defeated several British expeditions and had finally succumbed only at the turn of the century. They still recalled with anger the British ineptitude in trying to steal the

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Golden Stool of Ashanti and in deporting the Asantehene to the Seychelles in the 1920s. Now the Ashanti people, with the Asantehene at their head, decided to take action.

Within ten days of Gbedemah's announcement, one of Nkrumah's closest supporters, Krobo Edusei, himself an Ashanti, and a man of formidable influence in Kumasi, went to a meeting there to explain the cocoa price policy. He was roughly thrown out while angry crowds chanted an Ashanti war-cry. This incident brought home to Nkrumah the magnitude of his blunder. The tense situation throughout Ashanti, with anger surging in nearly every element of society, produced a powerful leader who was able to weld together the many disgruntled groups. Baffuor Akoto, a wealthy cocoa farmer, the linguist or spokesman of the Asantehene, and a man widely respected in the whole community, was able to bring over to the National Liberation Movement the majority of the young men in the Ashanti Youth Association, who so recently had formed the basis of CPP power in the area. The National Liberation Movement (NLM) was officially founded on 19 September 1954 with the motto 'Good Government'. The poor image of Nkrumah's government after three years in power is reflected to some extent in the aims of the NLM. These were to banish lawlessness, intimidation and hooliganism; to restore respect for authority, integrity, honest labour, and loyalty to traditional rulers; to uphold the best in Ashanti culture; to recognize the cultural and economic differences of the different regions of the Gold Coast; to give Ashanti an effective say in regional and central government; and to hasten self-government and the creation of a healthy, tolerant, prosperous and God-fearing nation. The Ashanti had sound arguments from their own perspective, but Nkrumah's drive for a united and independent Ghana and for an end to tribally divisive policies proved more powerful. The solution later proposed by the Colonial Office, which both sides prevented by their intransigence, was a compromise giving the

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central government overall control but with a federal constitution reserving major powers to the three largest regions.

The NLM soon became a powerful political force and a dire threat to Nkrumah's aim of a smooth run-up to independence. It demanded a federal form of government prior to independence, and levelled its fiercest criticism at the corruption and mismanagement of the Cocoa Marketing Board and the Cocoa Purchasing Company. As many members of the CPP joined the NLM they testified from first-hand knowledge to the corrupt practices of the two boards. The movement then sought the support of the powerful Asanteman Council and, with its approval, sent a resolution to the Queen asking for a Royal Commission to investigate the possibility of a federal constitution. The NLM even had the support of the Asantehene – the revered head of the Ashanti nation, who normally kept out of politics. He publicly supported the NLM, seeing it not as a political party but as a national movement which it was his duty to lead. Further support came when a number of distinguished CPP members – Victor Owusu, Joe Appiah, R. R. Amponsah and Kurankyi Taylor – left the CPP and joined the NLM.

This defection followed on from the fiercely fought dispute about the nomination of CPP candidates in the June election. Nkrumah, as Life Chairman of the party, made a direct personal appeal to the loyalty of each candidate, but this powerful group of Ashantis allowed their loyalty to Ashanti to overcome any loyalty they felt for either Nkrumah or the CPP. Nkrumah was seriously worried about this development, but was still able to captivate the crowds as he did when, at the Arena in Accra, he announced the names of the 104 chosen CPP candidates.

He arrived at the meeting with his senior colleagues Gbedemah, Botsio, and Hutton-Mills, all wearing Prison Graduate caps. *The Evening News* of 4 May 1954 described the scene.

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The masses victoriously responded as their emancipator waved majestically and confidently at them. Before the Man of Destiny delivered his soul inspiring speech preceding the release (sic) of the 104 candidates, he stated that the hand of God is in our struggle.

Even allowing for the exaggeration of the party newspaper, the account captures some of the fervour and adulation still felt by vast crowds of CPP supporters. At the end of the meeting a fetish priest poured a libation asking for blessings on Nkrumah; a bullock was then slaughtered and Nkrumah, following customary tradition, bathed his feet in its blood. The Accra rally restored some confidence, but Nkrumah remained tense and worried about the outcome in Ashanti. The defection of the four senior CPP members came just before a by-election at Atwima in July 1955, when the price of cocoa had been raised to 80 shillings. The NLM won an overwhelming victory with a candidate who was formerly in the CPP.

This powerful movement which developed so suddenly and seemed to sweep all before it in Ashanti, presented a problem to Nkrumah. In spite of the security reports, the speed with which the NLM developed took him by surprise. He complained that he could not deal with the lawlessness in Ashanti because the Governor still controlled the police and the army. Arden-Clarke, for his part, asserted that he did not want to intervene so soon after the new constitution had been established. He wrote:

The latest constitution is more difficult to work than the last, as it involves government by remote control instead of, as before, telling the Cabinet what to do at their weekly meetings and then seeing that they do it.<sup>3</sup>

The relationship of trust between Nkrumah and Arden-Clarke,

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which had been established at their first meeting when Nkrumah had just come out of jail, was now to be severely tested. Within the restrictions imposed by the 1954 constitution, Arden-Clarke supported the CPP Government and worked tirelessly to guide Nkrumah and the Cabinet towards a peaceful and successful handover of power. Whatever the problems or tensions, the bond of trust was never broken. On the other hand, the NLM and the Ashanti crisis created Arden-Clarke's gravest problem. As the crisis developed, the image which Nkrumah's CPP Government presented in Ashanti was that of a dangerous, irresponsible and dictatorial group, who were almost totally corrupt, and who undermined all the beliefs, customs and decencies of life which the Ashanti people held dear. There was some truth in these allegations. As Arden-Clarke appeared to support the government, or even to act as its spokesman, the convention that the Governor should remain above criticism was quickly terminated, and he came in for vigorous abuse, especially from the *Ashanti Pioneer*.

The prolonged crisis created further tensions. Nkrumah and the CPP were of the opinion that the British staff, from Loveridge and Russell down to the former District Commissioners – now deliberately entitled Government Agents – were far too sympathetic to the Ashanti view. In practice, the field staff, on the basis of the empathy they felt for the people in their own district, had viewed many of the changes pushed through by the CPP with distaste. Generally conservative and traditionalist in their attitudes, many were out of tune with the new political realities. Some had romantic old-fashioned attitudes to an Africa in which they were secure and comfortable, but which now no longer existed. Instead of dignified discussions with the local chief and his council, they had to cope with the brash and often antagonistic CPP agent whose prime aim was the elimination of colonialism of which the former DCs were the obvious examples. Their natural sympathy lay with the authentic rural African, whose best interest they

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would always claim to protect, as opposed to the type of CPP supporter whom they often saw as an aggressive, ill-educated, semi-Westernized *poseur*. The loyalties of the British field staff were sorely tried. They had a loyalty to their own area, to Arden-Clarke at the head of their service, and to the CPP Government of Nkrumah whose agents they had now become.

As the Ashanti crisis developed this conflict of loyalties became more and more difficult to resolve. Arden-Clarke initially had some sympathy for the NLM and he had a cordial relationship with the Asantehene, with whom he occasionally played golf. But he soon came to view it as a dangerous regional splinter group, poorly represented in the Assembly which had just been elected, and the biggest and most unexpected menace to the goal of independence. These developments set up dangerous tensions between Arden-Clarke in Accra and his field staff in Ashanti. He held to the view that Nkrumah, who had just won an impressive democratically elected majority, was trying to weld the nation together, and that sectional interests should be strongly discouraged from stirring up trouble deliberately, in the hope that Britain would intervene and suspend the constitution. At the beginning of 1955, the Secretary of State, Lennox-Boyd, echoing the Governor's view, replied to the request for a Royal Commission. He pointed out that the 1954 election had given a clear democratic majority, and that problems now had to be decided locally and not by British intervention, which would be unconstitutional. Nkrumah then broadcast to the nation on 3 January 1955 saying that his government had a duty to uphold law and order, and that they proposed to do this.

As the power of the NLM increased, Nkrumah and his Cabinet took counter measures. In December 1954, in order to quell the rising violence, they invited the NLM leaders to a conference. This invitation, and a second offer to discuss legislation to set up regional councils, were both rejected by the NLM. The CPP's efforts to counter the increasing support for the NLM illustrate well

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enough the tribal factors in the political scene. In the western part of Ashanti there were large areas where the Brong chiefs and their people resented the domination of the Ashanti. By encouraging this opposition, the CPP gained much needed support. Kumasi, the second largest town in the country, housed a large number of different tribal groups, and when loyalty to Ashanti became the dominant issue, the Fanti, Ga, Ewe and northern Muslims tended to side with the CPP. Even with the rallying call of the NLM, there were many towns and villages where disputes involving the chief or the stool assured the CPP of a fairly large number of supporters; and not all the young men deserted the CPP. Support for the NLM and the CPP fluctuated wildly. In October 1954, E. Y. Baffoe, an NLM official and a defector from the CPP, was murdered by Twumasi Ankrah, a strong-arm CPP agent. Some months later, the sister of Krobo Edusei was murdered by an NLM gang, and this brought sympathy and support for the CPP.

The atmosphere in Ashanti remained tense, but elsewhere it was more relaxed and even light-hearted. In February 1955 Nkrumah and Arden-Clarke attended the formal opening of the work on Tema harbour, where six million tons of rock were to be deposited. Together they set off the first detonation. Later Nkrumah got into difficulties getting down from one of the huge tipper trucks, and, to help him down, Arden-Clarke put his shoulder under Nkrumah's bottom. Arden-Clarke's description of the incident shows that all the party cries were not always in deadly earnest.

An enterprising photographer snapped this and sent me a copy which I have decreed must not be published! There were a large number of labourers and market women standing by, and they all roared with laughter and loud shouts of 'freedom' were raised... Meanwhile Ashanti simmers but the Government is behaving itself and, with luck, we shall avoid an explosion.<sup>4</sup>

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Meanwhile all over the country work continued on schemes both large and small with enthusiastic popular support. Metalled roads replaced the treacherous laterite, villages welcomed the supply of water and electricity, and in Tamale a large regional hospital was built. A travelling exhibition about the Volta River Project, after being launched by Nkrumah, visited every major town in the country.

After lengthy discussions between Nkrumah, Arden-Clarke and the Cabinet, it was agreed that, when the Governor spoke at the great durbar or meeting of chiefs at Kibi, he should comment on the demand for a federal government which the NLM was putting forward. This speech, made on 2 February 1955, caused an uproar in Ashanti, and for the next two years was referred to as provocative and insulting, though its actual terms seemed mild enough.<sup>5</sup> The Governor explained that, under the new constitution, he could not usurp the position of the minister responsible for the issues that had been raised, but that he could both give and receive advice. He continued:

There is too much talk of 'federalism' and 'regionalism'. As a practical administrator, I am very suspicious of 'isms' and similar generic terms unless they are precisely defined. Frankly, I do not know what 'federalism' or 'regionalism' means in terms of practical politics, and I don't believe the ordinary voter or man in the street does either.

He encouraged all groups to discuss constitutional matters with the government in order to find a solution. He said that it would be tragic if, on the threshold of independence, the Gold Coast could not solve its political differences and thus disappoint the high hopes of its own people and of Africa.

Arden-Clarke was not being entirely honest because he understood the NLM demands well enough. They wanted a federal

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form of government that would give Ashanti some protection from the centralizing policies of the CPP, but to admit this would have created other major problems and would have delayed independence for years. Hopes that his speech would calm the situation were quickly dashed. The situation in Ashanti became more explosive, and great prominence was given to Appiah's statement that "The CPP threatened the institution of Chieftaincy, the very symbol of our culture, tradition and democracy". The Asanteman Council followed this by protesting at Nkrumah's dictatorial attitude and his government's refusal to investigate the affairs of the Cocoa Marketing Board. Even the Asantehene said 'We are fighting to restore the lost prestige of the Ashanti Nation'.<sup>6</sup> Press and security reports showed an increasingly dangerous situation with widespread violence, intimidation and lawlessness. The NLM had taunted Nkrumah that he was frightened to come to Ashanti, but Arden-Clarke went to Kumasi on 21 March to try to break the deadlock. To mark his visit, the *Ashanti Pioneer* produced a leaflet which gives an interesting view of the situation in Ashanti and especially the Ashantis' view of Nkrumah:

We demand

- a) Commission of Inquiry into CMB and CPC affairs.
- b) Nkrumah's government to resign immediately – public opinion demands this.
- c) Setting up of a Constituency Assembly for Federation.

Are you not aware of

- a) Nkrumah's Dictatorial Tendencies
- b) Naked Fascism in this country
- c) The fact that you should be neutral in LOCAL POLITICS.

Why take sides with the CPP?

Sir Charles

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Are you for Democracy  
or  
For Dictatorship?

No Federation No Self Government.

During the visit an NLM crowd got out of hand and, as Arden-Clarke left the Asantehene's palace, they attacked his Rolls-Royce with mud, bottles and stones. Most of the local press were horrified at this incident, but some, while deploring the behaviour, referred again to the Kibi speech and blamed the government for making the Ashantis feel snubbed and slighted.<sup>7</sup>

On their side the CPP had sound arguments. Major factors in the success of the cocoa trade were the labour from the north and the marketing facilities in the south, so Ashanti could not claim all the credit. Nkrumah personally pointed out that Kumasi had a new hospital, the foundations of a new university and a new library. All over Ashanti there were new roads and other public works. This refuted the NLM argument that cocoa money was only being used in the south. After the formation of the NLM, some CPP supporters had suffered violent attacks and intimidation and many had fled to Accra. The CPP made much of the murder of Krobo Edusei's sister, but in practice both sides engaged in widespread violence.

As Nkrumah and Arden-Clarke became more deeply involved in the Ashanti crisis, and as some of the British press – notably *The Daily Telegraph* – became more critical of the CPP Government, the Colonial Office staunchly supported Nkrumah. Lennox-Boyd, the Colonial Secretary, reflecting opinion both at Westminster and in Whitehall, took a firm stand on clear constitutional grounds. He regretted the widespread violence in Ashanti, but argued that the Gold Coast was a democracy, and that the will of the majority of the people as expressed in an election, and as

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represented in the Assembly, must prevail. He wrote that the 1954 election had given a clear majority to the CPP, and that it would be improper and unconstitutional for Britain to intervene. Any such intervention by the imperial power would destroy the new democratic system which it was essential to nurture in order to prepare the country for independence. For his part, Nkrumah argued that imperialist agents were supporting the NLM in order to delay independence.

The role of the chief was, for the Ashanti, one of the crucial issues in the crisis. Since 1954, NLM leaders had put strong pressure on chiefs who supported the CPP to return to their allegiance to the Asanteman Council. Similarly, many chiefs had been encouraged by the CPP to join the party. The Asanteman Council complained that, in the Brong area, the CPP were deliberately encouraging chiefs to break with Ashanti, and to demand a separate regional administration. There were serious faults and threats of violence on both sides.

Behind the individual incidents and arguments lay the wider issues. Nkrumah supported the advance of modern centralized democratic government, aiming to cut out the feudal backwardness of traditional customs and traditional agriculture, and to break the vested interests of the whole apparatus of the chief and the stool. He wanted to eradicate tribalism in order to create a modern nation state. The real clash came in the towns and villages of Ashanti, where a well-ordered, disciplined and reasonably democratic social structure saw itself threatened by a new ideology which it did not understand and which frequently put power into the hands of ignorant, self-seeking people. These people paid no regard to elders or chiefs, were not respected in the community, had no standards of integrity, and used their new-found powers largely for personal gain. One direct result of the clashes and the violence came when Nkrumah introduced the States Council Bill. This gave a chief, in a dispute over his

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tenure, the right to appeal to the Governor over the heads of the Asanteman Council or the Asantehene – the traditional arbiter in these matters. Nkrumah justified this move because so many chiefs who had supported the CPP had been destooled. When Nkrumah first discussed the bill in the Assembly, there was an outcry in Ashanti. Baffuor Akoto, the NLM leader, claimed that the bill threatened the whole structure of Ashanti society.

Ashanti anger over the States Council Bill quickly became enmeshed in the issue of a separate regional administration for the Brong area - the Ashanti seeing this as another deliberate attack on their heritage. Because of the gravity of the crisis, the government appointed a select committee to consider a federal system of government and a second chamber for the Gold Coast. To advise this committee, Lennox-Boyd, the Secretary of State, sent out a distinguished constitutional lawyer, Sir Frederick Bourne. The NLM boycotted the committee and refused to meet Bourne, but later produced their own impractical scheme of a governor and two houses for each region.

Under such pressures and crises, the morale of the party flagged and at their sixth anniversary conference - 15 June 1955 - Nkrumah did his best to raise their spirits. He reminded them of their early struggles and suffering. He warned them of the dangers, from feudal tyranny and saboteurs. He argued that the CPP was the only national party that stood for independence, freedom, democracy and justice. They must not allow their independence to be held up by a few chiefs and disgruntled politicians. He stressed that he would welcome a well organized opposition, but that the real issue was between a parliamentary democracy on the one hand and a feudal tyranny on the other. He rounded off his speech by denying that he was a dictator and reaffirming the struggle of the CPP against the dictatorship of colonialism and the tyranny of feudal despotism. In July he again had to rally the party after the by-election defeat by the NLM at Atwima.

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In September 1955, Colin Russell replaced Loveridge as Chief Regional Officer Ashanti, and his urgent security reports again alerted Arden-Clarke and Nkrumah to the dangerous situation in Ashanti. Russell accurately forecast that, if the States Council Bill passed, it would lead to immediate violence and a permanent boycott of the Select Committee inquiry. This new crisis brought to the fore General Sir Edward Spears, a cantankerous eccentric who had been one of the three mining representatives in the Assembly, whom Arden-Clarke dubbed 'the unholy Trinity'. A former MP, Spears was head of the Ashanti Goldfields Company, and he used its resources to run the *Ashanti Times*. Spears was outraged when the new constitution removed the special mining representatives. From that time onwards he was determined to do all he could to back the NLM, to oppose the CPP, and to delay independence. Through the Ashanti Goldfields he had powerful contacts in the City of London, and he exploited his Conservative party links to bring pressure to bear in Parliament. He used all these channels and he also used Dr Kofi Busia, who had made his name as a sociologist in Oxford, to present the NLM cause. Spears and Busia mounted an active campaign in London. They both emphasized the left-wing and dictatorial tendencies of Nkrumah and warned British and European companies of the danger of Nkrumah expropriating foreign assets at independence. Busia appeared as the polished and educated African, as opposed to the violent CPP elements which the right-wing British press, encouraged by Spears, was eagerly portraying. Busia kept up the argument, and in a series of letters to *The Times*, demanded that differences should be settled before independence. In spite of these activities, Spears both before and after independence had a warm and cordial relationship with Nkrumah personally. Whenever he returned from a trip to London he brought Nkrumah the latest mechanical toy, and there would be hoots of laughter as they tried it out in his office - illustrating, once again Nkrumah's capacity for

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establishing cordial relations with expatriates working in Ghana.

Arden-Clarke and Nkrumah felt that Busia was going behind their backs, and were angry when Lennox-Boyd gave him an interview. Infact, Lennox-Boyd took a strong line with Busia, reminding him that he and the NLM had boycotted the Select Committee and telling him that no proposals which had not come through the Assembly and the Governor could be considered. Concern about the situation in the Gold Coast prompted a House of Lords debate in June 1955, and the government spokesman Lord Lloyd repeated Lennox-Boyd's unbending line.

In September, Sir Frederick Bourne started his visit but the NLM refused to see him. In October the States Council Bill was presented to the Assembly and it became law on 16 November 1955. Russell wrote angrily to the Governor protesting that the passage of the bill had again created an explosive situation in Ashanti.<sup>8</sup> Nkrumah contended that the bill go had to through in order to protect loyal chiefs who supported the CPP and who were destooled by the Ashanti hierarchy.

The British staff in Ashanti, including Russell, argued that there would be no peace in Ashanti until the States Council Bill was repealed, and they were driven to frustration and despair by Nkrumah's unsympathetic and inflexible attitude, which appeared to be backed up by Arden-Clarke. Nkrumah was forcefully reminded of the intensity of Ashanti feeling when, at the height of the crisis over the States Council Bill, there was a serious attempt to assassinate him. He was sitting one evening in his house with his secretary Erica Powell and a few colleagues when they smelt something like fireworks. Someone made a joke about Guy Fawkes, but even this did not alert them to the danger. Suddenly there were two large explosions which blew in all windows. Nkrumah's first reaction after the explosion was to ensure that his mother was safe. The police reported that, had the gelignite been set up properly, there was enough to blow up the whole house

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and everyone in it.<sup>9</sup>

Nkrumah used an effective argument in support of the States Council Bill by quoting at some length from Busia's book, *The Position of the Chief in the Modern Political System in Ashanti*. In this book, published in 1951 Busia argued that the Asanteman Council and the senior chiefs were dictatorial, and that the common man had no chance of redress against them. Nkrumah gladly accepted Busia's argument, and maintained that this was the main reason why initially the CPP had gained such strong support in Ashanti – especially among the young men who had already challenged the power of the chiefs. In his sociological treatise, Busia had criticized the Ashanti hierarchy, but he saw the CPP as a threat to the whole of the Ashanti society.

With the passage of the controversial bill, a new political element emerged. The NLM leadership now put forward the view that if there was another election and the NLM gained a majority in Ashanti – even if the CPP gained a majority on the country as a whole – then Ashanti would secede. These two new ideas – another election before independence, and secession – worried Nkrumah. He could claim reasonably enough that the CPP victory in 1954 had given him the clear mandate to carry the country to independence, and that this noble goal could only be damaged or destroyed by the actions of the NLM. Neither he nor any CPP member was keen to face another election in this atmosphere of uncertainty, distrust and violence. Meanwhile, Busia had quietly continued his lobbying in Whitehall, Westminster and the City. He again saw Lennox-Boyd and pursued his cause with sympathetic MPs. In the City, helped again by Spears and the Ashanti Goldfields Company and by their contacts in *The Daily Telegraph*, he kept his cause alive. Partly as a result of his determined work, in December 1955 the House of Commons debated the Gold Coast situation. Genuine concern was expressed in this debate, but Lennox-Boyd, summing up in favour of the CPP Government, gave a loophole to

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the Ashantis. He said that, while having some sympathy for their past situation, it was important for all sides to co-operate with the Bourne inquiry so that the independence constitution will be acceptable in all parts of the country.<sup>10</sup> The Ashantis rapidly decided to show that it would be unacceptable in their part of the country. They realized that their campaigning had achieved this loophole and that they had effectively by-passed both Nkrumah and Arden-Clarke. They were jubilant when, on the same day as the Commons debate, *The Times* in an editorial suggested that there should be another election before independence.<sup>11</sup>

Busia's quiet lobbying achieved another significant result. The NLM had for months and years been demanding a public inquiry into the work of Cocoa Marketing Board and the Cocoa Purchasing Company and, although their demand had Arden-Clarke's support, Nkrumah had always put off a decision. Now Lennox-Boyd added his weight to the demand, and Nkrumah felt that he had to take action, though he still delayed several months before appointing a notable Nigerian lawyer, Mr. Justice Jibowu, to head the enquiry. By the end of 1955, the political initiative had clearly passed to the NLM, and Nkrumah, instead of quietly preparing for independence, had to battle with his party to obtain their agreement to the possibility of another election, which they dreaded. They also had to prepare for the report of the Jibowu Commission, knowing that erstwhile CPP supporters now in the NLM would provide devastating evidence of corruption and mismanagement.

In December 1955, Bourne produced his report, which achieved very little. It rejected the Opposition's federal demands and confirmed that the power to legislate must lie at the centre. It recommended five regional assemblies, with protected powers, and acknowledged the particular problems of the Northern Area, with a proposal for a special ten-year plan. It did not approve of a separate Brong region.

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Since October Nkrumah had been involved in complex negotiations with Lennox-Boyd on the independence issue. Lennox-Boyd had invited him to London but he had parried the invitation, arguing quite correctly that if, in the current situation, he went to London, the Gold Coast people would expect him to return with a fixed date for independence. Lennox-Boyd's two conditions had been that a substantial majority of the people wanted independence in the very near future and had agreed on a workable constitution for the whole country. Nkrumah saw that these conditions could encourage the NLM to go on protesting as long as possible, but he was able to argue that he had made every effort to gain their co-operation in producing the Bourne Report. He had also, after the publication of the report, invited all the main political organizations in the country to a conference at Achimota to discuss it.

Therefore, Nkrumah's view, which was conveyed to Lennox-Boyd by Arden-Clarke when he went on leave in February 1956 was as follows. The CPP Government was making a serious attempt to get the NLM to discuss the proposed constitutional changes contained in the Bourne Report at a conference which he had called at Achimota. If, after this, an election was forced on him, he would have to have an assurance from Whitehall that, after the election, provided he had an overall majority - even though it was a minority in some regions - the British Government would grant a firm date for independence. Lennox-Boyd, who admired Nkrumah's skill as a negotiator, accepted the main part of this argument.

While these complex negotiations were proceeding, Nkrumah broadcast a statesmanlike New Year message to the country.

In any democratic country, the final decision in national affairs remains with the elected representatives of the people assembled in the national legislature. Similarly, in a fundamental matter such

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as that of our constitution at independence, the final decision of a fully representative legislature is accepted as having the general agreement of the people and must prevail. Racialism and violence must be completely rejected as an instrument of policy.<sup>12</sup>

He had also addressed the party at Saltpond just before Christmas and argued that, if he had controlled the police and the army, the NLM could have been dealt with more vigorously. He observed that that would not have been a sound basis for independence which was very close.

As the Achimota Conference approached, political speeches on both sides became more extreme. The CPP claimed in the *Accra Evening News* that a plot had been uncovered to assassinate Nkrumah and Arden-Clarke, and threatened dire penalties for the perpetrators. The NLM replied: 'These homeless tramps and jackals . . . are now haunted men and sorely afraid of their own shadows.' Even the Asantehene was stung into intemperate comment:

A dishonest press to which truth is unknown, and whose main occupation is the fabrication and propagation of irresponsible, scurrilous and nearly always libellous information, is a serious liability to any country.<sup>13</sup>

The NLM issued threats that Ashanti would secede, and quite senior CPP leaders like Gbedemah and Welbeck stated that the Gold Coast would declare independence if the United Kingdom insisted on another election – views which Nkrumah had personally to deny.

As threats and taunts flew to and fro, violence increased across the country. The Ashanti Ex-Servicemen's Organization, which had been a key body of CPP support against the power of the chiefs, joined the NLM and repented of their actions against the

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Golden Stool. Neither did Nkrumah reduce the tension when he called the Ashanti 'feudal tribalists', nor when he appointed a commission made up entirely of CPP members to plan the independence celebrations.

When the Achimota Conference opened on 16 February 1956 floods of protests and petitions arrived at Christiansborg Castle, at the House of Commons, and in Whitehall. The Asanteman Council wrote to Arden-Clarke, knowing that, although he was home on leave in Norfolk, he was having talks with Lennox-Boyd. They stressed that neither Ashanti nor the Northern Territories were represented at the Achimota Conference and 'the conclusions of this farcical conference will be unacceptable, and the NLM will not be bound by its decisions.'<sup>14</sup>

Just before the conference CPP agents blew up the Ashanti Royal Mausoleum at Breman, thus increasing the tension and apprehension. Colin Russell testified to the strength and intensity of feeling throughout Ashanti when their sincere, genuine and respected leaders felt that they could not get a fair hearing from the Accra Government or even from the Governor.<sup>15</sup> There was further apprehension when it appeared that the CPP were trying to get rid of the remaining British judges in order to appoint their own nominees. Sir Mark Wilson, the Chief Justice, managed to produce a moment of legal history and light relief at the height of the crisis. He was inspecting building work in the High Court roof when he trod on some plaster board and fell through the ceiling, descending from on high into the court below where a case was being tried. Fortunately his fall was broken by the canopy over the judge's chair!

One small incident at this time illustrated the issues which lay at the very core of the crisis. A minor chief in Ashanti, prompted by the CPP, threatened to secede from the Asanteman Council. Under the new law he would have the right of appeal to the Governor. This would mean that the CPP could encourage

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their supporters among the chiefs to appeal to Accra and thus circumvent the power of the Asantehene and the Asanteman Council. The Asantehene himself posed the question whether the Governor was going to be party to an anarchical precedent which would destroy the very foundations of Ashanti society. No clear answer came to this request, and so the apprehension increased. The Governor became more and more enmeshed in the imbroglio over the chiefs, and now, in addition, was charged by the NLM with not giving the Secretary of State the full facts about the Achimota Conference. The *Ashanti Pioneer* of 1 March 1956 referred to 'the lies told to the Secretary of State about 'the Achimota buffoonery'.

In Britain the protests and petitions achieved their object. Reports appeared with lurid details of violence in Ashanti. Nearly thirty people had been murdered in Kumasi: this was compared to Chicago in the 1930s - with bombs, bullets, explosives, and gunmen roaming unhindered. The London papers became increasingly critical of Nkrumah and his policy of democratic centralism. *The Economist* of 14 April 1956, in an article headed 'War Drums on the Gold Coast', supported the idea of another election. *The Observer* always well-informed on Africa through its correspondent Colin Legum, gave warning on 15 April of Nkrumah's plans for a one-party state and people's courts. It added:

It is probably true that the NLM and its allies, united into a national political party, will one day provide the Gold Coast with a government more stable, more intelligent and more honest than the one that has brought the country through transition from colonial rule to independence.

An editorial in the *News Chronicle* of 26 February 1956 summed up the general feeling in Britain. It said that there was evidence that the NLM was gaining increasing support from the chiefs,

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from CPP refugees, from the intelligentsia, and from 'honest men who are sick of the corruption, nepotism and patronage that besmirch the government's record'.

Nkrumah, very conscious of the strong opposition of his Cabinet and party to the idea of another election, decided to make a last effort. Through the Acting Governor, Sir Gordon Hadow, a message was sent to Arden-Clarke in England saying that, on constitutional and political grounds, there was no need for another election and that if one was held there was a real danger of violence, riots and bloodshed. This approach achieved nothing. Then Nkrumah, playing his final card, sent Kojo Botsio to London to plead their case. He briefed Botsio personally, arguing that the 1951 and 1954 elections had been fought on the issue of 'Self-Government Now', and that since the 1954 election the CPP had had a substantial majority in the Assembly. There was therefore no need for another election, and to impose new conditions at this stage would negate the very essence of democracy. By enforcing an election, the British Government would condone the violent and unconstitutional attitude of the NLM, and create a real danger of riots, bloodshed, intimidation and disorder. He said that his opposition to an election was not that the CPP were afraid of losing - far from it - it was solely to avoid the danger of strife and bloodshed. He pointed out that, from Accra, it appeared that the Secretary of State had condoned or even encouraged NLM intransigence. Finally, he gave details of two White Papers which were being prepared in proper fashion to take the colony through to independence as a sovereign state within the Commonwealth.

Arden-Clarke had spent much of his 1956 leave on urgent talks in Whitehall. He had originally been opposed to the idea of another election, but he had come round to the view that it would be the only way to break the political deadlock in the colony, and he had eventually gained the agreement of Lennox-Boyd and the British Cabinet to this. He flew back to Accra with

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Botsio, then spent the Easter weekend with Nkrumah and Hadow discussing the implications of the decision to hold an election before independence. Nkrumah has described how Botsio greeted him with the words, 'It looks as if a general election is the only answer'. Nkrumah saw three possibilities - to declare unilateral independence, to let the present constitution run on until 1958, or to have an election, even though this might cause violence in Ashanti. After reassurance from the Governor on security and public order, he decided to agree to an election.

Arden-Clarke, who wrote each day to his wife or family, has given a more detailed account of these discussions.

What a day it has been - I have had a continuous stream of people since 8.30 a.m. finishing up with a rather overwrought and tired Prime Minister who has just left me (6.30 p.m.) to go and deal with a difficult meeting of his party executive and ministers. He is going to break the news to them that there is to be a general election and he expects trouble. I think he went off encouraged and fortified: he feels thwarted and frustrated, never able to do what he wants to do, as and when he would like, and he has not yet developed the quality of patience. At least I can come back to a whisky and a quiet talk with you: he, poor devil, will be dealing with emotional stupidities until the small hours.

The following day, when Nkrumah had failed to carry his Cabinet with him, he came back to Arden-Clarke who wrote:

Yesterday was another of those days. The PM rang up and asked if I could see his whole cabinet at 10 a.m. I cancelled my appointment for 10 a.m. and up they all trooped, and for two hours I wrestled with them. First they did not want a general election or, if there had to be one, let it be in October or later.

After much excited debate among themselves and some fairly

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forceful interpositions by me, it was agreed that there must be a general election and that it should be held as early as possible.<sup>16</sup>

There was further excited discussion over whether the decision about another election should appear to be Nkrumah's - which Arden-Clarke favoured, as it gave the kudos to Nkrumah - or Lennox-Boyd's. The Cabinet, thinking of their more turbulent supporters, decided on the latter. The same day, Busia came to the Castle saying that he and the Asantehene might be prepared to call off their opposition in return for changes in the independence constitution, but the Governor told him bluntly that he had left it too late.

After this, careful planning resulted in a relatively trouble-free time when these important decisions were announced. On 11 May, Lennox-Boyd announced in the House of Commons:

The British Government will be willing to accept a motion calling for the independence of the Gold Coast, backed by a reasonable majority in the newly elected Gold Coast Assembly, and will then declare a firm date for that purpose.

Creech Jones, for the Labour Party Opposition, immediately supported this, thus making it clear that there was no support for the other issues the NLM had raised. The CPP, still concerned about violence, asked Arden-Clarke to warn political leaders and the whole people against violence, and they asked for an assurance that, if there was violence, the British Government would not use this as an excuse to delay independence.

On 15 May, at the ceremonial opening of the new Assembly, Arden-Clarke read the Speech from the Throne. He outlined the political and constitutional background, and then announced that the Assembly would be dissolved and an election held. He had expected the speech to be greeted in disapproving silence by

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the government benches, because the CPP had opposed having another election, but it was met by uproarious applause from them, and by glum looks from the opposition who perhaps, too late, realized their overall weakness. The election was arranged for 12 and 17 July 1956.

Two major issues had to be dealt with before the election took place – the protectorate status of the Northern Territories, and the future of the Togoland people. Since the protectorate status concerned relations with the Crown, Arden-Clarke, after detailed discussion with Nkrumah, undertook a lengthy tour of the Northern Territories, so that the chiefs and people would be fully informed in time for the election. He set off for the north with some misgivings. After his service in Northern Nigeria in the 1920s, he had always liked and respected the dignified northern people, far removed from the hurly-burly of the political arena. He realized, too, that their case was sound and honourable. In 1901, they had made treaties with Britain which were still valid and in which Britain offered them protection.<sup>17</sup> Their argument was simple – they still wished to retain this status and did not wish to embark on the uncertainties of an independent state under the control of Nkrumah and the CPP. Arden-Clarke's only possible argument against this, was that it would be unthinkable for the north to remain in colonial tutelage while the rest of the colony was independent. Such an argument had no legality at all, and his disquiet was revealed in a letter to his family, in which he said 'The speech is couched in reasonably diplomatic language and the pill is concealed in a lot of verbal jam'.<sup>18</sup> Throughout a long and arduous tour, he embroidered and elaborated the argument in a dozen different ways, and mixed it with joviality, bonhomie and pure bluff. In achieving a measure of success, he made a vital personal contribution to solving this intractable problem. The slow progress he was making is illustrated by another remark:

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the North must remain an integral part of the Gold Coast, and that when independence is granted it automatically and inevitably loses its protectorate status.<sup>19</sup>

From the perspective of the 1980s, Arden-Clarke may appear to have been patronising – an image not helped by his own reference to being a headmaster with a rowdy crowd of prefects – but in practice his relationship with all the peoples of Ghana was one of firmness and mutual respect.

The highlight of this tour was the great durbar at Tamale on 29 May 1956. Here were assembled the chiefs and their retinues from all over the Northern Territories – over 25,000 people. It was the biggest durbar ever held in the north, also perhaps the most important, and possibly the last. The Governor in full regalia, with an escort of lancers, took the Royal Salute, while the Gold Coast regimental band played the British national anthem. Then he walked round and individually greeted each chief, and every chief, with his state umbrella, came to the Governor's dais and returned the greeting. The Governor made a long speech, which was translated into Dagbani. The speech contained some very unpopular points but, perhaps because of the impressive ceremonial, there was no overt reaction. The following day, the Governor met the chiefs informally and, while a few young men were hostile, most of the chiefs appeared to accept his advice. After the NLM crisis both Nkrumah and Arden-Clarke were relieved that there was no longer any thought of the North seceding from an independent Ghana. Arden-Clarke expressed some exasperation in a final comment:

I never realized what a prolonged battle I would have with the politicians, chiefs and people of this country in order to give them the independence for which they have been clamouring all these years. Now they are going to have it whether they like

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it or not?<sup>20</sup>

Togoland presented a different type of problem. The Togoland issue has been referred to in connection with the formation of the Congress Party (see chapter 6). Now, as Ghana's independence approached, Togoland prepared for the plebiscite demanded by the United Nations, which took place on 9 May 1956. The CPP advocated union with the Gold Coast, and the Togoland Congress advocated separation. In the plebiscite a majority voted for union with the Gold Coast, so that the former British Togoland became a part of Ghana at independence. The relationship between an independent Ghana and Togoland after its independence in 1960 proved to be fraught with danger for them both.

The Northern Territories and Togoland had presented serious regional problems, but by 1956 Nkrumah and Arden-Clarke felt they had made a thorough and reasonable effort to overcome the worst difficulties. These two areas were the least of their problems as the country, with considerable apprehension, faced the prospect of the election of 1956.

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## THE 1956 ELECTION – THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

After the violence and the venom of the exchanges during the NLM crisis, Nkrumah felt almost a sense of anti-climax as he made the final moves towards the election of 1956. With Arden-Clarke he had worked out a detailed timetable. Lennox-Boyd had agreed to make a statement in Parliament on 10 May 1956, and then, after a final policy discussion in the CPP Cabinet, Arden-Clarke would open the new session of the Assembly on Tuesday 15 May and, in the Speech from the Throne, outline the constitutional proposals and the plans for the election.

After the Speech from the Throne, Nkrumah moved that the Assembly should adopt the White Paper containing the independence proposals for the Gold Coast to become a sovereign and independent state. He announced that the new state would be called Ghana, after the great African empire which in the eleventh century stretched between the Senegal River and the upper Niger and included the northern part of present-day Ghana. Then, having dealt with the role of the Governor General and details of the five-year Parliament, he announced plans for the regional assemblies. Remaining loyal to the pledges made to his CPP supporters in western Ashanti, a Brong region would be set up in addition to the Eastern, Western, Northern, Ashanti, and Trans-

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Volta-Togoland regions. Accra-Tema would become a separate district. The regional assemblies would enjoy the constitutional safeguard that a two-thirds majority in the Assembly would be needed to suspend or abolish them. (This appeared to give reasonable security, but just before independence, Nkrumah told John Codrington, one of Arden-Clarke's senior British colleagues, that after independence they would be able to drive a coach and horses through these safeguards, and they intended to do just that.)<sup>1</sup> The debate followed and Nkrumah's motion was passed by a comfortable majority.

The Governor dissolved the Assembly and announced the dates for the general election – 17 July, with an additional day, 18 July, for the Northern Territories. When the election was announced, the CPP had the advantage of a well-tryed and reasonably efficient party organization, but, as in 1954, there was serious trouble with rival CPP candidates. Once again Nkrumah was called on to deal with the most difficult problems, and on two occasions, he went without sleep for forty-eight hours – resulting, not surprisingly, in losing his voice, blinding headaches, and serious stomach upsets. At the end he felt the effort had been worthwhile, because by the deadline for nominations on 20 June, the CPP had an official candidate in each of the 104 constituencies, with far fewer rival CPP candidates than in the 1954 election.

Nkrumah decided to launch the CPP election campaign personally from the Accra Arena, which had been the scene of so many momentous events in his great struggle. As he approached the dais, there was a jubilant shout of 'Freedom' and he was hauled from his car and carried shoulder-high to the platform. He emphasized to the people that the real issue was between democratic independence and feudal tribalism. He warned them not to be misled by opposition tricks or stunts. He appealed to supporters who had fled in fear from Ashanti, to go back in order to cast their vote. He reminded them that the Governor had

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promised to see that law and order would be upheld everywhere. He said 'This is the end of the road. Whether we go through the golden gate to freedom or whether we remain behind, is now a matter for you to decide. "You, you, you and you!" I shouted, as I pointed to all corners of the crowd.<sup>2</sup> As he finished, he was lifted up, placed in a chair under an umbrella, and carried triumphantly through the crowds. The CPP then issued a manifesto which stressed the role of Nkrumah. It was clear, short and effective:

What you are asked to vote for is perfectly clear:

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO is to ask yourself two questions:

1. Do I want FREEDOM and INDEPENDENCE NOW - THIS YEAR - so that I and my children can enjoy life in a free and independent sovereign state of Ghana thereafter?
2. Do I want to revert to the days of imperialism, colonialism and tribal feudalism?

If you favour the first question - that is, if you want your INDEPENDENCE in 1956 - then the ONLY WAY TO GET IT, IS BY VOTING FOR KWAME NKRUMAH AND HIS CONVENTION PEOPLE'S PARTY.

If you are faint-hearted and your spirit of nationalism is so pitifully deficient that you incline your mind towards the second question, then you are no concern of ours and you are an outcast as far as the movement for Gold Coast Independence is concerned. You can vote for those whose policy and avowed aim it is to split up this country thereby delaying INDEPENDENCE.<sup>3</sup>

In contrast, the NLM manifesto, after a heading 'Why you should vote for cocoa', put forward thirty perfectly valid points. But as an election manifesto it was hopelessly ineffective, reflecting perhaps why Busia proved so feeble in the harsh realities of politics.

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Local leaflets did not show such restraint, and soon reflected the level of invective which had typified the exchanges between the *Evening News* and the *Ashanti Pioneer* during the NLM crisis. Gbedemah – an Ewe – produced a leaflet published by his opponent in Trans Volta Togoland:

#### RED COCKEREL THIEF

Don't vote for the red cockerel which is the CPP

1. CPP are thieves, rogues, traitors, double-tongued receivers of bribes, givers of bribes and gangsters.
2. CPP introduced the following taxes: Local Rate, House Rate, Industrial Taxes, Taxes on domestic animals, cows, goats, sheep, and rates on bicycles.
3. CPP introduced insubordination, tribal differences, disrespect, suppression, evil doing, lying, destruction of chieftaincy, greed and other evils.
4. CPP wants to divide the Ewes; give half to the Gold Coast and the other half to Dahomey. For these reasons don't vote for the red cockerel, the thief.

The NLM used much the same mixture of abuse, and an appeal to local interests:

VOTE FOR NLM  
& Allies on July 12 & 17  
Reject the Communist People's Party (CPP)  
A Party of Crooks and Swindlers  
on July 12 and 17  
It is Your Money They Want.<sup>4</sup>

In Accra the local leaflet was headed 'Why you should vote for Nkrumah', stressing that he was a man of the common people, honest, straightforward, hardworking, vigilant and stainless, and

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maintaining that all the great achievements since 1951 had been inspired by him. This was countered by *The Liberator* of 4 June 1956 which supported the opposition and wrote:

If there is any notorious liar in the country whose word should never, never, never be trusted, that man is Mr Kwame Nkrumah, one man and one man alone, the arch exponent of democratic centralism. Nkrumah, the arch liar. . .

It went on to allege attacks all over Ashanti by CPP thieves, robbers, thugs, cut-throats and hoodlums. In reply the *Evening News* called the NLM supporters unrepentant devils, brutes and thugs, and maintained that they had tried to poison the water in the Accra reservoir.

Some more serious argument came from the NLM which generally appealed to the people to support the Asantehene and the Golden Stool, to be loyal to their chief, and to demand a just deal and fair prices for the cocoa farmer. Throughout Ashanti, the NLM had substantial support from the chiefs and traditional leaders in the community, and from people who had been genuinely offended by the actions of ignorant officials who had obtained positions of petty power under the CPP. At the same time the NLM realized the danger that they would appear as the party of Ashanti, with no seats and no support in any other region. This problem produced deep division within the party, between those who wanted to concentrate their efforts on Ashanti and those who wished to carry the fight further south. In the end, some attempts were made to rally support for the NLM – in June 1956 it opened a branch in Accra – but, generally, this action tended to rouse dormant fears of Ashanti domination, and the overall effect of NLM activity in the southern regions was to rally the people behind the CPP. Busia continued to put forward constitutional arguments based on the assumption that

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the Ashanti and the Northern region would have a majority against immediate independence under the CPP. He also claimed that Nkrumah's government was corrupt and inefficient, and was rapidly moving towards dictatorship. The CPP answer to those arguments came through the *Evening News* which pointed out that the Gold Coast, with a population of five million, could not afford and did not require a federal type of government, that the CPP did not threaten civil war if it lost the election, and that if Nkrumah was as dictatorial as the NLM alleged they would have been locked up months before.

As the campaign progressed, the CPP had to decide whether the leaders of the party – and especially Nkrumah – should attend a 'monster rally' in Kumasi in order to support the party in Ashanti. The central committee of the party discussed the issue at length and finally decided that, from the public order point of view, it would be wiser if Nkrumah did not attend. The Opposition, of course, claimed that he was too frightened. On the Sunday, the rest of the party leaders were due to fly up to Kumasi to address the rally, but at the last minute the plane was grounded and they had to drive up. They arrived hours late, but still the crowds had waited patiently, and the rally was a success. After it Krobo Edusei, reporting the detail to Nkrumah, paid him a sincere compliment:

The rally in Kumasi was a huge success. But at the same time there was something sadly lacking. When you are there it makes so much difference to both the crowds and us.<sup>5</sup>

In July the NLM put forward exaggerated claims about their support in the country and convinced themselves that they were going to win an overall victory. Influenced by these exaggerations, Busia, in a letter to the Governor timed to coincide with the election, claimed that, even if he and his allies had a majority of only one, he would expect to take office, irrespective of the

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distribution of seats. Nkrumah was the first to realize what a dangerous ploy this was for Busia, for by the NLM's own conditions, if the CPP gained a majority of one, then it could demand to form a government. Flamboyant talk continued until election day. Arden-Clarke reported that one group of NLM supporters believed so completely that a juju ceremony could turn bullets into water and cutlasses or bayonets into paper, that they invited a friend to shoot them with a shotgun. He added: 'The friend did so and they are in Kumasi hospital having the pellets extracted.'<sup>6</sup>

The Governor was absolutely determined that there would be no violence on election day, and the police and security forces were deployed all over the country. Nevertheless, in Ashanti the NLM Action Troopers did cause a few incidents. Apart from these, the day passed peacefully and the country eagerly awaited the results. The CPP won an outright majority, gaining 71 seats out of 104. In the number of votes cast, they had nearly 400,000 compared to 300,000 for the NLM. These figures look impressive, but only 50 per cent of the electorate voted and this was less than 30 per cent of the adult population. The system favoured the CPP who won 57 per cent of the votes but 67 per cent of the contested seats, plus the five seats which they won unopposed and where no votes were cast. In the different areas, Ashanti was the most crucial. Here the NLM and its allies won 13 out of 21 seats and a majority of the votes as well. Four of the seats won by the CPP were understandably in the Brong area, but another four were close to Kumasi and had been expected to go to the NLM. In the north, the CPP were more successful than they had expected and won 11 seats as compared with the 15 of the NPP. The CPP won Tamale and some other seats because there had been disputes over the chief or the stool, which the party had been able to exploit. Finally, in Togoland the CPP won 8 out of 13 seats - a better result than expected. Nkrumah's final comment

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was reasonable enough: 'Quite apart from our large parliamentary representation, we could claim to be the only party able to speak in a national sense'.<sup>7</sup>

After the election, the Governor invited Nkrumah to form his third government. Facing his hour of triumph, he appointed many of his original CPP supporters to the new Cabinet, including Gbedemah, Botsio, A. Casely-Hayford, A. Ofori Atta, N. Welbeck and Krobo Edusei. In his *Autobiography*, Nkrumah skates briefly from the events of the 1956 election to the joyful announcement of independence, but many serious issues had to be settled during that time. His attitude seems to reinforce the view that he often tried to ignore unpleasant issues, hoping that they would go away. This tendency became more pronounced in the 1960s when the problems he faced were more intractable.

In Britain, press and political circles expressed general agreement that, as a result of the election, the government should go ahead with the programme for independence. Arden-Clarke, for his part, was concerned that, because of the strong CPP position in the Assembly – virtually a two-thirds majority – the Cabinet might be tempted to act unwisely.<sup>8</sup> In contrast to all other reactions, Busia claimed that because the CPP had failed to win a majority in Ashanti the election had given a clear mandate for a federal form of government prior to independence. Under his leadership the NLM kept up their demands. Other minority groups, including the Ashanti Youth Association and the Muslim Association Party, in spite of the overall CPP majority, continued to protest and to demand a federal constitution.

The opening of the new Assembly on 1 August 1956 – the last session before independence – was clearly an historic occasion. Before the Governor arrived, the CPP Cabinet became increasingly concerned because the Opposition benches were completely empty. Worried colleagues asked Nkrumah if it was a boycott, and were angry at the intended insult to the Assembly,

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to the Governor and to the Queen. In fact, the absence of the Opposition was not a constitutional protest, and had happened simply because the dense and excited crowds had prevented them reaching the Assembly in time. They made the excuse that they had been afraid to leave their cars and walk because of the fear of violence. Busia personally apologized to Arden-Clarke, but this incident made the NLM a laughing stock in Accra and did nothing to improve their image.

In the debate on the independence motion, the Opposition expressed strong regret that there was not an agreed constitution, that the government had not published the long awaited Jibowu Report on the cocoa industry, and that it had not taken action against widespread corruption in the public service. Although the government carried the motion by 69 to 32 votes, the Opposition still kept up their pressure.<sup>9</sup>

The NLM called a 'monster rally' in Kumasi which was attended by all the Opposition members and by thousands of supporters. The meeting declared that nothing short of federation would satisfy them, since three out of four regions in the country favoured federation. Members of the Opposition (perhaps covering up for their gaffe at the State Opening) gave examples of how they had been jostled and stoned by the crowds in Accra and told to go back home: this sort of treatment did not encourage them to place the destiny of Ashanti in the hands of the CPP. The NLM followed up this successful rally by sending a delegation to London, where they saw Lennox-Boyd and expressed their serious lack of confidence in the Governor. They were further encouraged when *The Times* of 9 August 1956 took up their cause and demanded that the CPP should grasp the opportunity to settle the constitutional differences prior to independence. This approach of the NLM infuriated Nkrumah and Arden-Clarke in Accra. When he heard about the delegation, Arden-Clarke wrote:

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I am telling the Secretary of State what I expect him to do with the delegation... I hope the Secretary of State will tell them plainly and categorically that the results of the election have given a mandate for the immediate grant of independence under a unitary form of constitution, and that they had better go and discuss with their own government their constitutional proposals in a spirit of compromise.<sup>10</sup>

The *Ashanti Pioneer* kept up the NLM attack, suggesting that Arden-Clarke was suffering from senile decay. On 25 August it wrote: 'A canker is eating into the Opposition's confidence in the role of the Governor, with his fanatical support for Nkrumah'.

During August, the menacing issue of the Jibowu Report began to emerge. Joe Appiah from Kumasi alerted the country to the fact that the *Evening News* - the mouthpiece of the CPP - had suddenly begun to print unseemly criticism of Mr Justice Jibowu, even though his report had not officially been published. Appiah considered that such abuse was deplorable and demanded that Arden-Clarke should restrain the CPP. When the Jibowu Report was finally published on 1 September, it certainly gave powerful ammunition to the NLM. It found that the CPP Government had connived at and condoned irregularities in the Cocoa Marketing Board and the Cocoa Purchasing Company. It also found that Mr Djin, the Managing Director of the CPC, who had employed vast numbers of his relatives and friends in these organizations, was not a suitable person to hold public office. Djin almost immediately admitted that he had defrauded the CPP and resigned. Appiah led the NLM attack in the uproar that this caused, and demanded that Arden-Clarke should take action and enforce the resignation of Nkrumah and Gbedemah because of their involvement.<sup>11</sup> In the Report certain allegations had been made about Nkrumah in connection with the award of government contracts. Nkrumah demanded to appear before the Commission in order to clear his

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name: the Report finally found that in each case there was no justification for the allegations. Nkrumah made little reference to the very serious issues the Report did raise about known corruption in the Cocoa Purchasing Company, and merely commented: 'I was quite convinced that the affair was a calculated attempt to bring my Government into disrepute by suggesting that bribery and corruption were rife among those in power'.<sup>12</sup>

Once again Busia made the most of Nkrumah's discomfiture, and he also continued his lobbying in London. He obtained another interview with Lennox-Boyd, and on 11 September, in a letter to *The Times*, made a dignified appeal for differences to be settled before independence. He also proposed a visit to Accra by Lennox-Boyd. The British press took up the issues raised by the Jibowu Report, and *The Daily Telegraph* - prompted doubtless by General Spears - published considerable comment which was highly critical of Arden-Clarke for hustling the Gold Coast to independence while corruption was tolerated at the highest level. The NLM developed new lines of argument. They suggested, first, that since Cyprus, which was a much smaller country than the Gold Coast, had been partitioned, the same remedy could be applied to them, with Ashanti and the Northern Territories partitioned off from the rest of the country. When this proposal was not accepted by Lennox-Boyd they sent a formal request to the Colonial Office asking Britain to recognize Ashanti and the Northern Territories as a completely separate state at independence. They proposed that existing members of the Assembly from the two regions should immediately form the new government, that foreign investments and the tenure of expatriates should be safeguarded, and that Britain should be asked to delineate the border between Ashanti and the Colony.<sup>13</sup>

The NLM timed these demands to coincide with the House of Commons debate on the Gold Coast in December, but they found that there was little parliamentary support for

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their cause. The majority of speakers in the debate supported the government's independence proposals, and James Griffiths, the former Labour Colonial Secretary, suggested that it would be wrong, at independence, to cut off Ghana from the Colonial Development and Welfare Acts, because its economy, like that of most other colonies, had been shaped and patterned not by Ghana's needs but by British interests. This was accepted. In the closing speech, Lennox-Boyd stated:

I am myself a believer in this great experiment. It is an experiment, but it will be helped if we enter into it without shutting our eyes, but in high hopes that this great and romantic conception will justify the faith which so many people have put into bringing it about.<sup>14</sup>

Lennox-Boyd waited until after the Commons debate to reply to the NLM. He made it clear to them that partition was unacceptable, and that the British Government was preparing the constitutional instruments for independence, bearing in mind the circumstances in the Gold Coast and the efforts that were made to reach agreement locally. He concluded:

The grant of independence to the Gold Coast is an act of good will, which Her Majesty's Government trust will be received by the people of the Gold Coast in a spirit of responsibility which will command the respect of the world.<sup>15</sup>

Arden-Clarke had supported Nkrumah and the CPP Government so loyally that his relationship with the British expatriate staff, especially in Ashanti, had been strained to the limit. However, he fought one final battle with the CPP Cabinet on the question of expatriate salaries and pension conditions. The government had appointed the Salaries Revision Commission

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to deal with these matters, but suddenly the Cabinet decided to cancel the Commission. The ensuing negotiations illustrate again the very positive role Arden-Clarke played in every aspect of politics and how heavily Nkrumah depended upon him. They both realized the danger to the newly independent state if too many expatriates suddenly decided to leave, and the cancellation of the Salaries Revision Commission could achieve just that. Nkrumah and Arden-Clarke worked closely together to achieve the goal of independence, but few outside a very small circle of colleagues realized how complete was their co-operation. After a lengthy discussion at the height of the crisis over the Salaries Commission, Nkrumah felt certain that he could not get the Cabinet to change their minds, but he thought the Governor might succeed. So together they devised a stratagem, and Nkrumah brought the whole Cabinet up to the Castle. There, after a fierce discussion, they changed their minds and finally agreed to the Salaries Commission. At this time, Nkrumah was showing serious signs of strain, and Arden-Clarke wrote 'The PM is becoming a very tired man and is having a lot of trouble with his colleagues'. Nkrumah illustrated another side of their close and trusting relationship when this particular struggle was over. As they sat quietly together on the balcony of the Castle, he said 'H.E. I am worried about the future. Now I can come and talk to you about these things, but what is to happen when you have gone?'<sup>16</sup>

Although the NLM issue dragged on through the autumn and up to Christmas, other major moves towards independence had not been delayed. During September 1956, Nkrumah and Arden-Clarke hammered out the final details of independence. They have both described these moving events - Nkrumah in his *Autobiography*, and Arden-Clarke in letters to his wife which give a day-by-day account. This wealth of detail illustrates many significant aspects of the handover of power. It reveals the relationship of these two highly contrasting characters, the relationship between British

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policy and Nkrumah's independence philosophy, and also the relationship between a tough and determined colonial governor and the Colonial Office in Whitehall. On Sunday 16 September, Arden-Clarke wrote to his wife:

I have been having a hectic time since you left, with 'immediate' and 'emergency' telegrams flashing to and from the Secretary of State, with Nkrumah in a flat spin and ready to do foolish things. The Secretary of State was doing a wobble and wanting to defer announcing a firm date for independence, while I was insisting that the announcement must be made before the Assembly rises on Tuesday next (18th). Yesterday the S of S surrendered with the words 'I feel you have left me no alternative' - he was right, I hadn't!

Later the same day after a beach picnic at Labadi, Arden-Clarke returned to the Castle, where he received an 'immediate' despatch, from London. In his letter he continued:

I read it alone in my dressing room. I wish you could have been there, darling - it is the culmination of seven years' hard, anxious and exciting work and I couldn't help a thrill of triumph and achievement. If I could feel like that, I wonder how Nkrumah will feel when I tell him tomorrow afternoon and how the Assembly members will behave when the announcement is made in the House on Tuesday morning. A cool head will be needed at the top, so after tea I went for a strenuous walk to look at State House, the PM's Residence, the new Stadium buildings and the beginnings of the Independence Memorial Archway - all being built to celebrate the telegram in my trouser pocket. I shall have to see to it that my children do not smirch the record or throw their 'freedom' away between now and Independence Day.<sup>17</sup>

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Early on the Monday morning Arden-Clarke asked Nkrumah to come to the Castle. When they were alone, he quietly handed Nkrumah the despatch. In his letter Arden-Clarke continued:

It came as a surprise to him as he had never really believed that an announcement would be made so soon, though he knew I was battling with the S of S to get it. After he had read the text of the despatch he looked up and said in rather an awed voice 'H.E. that's nice'. I reminded him of our first meeting alone together after he came out of prison, when I had said that there were two men who could break this experiment in five minutes, he and I: and there were two men who could make it a success, he and I, though I thought it would take a bit longer than five minutes. Now here was the result and it had taken us five years. 'We must have a party to celebrate this', said he. 'Not yet', I replied 'we have got to plan how this situation is to be handled.' So I called Hadow in and we made our plan, and while Hadow went off to draft a telegram to the S of S I dictated the outline of what the PM should say in the House at noon today. It was rather a solemn and subdued little man who left my office. He promised that he would not divulge the contents of the despatch to anyone – I wonder if he has managed to keep his promise. He took no copy of the despatch away with him. He comes to me again at 11 o'clock this morning to collect the copies of the two despatches for distribution to the Members of the Legislative Assembly after he has made his statement, and to make final arrangements for a press release and wireless bulletin, and then he goes to the House for his great moment, which in his own words is going to 'come as a shock to all of us'.<sup>18</sup>

Nkrumah's version of this deeply emotional moment is very similar.

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There were. . . a number of long paragraphs. When I reached the fifth one, the tears of joy that I had difficulty in hiding blurred the rest of the document. . . For some moments there was nothing either of us could say. Perhaps we were both looking back over the seven years of our association, beginning with doubts, suspicions and misunderstandings, then acknowledging the growth of trust, sincerity and friendship, and now, finally, this moment of victory for us both, a moment beyond description and a moment that could never be entirely recaptured.

'Prime Minister', the Governor said, as he extended his hand to me, 'this is a great day for you. It is the end of what you have struggled for.' 'It is the end of what WE have been struggling for, Sir Charles', I corrected him. 'You have contributed a great deal towards this; in fact, I might not have succeeded without your help and co-operation. This is a very happy day for us both!'<sup>19</sup>

Nkrumah arranged with the Governor that he would return the following morning, collect the despatch from him and immediately afterwards read it to the Legislative Assembly. Nkrumah left the Castle and went home feeling that he had dynamite inside his chest which might explode at any moment but he kept his momentous secret through the evening and through a sleepless night. The next day, his forty-seventh birthday, he went to the Assembly and at noon rose to make an announcement. No-one had any inkling of what he was about to announce. After a few preliminaries he stated that the British Government, subject to the approval of Parliament, intended that full independence should come about on 6 March 1957.

The whole of the Assembly was for a few seconds dumb-founded. Then all at once the almost sacred silence was broken by an ear-splitting cheer, cheers that must have been unprecedented in the Assembly. Some were too deeply moved to control their tears,

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among them some of my closest associates, those who had really felt the brunt of the battle and who perhaps realised more forcibly the true meaning of the word 'Victory'.<sup>20</sup>

Although the Opposition had fought hard for a federal type of constitution, the actual achievement of independence was such an overwhelming experience that the NLM cheered as loudly as the CPP.

After a few brief points about Togoland, and confirmation that the name of the new country would be Ghana, Nkrumah read the final sentences of Lennox-Boyd's despatch:

It is the hope of Her Majesty's Government that, at this turning point in the history of the Gold Coast, all sections of the community will be able to work together for the general good. In the name of Her Majesty's Government I wish to convey to the Government and the people of the country our heartfelt wishes for its future success.

As soon as he had finished speaking, Nkrumah was carried shoulder-high by his excited supporters out into the street where jubilant crowds had already heard the news. Later, he took the entire Cabinet up to the Castle to visit Arden-Clarke so that he too could share in the victory celebration. A bottle of whisky was broached and libation poured to the gods of Ghana, then they all drank champagne. Friends of Nkrumah arrived from Kumasi that evening and said that NLM and CPP alike went wild with excitement when they heard the news.

The next day in the Assembly, while euphoria still reigned, Nkrumah struck a more serious note and reminded the people of the new responsibilities of independence. He concluded:

Let us dedicate ourselves to serve this country of ours, this nation,

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with all the strength, knowledge and wisdom that God has given us. And let us pledge ourselves anew to serve our country selflessly, to protect her rights and interests and to play our part among the nations of the world in promoting peace, happiness and the progress of mankind.<sup>21</sup>

His speech was well received, as was his broadcast to the nation the following day. He said that Independence marked the beginning of a new epoch of co-operation and he was sure that the detailed discussions on the new constitution which would take place immediately would provide adequate safeguards for all legitimate aspirations, as well as for the aspirations of the chiefs and the people. He thanked all those who had worked to make independence possible. Finally he said:

In this solemn hour, let us not merely rejoice because we have reached our goal. Let us not merely make merry because our dearest hope has been fulfilled. Let us think first and foremost of the best interests of our country. Let us put aside petty political controversy and intrigues and lay a firm and stable foundation for the political structure of Ghana. May your thoughts, your deeds and your prayers strengthen and sustain the statesmanship of the nation!<sup>22</sup>

At this important moment in the history of the Gold Coast, Nkrumah struck a dignified and restrained note, appealing as he had done in his Motion of Destiny speech, to all the nobler feelings of his people. His call for an end to petty political controversy initially received a sound response, but the calm which the advent of independence produced, and which was welcomed all over the country, was not to last for long.

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## INDEPENDENCE

In September 1956, Busia had put forward the idea that Lennox-Boyd should come to the Gold Coast again in order to settle the constitutional dispute before independence. Initially, Nkrumah and Arden-Clarke opposed this because it would clearly detract from the CPP Government if Britain once again had to intervene, but gradually their opposition was worn away. The central issue was whether Ashanti and the Northern Territories were serious about their threat to secede at independence. Nkrumah believed that the threats were largely rhetoric, though evidence came from Colin Russell's security reports that plans to secede were being drawn up. A visit by Lennox-Boyd would have the advantage that he alone had the prestige and personality to cut through the web of tension and mistrust which persistently bedevilled relations between Kumasi and Accra, and in which both Nkrumah and Arden-Clarke were now hopelessly enmeshed. They both began to see the advantage of a visit, since it was inconceivable that, after Lennox-Boyd's statement at the conclusion of the December Commons debate, he could possibly agree to any of the NLM demands. Therefore, immediately after Christmas 1956 Nkrumah wrote him a cordial letter inviting him to the Gold Coast so that together they could finalize the White Paper on independence, and so that the new constitution could be launched in an atmosphere of goodwill.

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Lennox-Boyd arrived in Accra on 24 January 1957 and met Arden-Clarke, the Cabinet and the Opposition leaders. He quickly made it plain that he hoped that he could iron out their difficulties and that he would receive their full co-operation.<sup>1</sup> He left next day for Kumasi where he received a tumultuous welcome. The *Ashanti Pioneer* took the opportunity to point out that at this critical moment in Ashanti history, Lennox-Boyd was left to come to Ashanti alone – hinting that Nkrumah and Arden-Clarke were scared to accompany him. He also visited Tamale and spoke to the chiefs. After his whirlwind tour he made a sound and detailed statement. He stated that he had found very real anxiety among the chiefs that their important office was lost sight of in the new constitution. He believed in tradition, and he was sure that the chiefs would play an important role in the country for many years to come. The Order in Council would protect their position. On more general issues he said that he had found an underlying unity more important than the issues which were dividing the people, and he appealed to both sides to move a little closer to each other. He added that the United Kingdom had no intention of changing the date of independence. He paid a generous tribute to Arden-Clarke for having done a brilliant job in very difficult circumstances.

This announcement covered up days and days of urgent and sometimes desperate efforts to achieve a compromise on many intractable problems. Arden-Clarke commented:

The most hopeful sign is that both Nkrumah and Busia have been very reasonable and if it were left to the two of them there would be no difficulty in finding a workable solution. Unfortunately, neither of them is a strong man and they have unruly followers whom they cannot properly control. Each dog is all right but each has a tail that is likely to wag the dog.<sup>2</sup>

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Arden-Clarke, after his seven-year association with Nkrumah, had developed an insight into an aspect of Nkrumah's personality that was to plague him after independence and eventually contribute to his downfall. This was Nkrumah's inability to show decisiveness towards his followers or to take difficult and unpopular decisions.

The new constitution had a few short paragraphs on the principles of parliamentary democracy and then a very long section with practical details on such issues as regional boundaries, how to devolve authority to regional assemblies, and similar matters. Before he left, Lennox-Boyd stressed that the White Paper must contain written guarantees for regional assemblies. Lennox-Boyd's tact, charm and determination helped the NLM to compromise with dignity, and got the two sides to work together. No mean achievement!

The publication of the White Paper<sup>3</sup> and the House of Commons debate on 7 February 1957 was an important occasion for the Gold Coast. Nkrumah thoughtfully sent Gbedemah who was accompanied by Busia and William Ofori Atta, to witness the debate from the Visitors Gallery. The White Paper established a House of Chiefs which would deal with all matters affecting the Chiefs or the Stools, and it provided for Regional Assemblies to be set up within three months of independence. In a brief debate, James Griffiths welcomed the White Paper and paid tribute to Arden-Clarke for his outstanding work. After the debate in London, Nkrumah, in a conciliatory gesture, announced that the government and opposition were working closely together on the new constitution and that he looked forward to a period of growing confidence and co-operation. The Asantehene also encouraged reconciliation. He appealed to the people to forgive and forget, and to work together for a better future. So, at last, only a few weeks before the independence celebrations, the long and bitter struggle with the NLM appeared to be over, and the

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whole country could look forward to 6 March – Independence Day.

The long-running political crisis had obscured the careful preparations which had been going on since 1951 to prepare the Gold Coast for independence. For years the civil service had been trained and inculcated with a high level of professionalism and integrity. British, American, European and Middle Eastern firms were operating all over the country in commercial and industrial enterprises. The Five Year Plan, virtually complete because of Nkrumah's accelerated demands, had laid the foundations of a modern state; and over the years the CPP Government, with Arden-Clarke's positive support, had built up a credit of £200m. State House in Accra had been built for the independence celebrations, and nearby a new residence for the Prime Minister. On a personal level Nkrumah remained modest and undemanding, and he was very happy in his rented house in the Accra suburb of Lagos Town. He felt that his new residence was ostentatious and unwelcoming. Then, when it was nearly ready for occupation, it was found to be badly built and with innumerable faults. The windows would not close properly, the plumbing was faulty and there were many design mistakes. He reluctantly moved in two days before his first guest, President Bourguiba of Tunisia, came to stay for the celebrations.

As independence day approached, Nkrumah got caught up in a vortex of personal and official activity. Many crises took place behind the scenes. In Nkrumah's new house a faulty lavatory overflow flooded the stairs and Nkrumah's study just before Bourguiba arrived. This was soon put right by the faithful Erica Powell. Nkrumah had a remarkable capacity for remaining calm in such crises and they hardly seemed to bother him. On the same day, a reception at State House was nearly a disaster because the steward boys had helped themselves to the drink and were all drunk, but no minor crisis could detract from the exuberance and

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triumph of this great occasion. Partly because he did not delegate enough, decisions at every level came to Nkrumah to be settled, including his insistence that Peking and not Taiwan representatives should be invited. His own preparations included being coached by Louis Armstrong's wife so that he could lead off in a quickstep with the Duchess of Kent at the State Ball.

Many of the hundred and more official guests started to arrive by 26 February, and suitable events had been arranged for their entertainment: an independence race meeting; massed church services and a Pontifical High Mass; the Miss Ghana competition; the Governor's State Dinner at the new Ambassador Hotel; Convocation at Legon University College; the opening of the National Museum; the laying of a wreath at the War Memorial; a sailing Regatta; and, on Tuesday 5 March, the unveiling of the National Monument by the Duchess of Kent.

Nkrumah had insisted that the final session of the Legislative Assembly would feature dramatically in the last few moments before independence. Therefore, as the clock approached midnight on 5 March 1957, he made his final statement in the Assembly. He looked back over the great struggle for independence and concluded with the words 'By twelve o'clock midnight, Ghana will have redeemed her lost freedom'. As the hour struck, the Union Jack was lowered in a moving silence 'graciously and peacefully'.<sup>4</sup> Then the flag of Ghana – red, green and gold with the black star of African freedom – was hoisted to a tumultuous roar of 'Freedom' and there followed the singing of the song 'There's freedom for us'. Nkrumah was once again carried shoulder-high through the crowds to a platform on the old polo ground where he made his historic announcement 'Ghana will be free for ever'. For Nkrumah this moment of almost unbearable emotion meant more than any of the official ceremonies that followed in the next few days.

Early in the morning of 6 March, and before the State Opening of Parliament by the Duchess of Kent, Sir Charles Arden-Clarke

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was sworn in as Ghana's first Governor General. In a short quiet speech, he accepted the great honour, and added that in the thirty-seven years that he had worked in the Colonial Service, Britain's policy had remained constant. It was to teach the people committed to her care to stand on their own feet, and to run their own countries within the rule of law. Britain had always striven to bring her colonial territories as quickly as possible to the stage when they could become fully self-governing nations. Then, with a crack at some known critics, he added; 'In so far as the birth of Ghana today is the natural outcome of British Colonialism, I am proud to be a British Colonialist.' He concluded by welcoming the Ghanaian people, with their great qualities, to the British Commonwealth of Nations in whose aims and ideals he had sure faith.

During these years Nkrumah had relied heavily on Arden-Clarke, but on one occasion at least the position was reversed. Some weeks before independence, Arden-Clarke had approached Nkrumah and virtually begged to be appointed Governor General. Nkrumah was determined that there should be seen to be a complete change from colonial status, and therefore agreed rather reluctantly to this request, even though it was only for a couple of months.

The swearing-in of the Governor General was followed at 9.30 a.m. on 6 March by the State Opening of Parliament. The Duchess of Kent read the Speech from the Throne which contained cordial greetings from the Queen to the Parliament and people of Ghana. Nkrumah, in a lengthy speech, made the humble address in reply. He said that as a newly independent country Ghana parted from Britain with the warmest feelings of friendship and goodwill. Ghana was proud to be the first African country to gain its freedom and to become a member of the British Commonwealth. He referred to the recent achievements in buildings, roads, harbours and schools. He spoke with pride of

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half a million pupils in school out of a population of five million. He stressed the responsibility that had devolved upon the people of Ghana:

If we show ourselves disunited, inefficient or corrupt, then we shall have gravely harmed all those millions in Africa who put their trust in us and look to Ghana to prove that African people can build a state of their own based on democracy, tolerance and racial equality.<sup>6</sup>

Nkrumah's address was seconded by Busia, speaking for the Opposition.

After the State Opening of Parliament, the Duchess of Kent with Nkrumah and other distinguished visitors made a state drive in Accra through crowds that were deliriously happy. In the afternoon the new Governor General held a garden party at the Castle, and in the evening Nkrumah gave a reception at State House before the State Ball. Nkrumah, with the rest of the country, enjoyed the famous gaffe of the then Vice President Nixon who spoke to a group of black journalists in Accra that day and asked 'What does it feel like to be free?' only to receive the answer 'We don't know, we are from Alabama.' The following day Nkrumah accompanied the Duchess to a National Durbar in the grounds of Achimota College, where he had wandered as a student twenty years before. Finally he bade her farewell when she flew back to England that evening. After the Duchess of Kent left, Nkrumah still had his other official guests to look after - heads of state and ministers from around the world including President Bourguiba, the Russian Minister of State Farms, a Chinese general in a sky-blue uniform and many others.

When the ceremonies were over and the guests had gone, Nkrumah quickly had to adapt to a fundamental change. Before independence he had consulted with Arden-Clarke and had

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deferred to him on most major issues. Now the moment which he had referred to when he had said 'What is to happen when you have gone?' had really come. Arden-Clarke referred to this moment more light-heartedly: 'At one stroke I have lost my dearest enemies - Whitehall, and my Ministers'.

For a few weeks after Independence, Arden-Clarke toured the country as the new Governor General to say farewell to the people he had come to know and love. He was invited to many farewell durbars, including one at Tamale. In 1986, during a visit to Tamale, the present author met Dr Alhassan Seini, a distinguished local resident. He was a boy at school during Arden-Clarke's farewell visit and was able, spontaneously, to recite this song which all the children had learned for the occasion:

Thanking you for guiding us to freedom.  
Hurrah for the Governor, may God bless him,  
Hurrah for Nkrumah, may Heaven guide his leadership,  
And as it is you're leaving us, we offer you our thanks,  
Thanking you for guiding us to freedom!

An interesting side-light on the ideological interpretation of these events.

Nkrumah had one final opportunity to show his appreciation of Arden-Clarke. A farewell banquet was held on 11 May 1957 at which Arden-Clarke was to have been presented with a gold coffee service. In fact, it was not ready and he received it at a dinner in the Dorchester Hotel in London some months later. In paying tribute to Sir Charles, Nkrumah made an interesting speech. His tribute was genuine enough, and the gold coffee service was a munificent gift, but he seemed to be preoccupied with other issues. After a few introductory remarks he said that, as an honest man, Sir Charles would agree that the first honours should go to the CPP - the pioneers and foot-sloggers of the national

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independence movement. Without them there would have been no independence. He reminded people that independence was not given for the asking, but had had to be fought for relentlessly and untiringly. Finally he referred to the steadfastness of Arden-Clarke and said that it was due to him that there were strong ties of friendship between Ghana and Britain.

Interestingly, C.L.R. James in *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution* quoted at length from the speeches made at the banquet and, rather arrogantly, dismissed the normal view of the events between 1951 and 1957 as a myth full of cant and hypocrisy. James saw the attempts to establish a civil service with standards of integrity as guerrilla warfare waged by the imperialists against the CPP Cabinet. He blamed British imperialists for all opposition to Nkrumah, including that of the National Liberation Movement. He said their opposition was stirred up by the British to justify an authoritarian intervention.<sup>7</sup>

This tendentious view contrasts starkly with the facts and the comments of observers from all over the world who shared the magnificent celebrations of Ghana's independence and the sincere farewells to Sir Charles Arden-Clarke. On the other hand, they are significant in showing that soon after independence Nkrumah was to come under increasing pressure from left-wing ideologues.

After 1957 Nkrumah was to scale even greater heights and to make his name as a world leader, but no other achievement can match that of leading his country to peaceful independence, with the positive goodwill of Britain and of most other countries in the world.

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## PRIME MINISTER 1957–60

With the independence celebrations behind him, Nkrumah immediately swung into action to stake his claim as a world statesman and put Ghana on the map. The first item of his speech in an independent Ghana was a promise to call a conference as soon as possible of the eight independent African countries - Tunisia, Libya, Morocco, Ethiopia, Sudan, Egypt, Liberia, Ghana - to co-ordinate help to those still fighting for independence. He said that Ghana would establish missions in London, Washington, New Delhi and Paris to spread her influence; the Volta River Project would be implemented as soon as possible; and the whole of Ashanti would have a referendum on the Brong Ahafo problem. Other issues brought up at the press conference after his speech included his plans for goodwill visits to the USA and Canada, the Soviet Union, Communist China and India; his aim for Ghana to become a republic within the Commonwealth; and his emphasis that a United States of West Africa was part of his basic philosophy which he had incorporated into his book *Towards Colonial Freedom* (1945), and into the constitution of the CPP. In answer to a question he made it clear that he had no plans for marriage.<sup>1</sup> The next day, when questioned on apartheid he stated that he would welcome technical co-operation with South Africa but added 'Apartheid does not conform with the principles

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of Christian ethics and if I have my way, I will smash it!'<sup>2</sup>

Amid the euphoria, the country's new leaders exhorted the people to make the most of their independence by hard work. Welbeck, a senior minister, threatened that there would be no place for idlers in the independent Ghana. Bankole Timothy wrote a series of articles entitled *'Let us now seek the economic kingdom'*, and urged people at all levels to become involved with the development plans, but emphasized that the people of Ghana must remain in control. Gbedemah, visiting the Asantehene, who had invited over 1,000 guests to celebrate independence, suggested the slogan 'Serve Ghana Now', and appealed to the people to do their jobs honestly, and to work as hard as they could. Before the month was out, the figures for the cocoa crop showed an all-time record of 260,000 tons, appearing to confirm the rosy prospects for Ghana.

Independence brought fresh challenges to Nkrumah both at home and abroad. The new pressures he faced highlighted different aspects of his character. Although independence had been the time of his greatest triumph, he still felt psychologically insecure. He had shared dangers, privations and successes with Gbedemah and Botsio but his relationship with them did not appear cordial even when they were sharing their new-found freedom. His insecurity is illustrated by his State visit to the Ivory Coast in April as the guest of Houphouet-Boigny. No announcement was made about the visit, which Ghana only heard about from a Paris radio report. More significantly, he did not appoint a deputy to be in charge during his absence. It almost appears that he hoped the visit would be over before anyone, including Botsio and Gbedemah, realized that he was away. After 1957 he made many overseas visits but, being almost neurotically concerned not to encourage a rival, he rarely appointed a single deputy to be in charge during his absence. Later, he tended to appoint a three-man commission.

While Nkrumah was in the Ivory Coast, Arden-Clarke made

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his farewell visit to the North where a leading chief, the Tolon Na, speaking for the northern chiefs and people, asked him to convey to the Queen their sincere gratitude for the benefits her rule had brought them.

As part of the wave of activity to mark independence, the CPP Government announced a major educational programme with provision for more engineering and technology at Kumasi, and the establishment of a Training College, Technical School, Secondary School and Boarding School in Tamale. Nkrumah kept up the momentum. Addressing crowds in Accra he said 'We have to elevate ourselves from the lowliness into which colonialism has sunk us, and we must show integrity, honesty and truth.'<sup>3</sup> Arden-Clarke, in his final few days, said 'Ghana will meet many dragons along the road, malice, selfishness and intolerance. I wish you good hunting. Ghana's future is bright with promise if people set aside differences and live in tolerance and fellowship.'<sup>4</sup>

Exhortations to hard work, integrity and tolerance could not prevent serious problems from obtruding. The government had to suspend both the Accra and the Kumasi councils for failing to collect rates, and for spending money unlawfully. Almost as soon as independence was achieved, serious disturbances took place in Togoland. The Togoland Congress threatened violence, and one of Nkrumah's first acts after independence was to despatch police and troops to deal with the problem. Known as the Alavanyo Riots, they were quickly suppressed, but they reminded him that deep divisions still existed. A serious drivers' strike and more unrest in Accra reinforced this message. A pressure group of the Ga people – the Ga Adangme Shefimo Kpee or Ga Standfast Association – had stated their case even before independence. It set out to be a non-political organization aiming to protect the interests of the Ga people of Accra. It complained that under the CPP regime, Ashanti, Fanti and Ewe supporters got promotion, but the Ga people never did. Initially, their complaints centred on

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the housing shortage in Accra, and they were supported by the Ex-servicemen's Association, but their protests gathered strength and became a serious challenge to Nkrumah. In July, when he returned from a conference, the rough element of the Ga Standfast Association, called the 'Tokyo Joes', placarded his route with banners saying 'Welcome, Mr. Dictator'. After all the adulation which had accompanied the independence celebrations, this blunt message came as a shock to Nkrumah. He tended to be sensitive to criticism, and he reacted angrily to this demonstration. The Ga issue caused serious rioting in Accra during August, and he started to introduce repressive measures to deal with the problem.

The Togo and Ga unrest led eventually to the Avoidance of Discrimination Act, December 1957, which banned parties with a regional, tribal or religious basis, and enabled the CPP Government to suppress the Ga movement rather than solve its problems. Geoffrey Bing, a former British left-wing Labour MP and barrister, had been appointed as Nkrumah's legal adviser at the time of the Jibbowu Report. His services had proved valuable and he became one of Nkrumah's closest colleagues. In September 1957, he was appointed Attorney General in the new Ghana Government. Bing was closely associated with the Avoidance of Discrimination and other repressive acts. Krobo Edusei, as Minister of the Interior, had to enforce these acts. He used them to undertake a fundamental challenge to the power of the Ashanti chiefs. Over a period of months, he managed to de-stool nearly all the Ashanti chiefs who supported the NLM, and to replace them with CPP supporters.

These rather sinister moves, coming so soon after independence, alarmed all opposition members. They saw the power of the CPP as a growing menace, and they were horrified when it became clear that the government were going to appoint only CPP members to the important and senior posts, such as that of Regional

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Commissioner. Later, when a fairly large number of British expatriate Government agents (formerly District Commissioners) left Ghana, some ill-qualified CPP members were appointed to these positions. Prompted by these worrying developments and by the clear intentions of the Avoidance of Discrimination Act, the opposition parties sank their differences, and on 3 November 1957 formed the United Party, under the leadership of Dr. Busia. The United Party included the NLM, the Northern People's Party, the Muslim Association Party, the Togoland Congress and the Ga Standfast Association. The leaders of these parties included a formidable array of distinguished and highly respected people from all parts of Ghana who could have posed a serious threat to Nkrumah's leadership in a unified and well organized party.

At this stage, Nkrumah's real aims began to emerge. His socialist views and socialist policies had not been prominent during the struggle for independence, though they had always been openly expressed. Now the situation changed dramatically. He intended that Ghana should become a socialist state, and he realized that to achieve this he had to surmount serious difficulties. His problem is summed up in his own phrase 'You can't build socialism without socialists'. He therefore began the task of educating the party activists in his own philosophy, and laying the foundations of different organizations which would carry the message to the young people all over the country. Thus, to him, the appointment of party members to senior government posts seemed to be obvious and uncontroversial: they were to be his key workers in the transformation of Ghanaian society which he aimed to achieve. Most of the CPP leaders were socialists in general outlook – socialists in terms of the Attlee, Bevin, Creech Jones socialism of 1945. Indeed, Botsio and others had campaigned for Labour in the British election of 1945. In spite of this general socialist ambience, there had been no major cabinet discussion either before or immediately after independence about

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implementing a more clear-cut socialist philosophy.<sup>5</sup>

Independence created a new situation at home for Nkrumah and also launched him into the complexities of foreign affairs. Every colonial leader had been encouraged by Ghana's independence and they soon reacted to the situation. Norman Manley, the left-wing Prime Minister of Jamaica, called for faster progress towards Dominion status for the West Indies Federation. The Sardauna of Sokoto, Prime Minister of Northern Nigeria, made it plain that the North would soon catch up with the Eastern and Western Regions which had been granted Responsible Government in 1957. France, after her mauling at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, was just starting the savage six-year war in Algeria, so graphically chronicled by Frantz Fanon. This war, which nearly destroyed France, and which brought de Gaulle back to power, was to bring a swift and unexpected revolution throughout francophone Africa. A reminder of the Cold War involvement in Africa, which was to play such a significant role in Nkrumah's future, came from Vice President Nixon who, after his visit to Accra, had joined the celebrations of Tunisia's independence. He warned Africa that the newly independent countries would be a major target for communist infiltration and intrigue, and that the only colonialism to be feared would be communist colonialism. South Africa did not welcome Ghana's independence. Strijdom, the Prime Minister, criticized Britain for granting independence allegedly because he was not prepared to sit at table with Nkrumah. President Eisenhower continued his policy of harsh Republicanism, but he had the Democratic contender John F. Kennedy waiting in the wings and sending messages of hope to the Third World. In the Soviet Union, Khrushchev was busy consolidating his power at home though later he was to draw Nkrumah perilously into the Cold War conflict. In Britain, smarting under the humiliation of Suez, Macmillan was rebuilding relationships with the United States, and was not yet ready to take his stand on African Rights.

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All these world leaders were shortly to become involved in the affairs of Ghana and Nkrumah.

Since his days at Lincoln University and the 1945 Manchester Conference, Nkrumah had had clear Pan African aims. Therefore, as his first act in foreign policy, he invited the other independent African countries to a conference in Accra in 1958 – the first time that such a conference was held on African soil. The agenda he suggested included relations between African countries; the future of the dependent territories and their struggle for independence; and economic co-operation in Africa. Soon after issuing these invitations, Nkrumah signed an agreement to obtain technical aid from the United Nations. This meant that Ghana received help from the International Labour Organization, the Food and Agricultural Organization, the World Health Organization and UNESCO. After signing these important international agreements, he outlined his economic policy. Ghana's first priority would be to go ahead with the Volta River Project. In spite of the record cocoa crop, world cocoa prices were falling, and it was essential to get away from dependence on cocoa. The government would encourage diversification of both agriculture and industry, but the Volta Project would remain Ghana's best hope of for securing its economic goals.<sup>6</sup>

In order to strengthen his Pan African drive, Nkrumah had invited the veteran Pan African leader George Padmore to come to Accra and to be his adviser. At this time Padmore gave a thoughtful interview which seemed to be addressed as much to Nkrumah personally as to the people of Ghana. He said that the problems facing an independent Ghana were much more formidable than just getting rid of the British. There was urgent need for hard work to increase productivity, for civic discipline, and for a planned economy which the people must support. He favoured devolution to the regions and suggested that, while Ghana should help other countries struggling for their freedom, a

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United States of Africa was not possible until all African countries were free.<sup>7</sup>

Nkrumah had particularly enjoyed his brief sea trip on the *Nigerstroom* in 1955, and, having packed so much into the weeks since independence, he decided to travel by ship to attend the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference in London in June 1957. The captain of the ship, the MV *Badagry Palm*, was apprehensive about carrying a Prime Minister but was reassured by Nkrumah's staff, who said 'He's the most informal, friendly and charming person you are likely to meet. Just relax.' This proved to be the case. Nkrumah and his staff as well as the captain and his crew enjoyed the trip so much that it was arranged for the ship to delay its return in order to take Nkrumah's party home after the conference.

When they arrived at Liverpool, and again at Euston station, swarms of reporters surrounded Nkrumah not only to interview him as Prime Minister of the newest Commonwealth member, but also because of a strong rumour that he was going to marry Erica Powell. Who started this rumour has never been discovered. Erica Powell was acutely embarrassed and when they got to the Grosvenor House Hotel, she looked for the opportunity to apologize to Nkrumah. He was happily reminiscing about his visit to London twelve years before, when as a penniless student he had longed not to stay at such a hotel but to get a job there as a waiter. He said 'Life is wonderful, Erica.' When she referred to the incident at the station, he replied, 'Oh that! As for your reporters! Don't waste time on negative issues. Now get my diary. I've more important things to think about than that tripe.'<sup>8</sup>

Nkrumah made a good impression at the Prime Ministers Conference by his reasonableness and modesty. He put forward Ghana's need for economic help and investment, and the need for a stable cocoa price. He suggested that Africa needed a plan, like the great Colombo Plan in which, in 1950, the wealthier

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Commonwealth countries had agreed to help the poorer countries of South East Asia.

Nkrumah's views on the Commonwealth were intense and personal. Perhaps surprisingly for an African nationalist leader and the foremost critic of imperialism, he had a deep personal loyalty and affection for the Queen. When discussing Ghana's position in the Commonwealth with Erica Powell, he said 'It would be too bad for that young girl if we left the Commonwealth'. He was referring to the Queen, and obviously felt a strong desire to protect her from difficulty or embarrassment. Even on the question of South Africa his views were remarkable. He felt sad when South Africa left the Commonwealth. Although no-one opposed apartheid more strongly than he did, he felt that as long as Commonwealth members could meet like a family round a table there was some hope that sound sense might prevail. During the 1957 conference he had an audience with the Queen, and she spoke to him for more than an hour, impressing him with her vast knowledge of Africa and of Ghana. He valued the Commonwealth because it was an association of sovereign countries sharing the same democratic traditions, the same system of law, and was joined together in genuine partnership irrespective of race, colour or religion. His loyalty to the Queen and the Commonwealth caused deep division between him and the younger left-wing group which became so powerful in his later years, and which was eager to take Ghana out of the Commonwealth.

During his visit to London two incidents took place which were hardly noticed at the time, but had some significance for the future. He made a private visit to the Soviet embassy, and he deeply offended the three Regional Premiers of Nigeria. They were insulted because he offered them only fifteen minutes of his time and requested them to be prompt. Chief Awolowo, speaking for all three said, 'No one is interested in Dr Nkrumah's claim to be the foremost leader in Africa. Certainly we have other views.'<sup>19</sup>

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It is one of the tragic aspects of Nkrumah's Pan African aims and ideals that his relationships with other African leaders were often difficult. Sometimes it was a clash of personality, but more often he offended other leaders when they did not accept his forceful views on African unity. This was particularly true of Nigeria from the time of this initial jarring note onwards.

After his debut in London, Nkrumah returned to Accra to face difficult problems. The Ga unrest and the simmering discontent in Togoland were continuing. These regional problems tied in with the constitutional question of the regional assemblies. Nkrumah determined to tackle this vigorously. Interim regional assemblies had been set up at independence, pending the publication of the Report of the Regional Constitutional Commission. The report showed that the Opposition proposed strong and entrenched powers for the regional assemblies, while the CPP wished to reduce them to the status of advisory bodies. After the report was issued, the government made it clear that the powers of the assemblies would be severely reduced. Because of this, the Opposition boycotted the elections to the new assemblies, and the CPP gained control of all five.

Before major changes could be made to the constitutional position of the regional assemblies, Nkrumah cleared the ground at national level. He used the large CPP majority to pass an enabling act which permitted the Assembly to change the constitution. As soon as this was passed, the Constitutional Amendment Act was introduced and became law in March 1959. This act abolished the regional assemblies and enabled the National Assembly to pass any measure - including changes to the constitution - by a simple majority. The coach and horses referred to by Nkrumah had successfully driven through the independence constitution. More significantly, the powers of Nkrumah's government and party had been substantially increased; the effectiveness of the Opposition had been obliterated; and a growing number of

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Nkrumah's opponents began to believe that there was no lawful method of opposition left to them.

In the first few months after independence, Nkrumah had faced serious tribal problems - in Ashanti, in Togoland, and even in Accra because of the Ga Standfast Association. His policy for the CPP had always emphasized its role as a national party, the aim of which was to eradicate tribalism as a political force. Yet, before 1957 was over, he had taken a step - in reaction to tribal pressures - which was to contribute to his dangerous isolation in later years. A distant relative and fellow Nzima called Ambrose Yankey came to wield considerable influence over him, and tended to surround him with Nzima and Fanti supporters. Yankey was later to become head of the Presidential Bodyguard, and in 1957 he influenced Nkrumah in a grave and fateful decision.

Nkrumah, like many of his colleagues, accepted part or all of the superstitious beliefs which were a common background in Ghana. For some, this was no more than pouring a libation as the Cabinet had done at Independence with Arden-Clarke - but for others, including Nkrumah, it could be more significant. He had been under pressure for some time from his mother and others to consider the question of marriage. It is thought that Ambrose Yankey put him in touch with a fetish priest known as Kan Kan Nyame, who advised him to take a wife from the extreme north east. Whatever the truth of this, there is no doubt that Nkrumah acted in a most peculiar way over his marriage. It is believed that during a visit to Cairo to see President Nasser he had been strongly attracted by a young lady whom he had met, but he discovered that she was married. After he left Cairo he inquired further and discovered that she had a younger sister who was thought to be equally attractive. Without a word to any of his closest colleagues - including Botsio and Erica Powell - he arranged for the younger sister, Fathia Rizk, to fly to Accra and become his bride. He was in the office that morning talking to colleagues when Hammy

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(Captain Hamilton, former ADC to Arden-Clarke, and then controller of Nkrumah's household), noticing that Nkrumah was looking particularly smart, said, 'Good Lord, PM, you look as if you are going to a wedding'. Nkrumah made no comment, but in fact he was going to a wedding – his own. Fathia Rizk arrived in Accra, having never met Nkrumah before, and they were married in a private ceremony the same afternoon.

The news stunned Accra. The market women marched on the Castle, others mourned and wept. Nkrumah clearly primed the Public Relations department and took the line that Fathia was an African like themselves and the marriage was in the best possible interests of Ghana. Bearing in mind the tribal rivalries, perhaps it was. Otherwise should he have married an Ashanti, or a Ga, or an Ewe or a Dagomba woman?

Sometime after his marriage he spoke to Erica Powell of his intense feelings about the whole question of his family. He insisted that his family should be completely protected from publicity and allowed to lead normal private lives. Some ideology crept into his views because he suggested that marriage did not exist in nature, and was a bourgeois imposition. Considerably later he wrote a letter to Erica Powell which throws a very clear and sensitive light on his whole attitude to marriage.

Have you noticed over the years that I have known you that I am a very lonely man? Can you say that this and that person is a friend to me? I am friendless and companionless . . . I suffer from intense loneliness which makes me sometimes burst into tears. I am an isolated man – isolated even from life itself. You only know and understand that, Erica – few people know this. They see me in public smiling and laughing, not knowing the burden of loneliness and isolation that I carry. Marriage did not solve it - it has rather intensified and complicated it . . . You know I did not want to get married. You know my views on the subject. Did I ever

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tell you that I married not for myself but for the presidency?<sup>10</sup>

In similar vein, he expressed his inner thoughts on religion, saying that he believed in a universal power which pervaded the universe and held the cosmos together. He said he was not an atheist or an agnostic but a cosmopolitan deist, who accepted teachings from a number of different religions.

This cosmopolitanism was to contrast with the various pagan rituals he often took part in. The customary slaughtering of a sheep or pouring a libation to the ancestral spirits, which were of great significance to local people, meant very little to him, but he went along with them because they were an accepted part of Ghana society, and he was too much the politician not to recognize the perils of ignoring social traditions while trying to set the pace for, political progress.

Nkrumah had by now become an almost exclusively political animal. His real joys derived from his political success, his disappointments from his political failures. His marriage he saw as a political move, as a fusion between the two great African traditions – the Black and the Arab. His religious or ethical convictions were conveniently vague and could be tailored to suit the occasion. Such unsure foundations made Nkrumah ultimately uncomfortable with his own pragmatism. The resulting insecurity is seen in his relations with other stronger characters with whom he had to work. Until independence, the strength of Arden-Clarke had carried him through many problems and crises, and he had given vivid expression to his apprehension when he had said to Arden-Clarke 'What shall I do when you have gone?' Even before independence, when Nkrumah was already investigating the possibility of rural development, he had made an approach to the Government of Israel, sending both Botsio and Tettegah to Israel to seek advice on the kibbutz and on the Histadrut. Israel, seeing a great opportunity to gain influence in emergent Africa, sent an

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outstandingly able ambassador, Ehud Avriel, to Accra. For some years Avriel had considerable personal influence over Nkrumah. At a later stage, but for the same reasons, the distinguished Russian ambassador Rodionov gained a similar advantage.

In 1958, Nkrumah became increasingly preoccupied with foreign affairs and in particular with the struggle for independence in Africa. In April, he proudly hosted the Conference of Independent African States - Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, Libya, Tunisia, Morocco, Liberia and Ghana. In spite of the preponderance of North African Arab states, under Nkrumah's leadership the conference set up the machinery to co-ordinate the independence struggles all over Africa. It agreed on the basic premise of one man one vote, and agreed to aim at the unification of the continent after the forces of imperialism had been routed. Nkrumah built on the success of the conference by visiting all the countries which had taken part, in order to set up the machinery of consultation, and to keep the momentum going.

He had scarcely returned from these trips when he visited Canada and the USA. In Canada he addressed both Houses of Parliament. Canada responded generously to Ghana's needs and, from that time onwards, has donated millions of dollars of aid, through sound and practical schemes - notably the provision of wells in the arid Northern Territories. From Canada, Nkrumah and his entourage flew to Washington where he was received by Vice President Nixon, and then had lunch with President Eisenhower. One factor in his generous reception by the Washington establishment was an incident which had occurred the previous year. Komla Gbedemah had been on an official visit and, while travelling by road, his request for a glass of orange juice at a wayside restaurant had been refused because he was black. The US administration had reacted quickly to this gaffe and Gbedemah had been invited to breakfast with Eisenhower, where he was able to broach the question of the Volta River Project. Nkrumah

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bitterly resented Gbedemah meeting Eisenhower before he had, and personally prevented the details of this famous breakfast being broadcast on Ghana radio.<sup>11</sup> This rather petty incident shows that, although Nkrumah had remarkable achievements to his credit, he still remained psychologically insecure.

After Washington, Nkrumah's party continued their visit to Lincoln, Chicago, Philadelphia and New York. This trip was one of the most untroubled and successful interludes in Nkrumah's whole career. He had behind him the achievement of independence. The accolade of approval from the British and American administrations had strengthened his political position and enabled him to play a confident role on the international stage. Helped by these advantages he used every opportunity of his American tour to appeal for economic and financial assistance. The suspicion and doubt of later events spoiled this idyll – the Cold War clash in the Congo, the Soviet-American rivalry in Ghana, and the machinations of the Adamafo group at home – but during this tour such problems had not yet obtruded. Nkrumah made the most of the enthusiastic and uncomplicated response of the black communities to whom he addressed his particular call for help. Appearing before black audiences across the country as the Prime Minister of an independent African country, he created an excitement and a momentum which merged into the civil rights struggles of the ensuing decade. He contacted Martin Luther King and Malcolm X who hailed him as their greatest hero. The subsequent visits of Malcolm X to Accra were part of a two-way traffic which Nkrumah initiated – economic help from the US to Ghana, and inspiration and financial help from Ghana to the black leaders of the civil rights movement.

The Algerian War and the French crisis were soon to impinge dramatically on Ghana. De Gaulle, attempting to solve France's problems in North Africa, offered all its territories a place in the French community. Sekou Toure of Guinea, alone, refused his

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offer. The French, in a fit of vindictiveness, left Guinea, removing even the telephone wires and typewriters from the offices. In this major crisis for Sekou Touré, Nkrumah reacted quickly. He made an immediate loan of £10m. from the substantial sterling reserves Ghana still possessed. At this time Sekou Touré, a convinced socialist, was one of the few African leaders who genuinely supported Nkrumah. Even so, while the loan was made quickly, the resultant negotiations for the union of Ghana and Guinea were more hard-headed and realistic. Nkrumah, ever ready to rush in with a new scheme, saw the Ghana-Guinea Union as the possible nucleus of a United Africa. Every other independent African country would be encouraged to join. Gbedemah, Lewis and A.L. Adu who had to thrash out the details of the agreement and overcome the complications of the Commonwealth connection, eventually imposed some delay on Nkrumah's impetuosity. Adu, who subsequently left Ghana and held high administrative office in East Africa, publicly criticized his administrative methods.<sup>12</sup> Nkrumah clearly set the pace for the proposed union, while Sekou Touré - not being entirely open - was still secretly negotiating with the French. Sekou Touré was also strongly pursuing his rivalry with Houphouet-Boigny for the leadership of the former French West African states. Although the initial agreements for the Union were signed in November 1958, tough negotiations continued for months with Nkrumah pressing for full political union, Sekou Toure seeking closer economic union, and neither giving way. In spite of these difficulties, the November agreement did establish the Ghana-Guinea Union as a possible nucleus of a Union of Independent African States.

Nkrumah gained great kudos for making a loan of £10m. when, thanks to French petulance, Guinea was virtually bankrupt. Gbedemah, who, as Minister of Finance, was in charge of the financial negotiations, maintains that the episode illustrates another side of Nkrumah - namely that he had no interest in

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finance and no understanding of it. Gbedemah remained in charge of Ghana's finances until his bitter split with Nkrumah in 1961, and he confirms that up to that time, although he had made frequent approaches to the Guinea finance minister, not a penny of the money was ever repaid. Gbedemah recalls another occasion when, after a year's careful husbanding of his country's resources, he proudly announced to Nkrumah that Ghana's revenue would be £198m. - far more than ever before. Nkrumah's only reaction was to ask whether they could squeeze another couple of million from somewhere else so that they could say the revenue was £200m.

The Ghana-Guinea Union provided a major step forward for Nkrumah's African ambitions and tied in closely with the All African People's Conference held in Accra in December 1958. Against the wishes of George Padmore who was the main organizer of the conference, Nkrumah had insisted on this name for it, to show that it was something new and not just another Pan African conference. In many ways this conference was one of Nkrumah's greatest diplomatic successes. Padmore continued to plug Pan Africanism as the best guarantee against communism - the theme of his book *Pan Africanism or Communism* published in 1956 - but he also encouraged regional groupings in Africa as the most practicable step forward. Nkrumah strongly opposed this view and tended to brand any regional plans as neo-colonialist plots. In spite of their disagreements, they had co-operated on the invitation sent to the three hundred delegates:

THIS CONFERENCE WILL FORMULATE AND PROCLAIM THE PHILOSOPHY OF PAN AFRICANISM AS THE IDEOLOGY OF THE AFRICAN NON-VIOLENT REVOLUTION. HENCEFORTH OUR SLOGAN SHALL BE: PEOPLES OF AFRICA UNITE!

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YOU HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE BUT YOUR CHAINS!  
YOU HAVE A CONTINENT TO REGAIN!  
YOU HAVE FREEDOM AND HUMAN DIGNITY TO  
ATTAIN!  
HANDS OFF AFRICA!!  
AFRICA MUST BE FREE!!!<sup>13</sup>

In his opening address Nkrumah said that his aim was to inject a new spirit into the African revolution. He certainly achieved this, and with so many activists from the freedom movements all over Africa able to meet together and support each other, the effect was dynamic. Nkrumah made personal contacts with many leaders who were to play distinguished roles in their own struggles for independence. They looked to him as the first leader to achieve this and also as the first one who had taken the next step towards African Unification because of his link with Guinea. Kenneth Kaunda of Northern Rhodesia, Julius Nyerere of Tanganyika, Joshua Nkomo of Southern Rhodesia, Patrice Lumumba of the Belgian Congo, Tom Mboya of Kenya and Kanya Chiume of Nyasaland all testified to the encouragement and inspiration they had received from this great African conference. On the debit side, the organizers gained Nkrumah's support for their argument that they did not have to submit the expenses of the conference to civil service auditors. Other sections of Nkrumah's administration followed their lead and quickly added to the drain on Ghana's finances.

As a result of the conference, Ghana started to support freedom fighters and liberation movements, which involved attempts to destabilize other African countries, and especially his neighbours in West Africa. Significantly, Nigeria had not been invited to the conference and its leaders bitterly resented Nkrumah's condescending offer to speak on their behalf.

Within a few days of the conference in Accra, Nkrumah had to

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face a very different situation. He was about to set off for an official visit to India on 20 December 1958, when a plot to assassinate him at the airport was discovered. The rather amateurish plot centred round two opposition figures, R.R. Amponsah and M.K. Apaloo, who allegedly approached the commandant at Giffard Camp, the main military camp near Accra, and offered him money to get his troops to take part in an assassination plot and a coup d' état. The conspirators bought uniforms and badges and secreted them in a store in Labadi, the sea-side suburb of Accra. On the night of the planned coup they moved silently to a rendezvous on the Labadi road which had easy access both to Giffard Camp and to the centre of Accra. They waited tensely for the remainder of the group to arrive but heard only the sound of the waves breaking on Labadi beach. After a considerable time a vehicle approached. Expecting their fellow conspirators to get out, they were taken completely by surprise when members of the Security Forces sprang out and arrested them. Later, it was said that one of the conspirators thought that he should inform someone in authority about the plan. Another version of this strange tale is that Nkrumah was privy to the plot and allowed it to go ahead in order to implicate Amponsah and Apaloo, as well as Joe Appiah and Victor Owusu – the former NLM leaders. Whatever the truth about the gravity of this incident, Nkrumah decided to continue with his visit to India, but he considered the situation to be serious enough to cancel the second part of his tour to Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon.

Since independence there had been threats of violence from Ashanti, from Togoland and from elsewhere, and it was this background which led to the various repressive acts passed by Nkrumah's government. These culminated in the Preventive Detention Act of July 1958, under which suspects could be imprisoned without trial for up to five years. This Act was used and abused on an ever increasing scale – for example, thirty-eight people were detained in November 1958, even before the airport

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assassination plot. It became the most notorious instrument of repression from that time until Nkrumah's overthrow eight years later, when, after the coup, 1,200 detainees were released.

The Ghanaian party arrived in India on 22 December 1958. Although Nkrumah admired the work and achievements of Gandhi and Nehru, his personal relationship with Nehru, from their first meeting in the mid-1950s, had always been difficult. Nkrumah managed to establish cordial relations with most of the world's leaders, but Nehru was his one certain failure. At the 1957 Commonwealth Conference it had been announced that the Ghana parliament was erecting a statue of Nkrumah. Nehru's reaction was disdainful. 'From then on he considered Nkrumah an opportunist of the Sukarno stamp and of no long-term significance. Nkrumah, in turn, never forgave Nehru.'<sup>14</sup> Despite their cool personal relations, Nehru welcomed the Ghana party, but very quickly despatched them on a round of official sightseeing. In Delhi, Nkrumah received an honorary degree, and addressed a conference. The Ghanaians visited dams in the Himalayan foothills, went tiger shooting in Mysore and visited the military academy at Poona. At the end of the visit some of the party felt that Nehru looked on Nkrumah and the rest of them as coming from a much lower caste.

During 1959, Nkrumah gave much time and thought to the proposed visit of the Queen to Ghana. She was due to come in November and elaborate plans had been made. Nkrumah's relationship with the Queen illustrates one of the many paradoxical and almost quixotic aspects of his character. Sir Robert Jackson, who worked very closely with Nkrumah throughout these years, and who knew him as well as anyone did, was with him when he received the news that the Queen was pregnant and would not be able to make her visit. Nkrumah turned grey, as he did when he received some really severe shock, and said that it was the worst news he had ever received. Sir Robert guided him on how

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the news should be broken to the people of Ghana. Nkrumah rehearsed the statement that it was great and joyful news for the Queen and the Royal Family, but sad news for Ghana. In reality the recording for the actual broadcast, from Nkrumah's home, proved as problematic as the message. The first attempt was halfway through when Fathia, his wife, put on her radiogram in an adjoining room, and the recording had to be repeated; the next attempt was well under way when the grandfather clock chimed; the third attempt was nearly finished when the alsatian dog barked. Finally it was completed just in time to meet the broadcast deadline.

His deep personal disappointment was alleviated by an invitation to visit the Queen at Balmoral - an honour till then bestowed on no other Commonwealth leader. Accompanied by Enoch Okoh and Erica Powell, he flew via London to Aberdeen and drove to Balmoral, where he was overawed by the castle's historical associations and the thought of the famous people who had stayed in his room. During the visit the Queen invited him to become a Privy Councillor, an honour awarded to very few Commonwealth leaders. This honour again highlighted the paradox of Nkrumah's position. The arguments against acceptance were strong. Apart from his well-known views on imperialism, he was strongly opposed to the acceptance of foreign honours. He was the leading spokesman for non-alignment, and was making preparations for Ghana to become a republic in 1960. Yet he and his advisers realized that, if he accepted the honour, the people of Ghana would be delighted. This proved to be a situation where his left-wing stance was overcome by his deeper loyalty to the Queen and Commonwealth, and, more importantly, his pragmatic response to what Ghanaians expected of their leader.

Nkrumah's unexpected visit to Balmoral had distracted him from some fairly serious new developments in Ghana's foreign policy. In an effort to improve relations between Liberia, Ghana

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and Guinea, President Tubman invited Nkrumah and Sekou Touré to a conference at Sanniquillie in July 1959. At this conference the three leaders set up the Community of African States, a loose association of states, the purpose of which was to encourage African liberation and unity, and to foster economic and cultural links. Any independent country could join the Community. Tubman, concerned at the narrow nature of the Ghana-Guinea Union and at Nkrumah's known opposition to regional groupings, felt that Sanniquellie had been a success because it had gained Nkrumah's agreement to a looser and more flexible association of states. Nkrumah, who saw Tubman as a reactionary opponent of his schemes for African unity, felt he had got Tubman to make a significant move towards support for African unity.

Until 1959, Nkrumah's African policy had been strongly influenced by George Padmore, to whom he had offered a home and a refuge in Ghana, and to whose intellectual ideas he deferred. Padmore had strongly encouraged him towards a more active Pan African policy, against the advice of most experienced Ghanaian leaders. They disliked Padmore, whom they found arrogant and condescending, and whose views they frequently opposed. Nkrumah grieved deeply and sincerely when, during a short visit to London in September 1959, Padmore died. His death had a direct effect on political developments in Ghana. Nkrumah used it as the opportunity to promote Padmore's deputy A. K. Barden and to put him in charge of an independent Bureau of African Affairs. Barden, an ex-sericeman of limited ability, who came to wield considerable power, was responsible only to Nkrumah – thus enabling African Affairs to be hidden from parliamentary scrutiny. Officers of the Bureau included Welbeck (chairman), Tettegah, Adamafo and Djin – a group which gained very real power in Ghana through the instrument of the Bureau. This power grew still further when the establishment of the Republic removed many former restraints.

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## THE VOLTA RIVER PROJECT

THE BRITISH COLONIAL GOVERNMENT of the Gold Coast initiated the first inquiries into the possibility of a major hydro-electric scheme based on the River Volta, the aim of which was to provide electricity for the whole country, irrigation in the dry Accra plain, and large-scale fisheries from a huge man-made lake. The scheme envisaged the construction of a new town and artificial harbour at Tema, fifteen miles east of Accra, which would have modern dock facilities to deal with imports and exports for the eastern half of the country. Behind these far-reaching schemes was the World Bank forecast that the demand for aluminum would increase fourfold in the twenty years after 1950, and therefore a smelter and local bauxite could provide Ghana with a permanent and valuable manufactured export which would bolster revenue when the cocoa price fluctuated. Many of these schemes proved sound and successful, but the plans did not work out entirely as predicted.

As early as December 1951, when Nkrumah had been in office only a few months, he announced that the CPP Government supported the Volta Project and the building of Tema harbour. Nearly a year later, in November 1952, the British Government produced a White Paper giving details of the proposed dam,

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harbour and smelter. One factor in the British decision to support the Volta Project had been to ensure that the Commonwealth had access to a supply of aluminum which was not controlled by the American monopoly. Of the possible Commonwealth sites, the Volta Scheme appeared the most promising. The 1952 White Paper proposed that the dam should be at Ajena with the smelter at Kpong aiming to produce 80,000 tons of aluminum per year. The estimated costs at this stage totaled £144m. which the Gold Coast Government would meet, helped by a British loan of £57m. over eighty years. During the early 1950s both Nkrumah and Arden-Clarke gave personal support and encouragement to the scheme, and they organized massive publicity and public debate. A public exhibition of the Volta Project, launched by Nkrumah, visited every part of the country. To assist the thorough investigation of all aspects of the Volta Scheme, the British Government appointed a Commission under Sir Robert Jackson, who had wide experience of large-scale organizations including UNRRA, and who was to become a close friend and confidant of Nkrumah. Jackson was a key figure in the Volta Project – supporting the scheme and supporting Nkrumah.

From relatively modest beginnings, the scheme became a *cause célèbre* of the Cold War in Africa: it was a controversial question for the United Nations, for the World Bank and international finance, and it was a major issue for three American Presidents – Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson. The initial inquiries pronounced the scheme sound and practicable, but by the mid – 1950s the estimated cost had risen to over £300m, and the British Government pointed out that it would be necessary for the World Bank to support such a large scheme. At this stage too, several agencies, including the Alcan Company of Canada, expressed serious reservations, and the scheme could easily have foundered but for Nkrumah's absolute determination to see it through to completion. He realized Ghana's great need for the hydro-electric

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power which the scheme would produce, but he also saw the Volta Project as a symbol and keystone of all his plans for the development of Ghana as a modern industrial country. In this he was supported by Sir Robert Jackson and his wife Barbara Ward, the distinguished economist who was also to play an important role in the saga of the Volta Scheme.

In October 1956, Gbedemah had made the most of his famous breakfast with President Eisenhower, and from that time onwards, the US Government took an active part in organizing the financial and technological backing for the scheme. When the Canadian company Alcan pulled out, American companies, with Eisenhower's support, undertook to investigate the smelter and the dam, and the financial backing for them both. When Nkrumah made his State visit to the United States in July 1958, the International Co-operation Administration had already put forward a scheme jointly supported by public funds and private enterprise. By this time, there was a surplus of aluminum in the world, but Eisenhower gave his backing to Ghana as the first independent state in sub-Saharan Africa. Like his successors, he was concerned about Soviet penetration into Africa, and he was also aware that the ineptitude of American and British policy over the Aswan dam in Egypt had played into Soviet hands.

In New York, on 28 July 1958, Nkrumah had his first meeting with Edgar Kaiser – the tough and dynamic head of the Kaiser Corporation. They established an immediate rapport. During their conversation one of Kaiser's colleagues said 'He sounds just like your father'. Nkrumah overheard this and to everyone's relief roared with laughter.<sup>1</sup> This started a close partnership and friendship which lasted through all the crises of the next eight years until the Volta River Project (VRP) was finally completed. The huge Kaiser Corporation rapidly swung into action to review and assess the whole VRP. The British firm Halcrow were already involved in building Tema and they co-operated closely with Kaiser. After a

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thorough and detailed investigation, Kaiser suggested a number of major changes. They proposed that the dam should be built at Akosombo – not at Ajena. This would provide much more power – over 1m. kilowatts. It would supply the smelter, enough electricity for the whole country, and a surplus for export. Kaiser also proposed that the smelter should be built at Tema to save the cost of building a second new town. Ghana had huge deposits of bauxite – including a major discovery at Kibi – and it had been hoped that local bauxite could be used for smelter, but this would have involved further large-scale capital investment. Nkrumah therefore agreed, reluctantly, that the smelter would operate on imported bauxite. This proved to be a fateful decision; after the initial funding of the VRP by Nkrumah, Ghana was never again in a position to raise sufficient capital to establish the plant to process its own bauxite. This final result of the Kaiser investigation was to reduce the estimated cost by 30 per cent, which immediately made it a practicable and viable proposition.

Nkrumah had infected Edgar Kaiser with his enthusiasm and after 1958 there was a surge of activity. Under Kaiser's leadership, in early 1960, a consortium of companies called Valco agreed to build and run the smelter. Thirty years later, Valco still runs successfully providing the advantages for jobs and training of a major industrial complex. It produces a major share of Ghana's foreign exchange and it still uses imported bauxite. After intense competition, the Italian company Impregilo, which had just completed the Kariba dam, won the huge Volta contract. With the need for major borrowing, the World Bank now became involved. After a visit of inspection, it recommended that there should be a ceiling of £190m. for all Ghana's borrowing. This created problems but Nkrumah still enjoyed Edgar Kaisers's positive support. Lengthy and not always amicable discussions took place over the agreed price of electricity for the smelter. This was clearly vital to both sides and is till a controversial issue

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in Ghana today. Kaiser looked to the millions of dollars it had invested in order to make the whole project a success and wanted a reasonable return on its investment. The Kaiser Corporation's rivals thought that Kaiser was getting a very generous deal in Ghana, since the project was underpinned by the semi-official International Co-operation Administration. In contrast, left-wing critics, including several in Nkrumah's Cabinet, saw the VRP as a classic example of neo-colonialist exploitation. They realized too that the Soviet Union had already made some offers to finance this type of development.

The year 1960, which had opened so encouragingly, brought serious problems. The Congo revolution, in which Nkrumah was to become so deeply involved, discouraged many financial institutions from investing in Africa. Nkrumah's support for Patrice Lumumba, and his criticism of the role of the Western powers in the Congo, created further problems. In July 1960, Ghana became a republic. This removed a number of restraints on Nkrumah's actions which became increasingly unpredictable. American opinion was more and more alarmed as, because of the Congo crisis, Nkrumah veered towards the Soviet side. Gbedemah, who had carried out most of the negotiations for the VRP, gave evidence of this at the time. After lengthy and difficult negotiations in Washington, he had returned to Accra £1.5m. short of the target needed. His main fear was that Nkrumah might react angrily and hand the whole project over to the Russians.<sup>2</sup>

The issue of American or Russian involvement bedevilled Nkrumah's policy from 1960 until he was overthrown. Sir Robert Jackson said that Nkrumah's brain was in sealed compartments, and it certainly seems true of this question. American anxiety increased as Nkrumah invited the Russians, Chinese, Poles and East Germans to Ghana. Although he absorbed many of their ideas during his 1961 visit to the Eastern bloc, they never considered him to be a convert to their philosophy. Nkrumah saw

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nothing contradictory in what he was doing. He was genuinely trying to work out a new system of African socialism applicable to the problems of Africa and more specifically to the problems of Ghana, and to work this out on a pragmatic and eclectic basis for the benefit of all the African people, helped only by those who would subscribe to his philosophy.

It was frequently said of him, rather critically, that his view was always that of the last person he had been speaking to. He certainly collected ideas as a squirrel collects nuts. This aspect of his character is borne out in many different situations. It is shown by Erica Powell, who had the nightmare experience of typing and retyping his speeches on planes and trains and in hotel bedrooms from Philadelphia to Peking, from London to Lucknow - often up to the last minute before he delivered them.<sup>3</sup> During a visit to China, Nkrumah was due to make a major speech at an evening banquet in Shanghai. After an afternoon visit he decided to change his whole speech, and Erica was still typing it after Nkrumah had left for the banquet. She then offended her Chinese hosts by not turning up for the banquet herself. This rather strange aspect of Nkrumah's mind may be partly explained by the fact that he was a complete pragmatist, determined to get as much help and financial support as possible for Ghana from both sides - from East and West, from the United States and the USSR. The result was that he ended up distrusted by both sides, and this greatly added to the difficulties of bringing the Volta River Project to a successful conclusion.

The outstanding financial deficit was finally made good when Nkrumah appealed personally to Prime Minister Macmillan, and the British Government made a loan of £5m. over twenty-five years. While these delicate negotiations continued, the government-controlled press in Accra poured out a stream of anti-American propaganda. This prompted Edgar Kaiser to write the first of many personal letters to Nkrumah saying that he had

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really done his best for Ghana and, considering his Corporation were investing £125m. in the country, he felt that he was being badly treated. This type of approach invariably succeeded with Nkrumah, and it enabled the last problems to be ironed out. When the negotiations were completed, Gbedemah, on behalf of the Ghana Government, signed the contract with the Volta Aluminum Company (Valco) on 17 November 1960. Obtaining the necessary American financial backing was one of Nkrumah's great successes. To cap this achievement, in January 1961 in an Assembly debate on the VRP, he announced that, in addition to the American help for the VRP, the Soviet Union had offered to build a dam at Bui on the Black Volta. This incident explains the real core of Nkrumah's philosophy – to get help from East and West for the benefit of Ghana – and he could see no reason for anyone to object to the idea.

Informed American opinion became increasingly concerned over Nkrumah's words and actions during the Congo crisis, and by the virulent anti-American line taken by the Ghanaian press which was, by this time, completely under the control of the government. With the arrival of John F. Kennedy in the White House, US-Ghana relations changed for the better. Kennedy determined to repair the damage done to the United States by Eisenhower's disastrous policy in the Congo, had the misfortune to come to power just when the murder of Lumumba took place on 17 January 1961. Throughout Africa it was believed that the Central Intelligence Agency had arranged Lumumba's murder, and this increased Kennedy's difficulties. He had already established a sound rapport with Nkrumah. As a presidential candidate in 1957, he had given great hope to African patriots in an outspoken speech on the Algerian war in which he said that Algeria had to be freed. Nkrumah had written to him then, and wrote again after his election, emphasizing the hopes that African leaders placed in the new American administration and begging him to take action

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to save Lumumba. For his part, Kennedy was determined to retrieve the situation in Africa by backing the Volta River Project. His overall sympathy towards Ghana had been carefully nurtured by Barbara Ward, the wife of Sir Robert Jackson. As a Carnegie Fellow at Harvard, she had close access to the Kennedy power base in Boston, and as early as 1958 she had reassured Kennedy when there was a general outcry from the Western press over Nkrumah's Preventive Detention Act.

Kaiser informed the new administration that a major Cold War battle was being waged in Africa and that, in his view, support for the VRP would have a good effect throughout the continent. Reports from Russell, the American Ambassador in Accra, were less encouraging. He voiced his outrage at the strident anti-American campaign by the Ghana press, and at the apparent move towards the Soviet bloc. He considered that if the US financed the VRP, it could appear to be rewarding Ghana's anti-American posture as shown in the local press campaign. At the same time he warned that America should not underestimate Nkrumah's fury over events in the Congo. He reported rising dissatisfaction with Nkrumah among conservative elements in Ghana, but considered that if US support for the VRP was withdrawn, it would drive Ghana into the Soviet camp.<sup>4</sup>

The murder of Lumumba had caused anti-American riots in Accra and convinced Nkrumah that he would be the next target for what he saw as the neo-colonialist hit squads. The unrest lasted several weeks, during which little else was discussed in Accra. By the end of February other significant events were taking place. Chad Calhoun – Kaiser's vice-president – visited Nkrumah with Sir Robert Jackson to discuss the VRP, and all seemed well. In contrast, the significance of Soviet penetration and involvement in the Congo and West Africa is shown by the visit of Leonid Brezhnev to Ghana to discuss Eastern bloc policy with Nkrumah. Brezhnev's visit, and a state banquet in his honour, took place on

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the same day as Nkrumah's interview with Calhoun and Jackson. At the banquet, also attended by Rusell, Nkrumah said that Lumumba's death showed how far the imperialists were prepared to go to achieve their aims, and he expressed his gratitude for Soviet support. He added that the CPP were determined to build a socialist society in Ghana based upon African experience and African traditions and with appropriate socialist institutions. Addressing Brezhnev he said:

Your government has helped us to forge ahead with our determination to develop our economy, especially in revolutionizing our agriculture. We look forward to even greater co-operation in the interests of all mankind and the peace of the world.<sup>5</sup>

Brezhnev replied and invited Nkrumah to Moscow to visit Khrushchev. Thus while the United States and the Soviet Union manoeuvred to gain the allegiance of Nkrumah and Ghana, he remained true to his belief that small developing nations had to avoid becoming client states of either superpower. At this stage he was still rather naive and he did not appear to realize what a dangerous game he was playing. Brezhnev's visit alerted the West to the active Soviet interest in Ghana, and there followed some feverish activity in Washington and Accra. In Washington, Barbara Ward and Chad Calhoun argued in a memorandum to President Kennedy that, when Nkrumah came on a visit to the US, Kennedy should try to win him over and keep him out of the Soviet orbit. Correspondence between Nkrumah and Kennedy continued and Nkrumah put his case clearly. He pointed out the need for co-operation between Africa and the West, but explained that African states distrusted the Western powers because they were introducing a new type of colonialism into Africa through the political actions of commercial and industrial concerns. He

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gave the example of Katanga, where Tshombe was backed by the Union Minière and by the Belgian Government. At the same time, American apprehension was kept up when it became known that a majority of CPP ministers, led by Adamafo, wanted the VRP to be handed over to the Russians. There was further American concern when Ghana made an economic agreement with Yugoslavia during a visit to Accra by Tito on 1 March. In welcoming Tito, Nkrumah again made an important speech:

I am determined to build a socialist society in Ghana, entirely Ghanaian in character and African in outlook, and based on a Marxist socialist philosophy. . . I see before my eyes a great monolithic party growing up out of this process, united and strong and spreading its protective wings over the whole of Africa . . . All people are created equal, born equal, and have an equal right to self determination, and have an equal right to manage or mismanage their own affairs in their God given land and country.<sup>6</sup>

Russell, in passing this on, encouraged Kennedy to pursue this Jeffersonian philosophy when he next saw Nkrumah.

By March 1961, Gbedemah had been pushed to one side by Adamafo's left-wing group and was close to his final clash with Nkrumah. While he was in Washington preparing for Nkrumah's visit, Gbedemah called on Walt Rostow, a National Security Adviser, and expressed his growing fear of Ghana's close links with the communist bloc. He suggested that, if at all possible, Kennedy and Nkrumah should meet alone without any of Nkrumah's advisers, because Bing (whom Russell had dubbed the most pro-communist of all Nkrumah's entourage) would be with him in Washington. Gbedemah warned Rostow of the increasing influence the Soviet authorities had gained over Nkrumah through Bing and through the extremely able Russian

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ambassador, Rodionov.

Kennedy, trying to get as much information as possible before Nkrumah's critical visit, received another note from Barbara Ward warning him that Nkrumah's English was surprisingly uncertain, and stressing his appetite for flattery. Nkrumah's important meeting at the White House took place on 8 March 1961. Kennedy had been very well briefed. The two Presidents spent some time discussing the Congo, though Nkrumah, who normally coped well with the big occasion, gave a poor and muddled presentation of his views. Next, Kennedy turned to Nkrumah's pro-Soviet attitude and his anti-Western statements. He spoke severely, pointing out the serious difficulties this had created in obtaining the necessary American finance for the VRP. Nkrumah retorted that he was not a communist, but that it was often easier and quicker to get help from the East. Kennedy had spoken bluntly, but he wanted the Volta scheme to go ahead with American backing, and this he achieved. He assured Nkrumah that the \$30m. which had been frozen by Eisenhower would be unblocked and the remaining difficulties quickly resolved. After the meeting, Kennedy took Nkrumah to meet his wife and daughter, Caroline. Nkrumah, bowled over by this generous personal treatment, and overlooking the dressing-down he had received, spoke at a press conference in glowing terms of a new era in Afro-American friendship. The meeting certainly brought some momentum to the VRP, but thorny problems still had to be solved. The State Department and the Treasury still thought that Kaiser was getting too favourable treatment, though they were impressed by the thorough work Gbedemah was doing in the financial negotiations with the US authorities and with the World Bank. Gbedemah openly expressed his fears of the Soviet involvement, but he completed the remaining arrangements within a few weeks of the White House meeting.

When every difficulty seemed to have been solved, Nkrumah

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caused another problem when, on the advice of Lord Kaldor, he refused to accept the conditions laid down by the World Bank. All the doubts and criticisms returned. Once again Barbara Ward took decisive action, and in a famous memo asked 'Must we have two Aswans?' Eventually, even this hurdle was surmounted, and Kennedy was able to write to Nkrumah on 29 June 1961. After discussing a possible chairman for the Volta River Authority, he said how pleased he was that all outstanding difficulties had been resolved.

Kennedy's letter reached Nkrumah just before he left with a sixty-strong delegation for a two-month tour of the Soviet Union, China and the whole of the Eastern bloc. During this lengthy tour, Nkrumah made flattering comments about the communist system. This re-opened very serious criticism in Washington, and brought in its wake further months of anguished debate. Senator Gore, head of the Senate Committee on Africa, considered that Ghana's policies were too firmly oriented towards Russia and China. Kennedy, reluctantly involved again, sent Franklin Williams, who was later to be US Ambassador to Ghana at the time of the coup, to Accra to give him an up-to-date report. This visit was followed by a three-man team under Senator Gore in October 1961.

The Volta problem now became intertwined with the proposed visit to Ghana by the Queen and Prince Philip, and urgent discussions took place involving Kennedy, Robert Jackson, Barbara Ward, Duncan Sandys and Macmillan. Among the welter of conflicting opinions, two clear statements emerged. Nkrumah, worried at the American reaction, wrote to Macmillan. He said he was not prepared to see the Cold War in black and white terms, and that the main aim of the Non-Aligned Group, in which he was prominent, was to lessen tension between East and West. The suggestions of the Western press that he was veering towards the Soviet bloc were entirely without foundation. He assured

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Macmillan that there was no change in Ghana's fundamental neutrality, and asked him to use his influence to curb the hostile press attacks on Ghana.

British concern at Ghana's leftward trend and the serious security situation in Accra, which might endanger the Queen, led to a visit by Duncan Sandys on behalf of the British Government. There had been strong anti-British comment in the Ghana press, and Sandys spoke severely to Nkrumah about this. He demanded that a joint statement be issued after their talks. The statement confirmed that Nkrumah's policy of non-alignment was designed to keep the Cold War out of Africa. It also confirmed that Britain had handed independence to over 600 million people without any strings attached, and therefore charges of neo-colonialism could be rejected. This report was sent to Kennedy who still had to make major decisions on the VRP. A report from Russell gave a very different view. He believed that Nkrumah, by inviting in the Soviets, was positively bringing the Cold War into Africa and increasing the tension between African states. He suggested that Kennedy should take a tough line with Ghana and threaten to delay the signing of the final Volta Agreement and to oppose Ghana's application for a seat on the UN Security Council, and, instead of helping Ghana, give more aid to the conservative Monrovia group of African countries.<sup>7</sup>

Barbara Ward, Kaiser and Chad Calhoun - who had met Nkrumah in Belgrade during his East European tour - were still convinced that the Volta scheme should go ahead. Barbara Ward, always well informed, had consulted Leopold Senghor of Senegal and other African leaders, who expressed their deep concern lest America pull out.

During his October visit, Senator Gore had an interview with Nkrumah. In reply to his questions, Nkrumah maintained that his Soviet leanings had been completely misinterpreted by the Western press, and in a rather defensive approach, justified his visit to the

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Soviet Union by the need to see what they had achieved. Clearly, he did not convince Gore, who thought he was so obsessed with colonialism that he was blind to Soviet colonialism. Gore recommended to Kennedy that the United States should pull out completely because of Nkrumah's pro-Soviet stand, and because of his dictatorial regime and the imprisonment of his opponents. Gore considered that the Volta scheme was uneconomic and that its main beneficiaries were the consortium members of Valco.<sup>8</sup>

The CIA, independently of Russell, also gave adverse advice. It referred to the removal of all moderates by Nkrumah, the installation of Adamafo's radicals, and the imprisonment of all critics of the regime. It thought that Nkrumah would use the Eastern bloc to further his own ends without committing himself to communism, and saw him as a 'pivotal factor', a man 'essentially vain and egocentric, who sees himself as a Messianic leader'. The CIA predicted that his flamboyant and unpredictable behaviour would increase, while he meddled with the affairs of other African countries and supported the eastern bloc on issues sensitive to America and Britain.

Before Kennedy made his difficult final decision, based on such conflicting advice, he received a report from Sir Robert Jackson, which was shrewder and more realistic than most of the others. Jackson pointed out that, during the Russian trip, Adamafo and Boateng had insisted on Nkrumah getting rid of all his expatriate colleagues, including Robert Jackson himself, General Alexander and Erica Powell, as well as Botsio and Gbedemah. Jackson added that Adamafo's clique were almost entirely in control, and no-one with moderate views had access to Nkrumah. The clique intended to pursue an aggressive socialist policy and to eliminate private enterprise. He concluded 'Nkrumah is still keen to complete the Volta Project, but the leftist clique would be glad to see it fall through, as they would have the Queen's visit'.<sup>9</sup>

Finally, against the weight of much Washington opinion,

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Kennedy decided in favour of supporting the Volta Project. It was announced simultaneously in Washington and Accra that the World Bank, the United States, Britain and Ghana would support loans of £116m.

The formal signing took place between Nkrumah and Kaiser in Accra on 22 January 1962. Diplomatic crises still continued, but after this the project got under way very rapidly. It became a fine example of what could be achieved in Ghana by all-round support without any political division or interference. Jackson, who masterminded the scheme, had made sound preparations. The Italian firm Impregilo, which from the beginning established admirable relations with the Ghanaian workers, had already started work at Akosombo in June 1961. Nkrumah became head of the new Volta River Authority with overall responsibility for the whole project, in which he took a direct personal interest.

The planners hoped that the Akosombo Dam would be sufficiently far advanced for the lake to start filling by July 1964, and for the generation of electricity to start by September 1965, when the repayments of the loans had to start. In practice the work went ahead of schedule, and on 19 May 1964, Nkrumah performed the ceremony which lowered the steel and concrete gates to seal off the tunnel and to start filling the great Volta Lake.<sup>10</sup>

The lake was eventually to cover one ninth of the whole country, and the VRP included impressive arrangements for the social and economic effects of such a vast scheme. The scheme planned to gain the maximum benefit both for the people and for the country. Large numbers of small communities living in the areas to be inundated had to be moved. This could have caused serious problems, but the whole matter was so carefully and sensitively handled that there was hardly any opposition. Kobla Kalitzi, in charge of resettlement, succeeded brilliantly.

New villages were built so that the houses were ready when the

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people had to move. When they moved they were encouraged to give up their age-old subsistence farming and to start farming with a cash crop and livestock, in order to improve their standard of living. Nkrumah approved the grant of £10,000 so that, when communities moved, libations could be poured and due deference paid to local people's fetishes and ancestral gods. By 1963 more than fifty resettlement sites around the lake had been prepared, and more than 1,000 families had already moved. They looked forward to a prosperous future, living beside the great new lake, with all the advantages that brought.

These encouraging developments, and indeed the whole VRP, received a tragic set-back when President Kennedy, who had backed the scheme against very strong Washington opposition, was assassinated in Dallas in November 1963. William Mahoney, the American Ambassador in Accra, said that it was like a curtain coming down on the eager and sympathetic interest of the White House in the project. The sudden removal of personal Presidential support created new problems, especially over the negotiations for the smelter, which were still proceeding.

Nkrumah had been trying hard to raise the capital to build a plant which would enable Ghanaian bauxite to be used to run the smelter. This would have involved another £40m. of overseas capital investment, and this was impossible to obtain. Kaiser visited Accra, and President Johnson sent Averill Harriman to discuss the whole issue again with Nkrumah and Jackson. Kaiser still appeared to be supporting the project wholeheartedly, but there were critics who pointed out that his firm had made a very favourable bargain – guaranteed by the US Government. They saw that if Ghanaian bauxite could not be used, then the new smelter would have to run on bauxite imported by Kaiser's ships. This question came very close to the nub of the whole issue of neo-colonialism. Nkrumah was fighting to get the capital investment to enable Ghana to run the smelter on its own bauxite, quarried

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at nearby Kibi, where a colossal find of bauxite, had just been made. If he had succeeded, Ghana would have had an industrial complex which would have brought sufficient wealth, year after year, to support future policies of industrialization for the rest of the country, and to be the basis for a market throughout the whole of Africa.<sup>11</sup> Because of the financial limits imposed by the State Department and the World Bank, he failed to obtain the capital investment necessary to process local bauxite, and for decades Ghana has had to import bauxite at a very heavy cost in foreign exchange. Had Nkrumah succeeded, Ghana would have been in a much stronger economic position.

After a long series of meetings involving Nkrumah, Harriman, Kaiser and Jackson, it was finally agreed that the work on the smelter would start, but that it would operate on imported bauxite. Work began on the smelter in June 1964, with Nkrumah and Kaiser gracing the official opening in December. On this occasion, Kaiser made a speech with considerable political content, saying that he hoped one form of colonial control would not be replaced by a more iron tyranny and that Ghana would always be ready to support its own freedom. Nkrumah, replying, summarized the history of the VRP. Ghana had provided £35m. to build Tema town and harbour; Ghana, with the United States, Britain and the World Bank, had financed the Akosombo Dam; and US Government loans and private investments supported the smelter. He looked on this as an enterprise of international co-operation which would support world peace. Significantly, he added that he hoped, as soon as possible, to use Ghanaian bauxite in the smelter, and that this would lead to Ghana supplying a major part of the African market. Here Nkrumah was linking his economic plans for Ghana to his wider aims of Ghana providing an industrial base which would eventually operate competitively throughout the whole continent, to counteract the influence of the European multinationals.

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Progress on the Akosombo Dam, the smelter, and Tema harbour continued fairly smoothly against a highly volatile political and security background. All parts of the scheme were completed on time, and Nkrumah was present in September 1965 when, as planned, the first electricity was produced. He took part in a brief ceremony with the local paramount chief, who poured libation to the ancestral spirits. Nkrumah then turned the knob to switch on the electricity – shortly to be fed into the 500-mile grid connecting Akosombo with Accra, Kumasi, Takoradi, and the mining centres at Tarkwa and Obuasi.<sup>12</sup>

The actual production of electricity showed that the whole project was virtually complete, and after September the emphasis was on preparations for the formal opening of the completed Volta River Project. This took place on 22 January 1966. Kojo Botsio presided over the ceremony, which started when Nkrumah and his wife Fathia flew in by helicopter. The Omanhene again poured libation. Kaiser, who was accompanied by his wife, spoke first. He took faith as his theme. He believed that faith worked miracles for co-operation between men and nations, and it was a symbol of hope for the future of Ghana. Dr. Lodigiani, a Director of Impregilo spoke of the blend of public and private enterprise, which should give inspiration all over the continent. He paid tribute to the Ghanaian workers who had created amazingly warm and happy human relationships. The Papal Nuncio then gave his blessing. It had been hoped that Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy would be present but the US Administration had discouraged this as it had been offended by Nkrumah's attack on capitalist enterprise in his book, published in November 1965, *Neo-Colonialism, The Last Stage of Imperialism*.

Naturally and rightly it fell to Nkrumah himself to make the major speech before the gathering of all those Ghanaians, Americans, Italians and others who had been involved in this

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magnificent scheme. In a confident and benign manner, he first paid tribute to those who had played distinguished roles in the great project – to the Kaisers, father and son, who had given Ghana unswerving support, and to their close colleague Chad Calhoun. He paid tribute to Eisenhower and Kennedy, recalling the occasion when Eisenhower – not famous for grasping every detail – had said to an aide, ‘Why don’t you get on with the damned thing?’ Then came a tribute to Kennedy and regret that Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy was not present. He then reminded his audience and the wider world that a small, dynamic, independent state like Ghana must attain control of its economic and political destiny, in order to banish the legacies of the colonial past and the threat of neo-colonialism. Only then could the ultimate goal of a Union Government for Africa be achieved. When he finished, Fathia Nkrumah, standing in for the absent Mrs. Kennedy, unveiled bronze plaques of Eisenhower and Kennedy. At that moment, as darkness fell, Nkrumah switched on the lights to display what many onlookers said was the most dazzlingly beautiful sight they had ever seen. This moving moment was followed by a brilliant firework display and celebrations which went on until morning. The Volta River Project was complete.

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# 13

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## LURCH TO THE LEFT

A CLEAR AND COHERENT OUTLINE of Nkrumah's socialist policies is difficult to achieve because, although his overall aim remained fairly constant, his views and attitudes often appear contradictory, paradoxical and almost schizophrenic. The contradictions are more apparent because of the weakness already noted by Sir Robert Jackson, that his brain appeared to be in watertight compartments, and what he said in one context bore little relation to what he might say in another.

Up to Independence in 1957, the whole momentum of government and party had been geared to the independence struggle, and the battle cry 'SG Now' had made no demands on the niceties of policy. Nkrumah had foreseen the need to bolster support for his socialist aims by setting up, as early as 1956, among Ghanaian students in London, the National Association of Socialist Students Organizations, NASSO. Its first priorities were the study of scientific socialism and the increase of CPP influence among all Ghanaian students. Padmore lived in London at that time and played an active part in NASSO. He and Nkrumah also discussed the wider issues of socialist reconstruction, and the paucity of dedicated socialists among senior CPP members. Nkrumah then appointed Padmore as his personal adviser, in

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order to swing the party towards effective socialist policies, and to convert those who were viewed as reactionary self-seeking capitalists. The development of socialist ideology was closely linked to the role that the CPP should play. Nkrumah saw the party as his main weapon, and he strongly backed the party on those fairly frequent occasions when there was a clash between the party on the one hand and the senior civil servants and the non-socialist members of the Cabinet on the other. To forward his argument, Nkrumah dismissed the concept of the supremacy of parliament as an imperialist myth, and maintained that sovereignty rested in the people – that is, the party.

In June 1959, Nkrumah invited Tawia Adamafo to become General Secretary of the CPP. A bright young man who had studied law in London, and had been prominent in NASSO, Adamafo accepted reluctantly. His comment about the CPP at that time is interesting.

I knew their intrigues and jealousies, the vicious whispering campaigns and the rumour mongering, the deliberate name-smearing and wicked mud slinging, the character assassination, the interminable inner party struggle, the incompetence and greed, the bribery and corruption.<sup>1</sup>

Adamafo used his senior position to ingratiate himself with Nkrumah, and soon became his closest confidant. He adopted Nkrumah's left-wing philosophy and became its most fanatical supporter. Gradually he created an atmosphere of intrigue and mistrust and used this to advance his own ambitions. At the same time he had a close and apparently cordial relationship with Nkrumah. This is well illustrated in his book *By Nkrumah's Side* which vividly recounts his story until the time of his arrest after the Kulungugu incident.

Centered on Adamafo, Nkrumah gradually built up a group

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of socialist activists with whom he discussed every facet of his socialist aims. This group included Heymann, Addison, Baffoe, Shardow, Tettegah and Amoako-Attah. In the early days of this group and before his death in 1959, Padmore had great influence. He was often involved in clashes with the civil service and the Cabinet. Robert Gardiner, one of the most distinguished Ghanaians of his age, said of Padmore that he only had one idea and that it was wrong a one. After 1959 Adamafo rapidly assumed Padmore's mantle. Early in 1960 the pace of events quickened. The CPP Headquarters moved into an impressive building, the *Accra Evening News* was published with the slogan 'The Party is Supreme', and Adamafo and his close friend and colleague Tettegah were appointed by Nkrumah to the Cabinet. These events form the background to the setting up of the Republic.

The CPP Government published a White Paper outlining the Republican Constitution early in 1960. Based very loosely on the US Constitution, it gave immense powers to the President who was both Head of State and Chief Executive. Elected for a five-year term, the President had the power of appointment and dismissal over the civil service, the armed forces and the judiciary. In addition, he had the power to refuse assent to bills, and to pass laws by legislative enactment. Nkrumah had never accepted financial restraints or discipline and the Republican Constitution included a President's Contingency Fund which was not controlled by the Assembly. After the publication of the White Paper, the Assembly formed itself into a Constituent Assembly in order to debate the constitution. The opposition then made their last real attempt to curb the power of Nkrumah and the CPP. Victor Owusu bravely criticized the unrestricted power being placed in the hands of the President, but his stand availed little and the constitution was accepted.<sup>2</sup> A plebiscite was held in April, and the people were asked, firstly, if they accepted the constitution contained in the White Paper, and, secondly, whether they

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supported Nkrumah or Danquah for President. In both votes, Nkrumah and the Republican Constitution were supported by over 1 million votes to about 130,000.

Between the plebiscite and the launch of the Republic, Nkrumah attended the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference in London, and officially announced that Ghana would become a republic. Adamafo accompanied Nkrumah and has recorded a significant incident. In London they had an earnest discussion about the danger to Ghana of the increasing corruption, and agreed that an attack on corruption should have the highest priority. Adamafo returned to Accra before Nkrumah and announced to a press conference that, when Nkrumah returned, he was going to make a major assault on corruption. To Adamafo's horror Nkrumah denied this, and said that there were only one or two people taking unauthorized tips. Privately, Nkrumah said that he knew about the corruption and would act at the proper time. Adamfo commented that the proper time never came and 'The evil has grown into a howling monster threatening to wreck the whole nation'.<sup>3</sup>

Ghana became a republic on 1 July 1960. Some saw this as the final severance of a humiliating link with the colonial past – symbolized by the departure on the previous day of the Governor General, Lord Listowell. But most Ghanaians, while they rejoiced at the colourful ceremonies, were in a more sober mood than at Independence, and felt that Ghana was now really on its own. The official ceremony took place in the Kwame Nkrumah Conference Centre – formerly State House. The First Republic was proclaimed, and Kwame Nkrumah was sworn in as the first President by the Chief Justice, Sir Arku Korsah. Holding the gold Sword of State, Nkrumah swore the Oath of Loyalty to the Republic. Next, the Ministers of the Government were sworn in, and then Nkrumah, flanked by police, party and army outriders, went on a State Drive around Accra, his route lined by jubilant crowds.<sup>4</sup>

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The idea of the Republic had been fairly easy to get over to a relatively unsophisticated public, who saw it as the next step after independence, and approached it in that spirit. Nkrumah faced a far more difficult challenge in trying to carry the Ghanaian public with him towards his socialist goals. There were enormous obstacles. Only a tiny minority of Ghanaians appeared to understand or discuss the concepts of socialism, which were completely alien to them. In practical terms, there was little possibility of the mass support for socialist ideas that there had been for Self-Government Now, and Nkrumah never really got to grips with this problem. When it came to the implementation of socialist ideas in collective farms or state corporations, he again fell foul of the rugged individualism of the Ghanaian peasants and workers. They had always had an attitude of contempt for the man who, for example, was so lacking in independence that he worked for the town council. 'Town council man' was a term of abuse. In spite of these serious drawbacks, Nkrumah set out to train enough activists to carry forward the socialist revolution. In 1959, he announced plans to set up the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute at Winneba, a pleasant sea coast town forty miles west of Accra. The Institute's priority was to train CPP party workers in socialist ideology. Staffed largely by communist writers and teachers, both Ghanaian and expatriate, it ran two-year courses in Nkrumaism, Marxism and Leninsim. By this time Nkrumah had already had several clashes with the universities, and, to some extent, Winneba had been designed as a rival institution. It certainly gave useful training to active party workers, and some of its graduates achieved rapid promotion in the party hierarchy or in the state corporations, but generally it was to prove a great disappointment to Nkrumah who had had such high hopes for it. Even with the prospects of rapid promotion within the party, the Institute failed to attract students of high calibre, or to achieve high levels of intellectual integrity. Nkrumah set the tone through

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his writings and personal addresses, and he alone was seen as the absolute arbiter of thought and ideas.

Nkrumah's determination to lift Ghana out of its poverty and illiteracy lay at the centre of his own philosophy and his attacks on colonialism and imperialism. Some of the disasters prior or the 1966 coup have led to severe criticism of his whole economic policy, but in practice, Nkrumah, as a world statesman, in the 1950s and 1960s sought and received economic advice from the world's leading experts. During the 1950s the majority of economists involved with problems of poverty and development suggested that massive investment was needed for a poor country to break out of the poverty trap. They generally assumed that large-scale industrialization was necessary before a country could 'take off' from a basis of poverty towards growth and prosperity. Their emphasis was nearly always on industrialization, usually linked to plans for import substitution as an important part of that industrial development. As early as 1951 a UN Report supported these views and suggested an investment rate of 10 per cent of national income of an underdeveloped country. Professor Arthur Lewis, who wielded great influence on Ghana's economy in the 1950s, supported this thesis and even suggested a higher percentage of saving. Theories of development economics put forward over these years by Nurske, Myrdal and Kuznets recognized that many poor countries were at a serious disadvantage because of their reliance on a single-crop economy which suffered from fluctuating prices on the world commodity markets. They suggested that the level of development in many African countries was too low to permit the 'take-off' which they all sought. The economists saw, too, that the ever widening gap between the prices of primary commodities and those manufactured goods meant that foreign investment often benefited the aid donor more than the recipient. There was a general consensus that the colonial system had impoverished the subsistence economy of much of Africa by taking land, by

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demanding forced labour, and by imposing taxes to force people to work for capitalist employers.

By the end of the 1950s there appeared to be general agreement that to achieve the 'take-off' out of poverty, a country needed a major change in its economic structure. It also needed a 'big push' to set the process in motion and achieve self-sustaining growth through a massive increase in the ratio of investment to the national income. Development planning was needed to achieve these objectives in underdeveloped countries, and this could only be provided by the government taking over many more of the functions which more advanced countries left to private enterprise.

All these ideas fitted in with Nkrumah's general philosophy, and with the Marxist view on the exploitation of Africa by the imperialists and neo-colonialists. These ideas were eagerly grasped by nationalist leaders all over Africa, who, like Nkrumah, saw the need for economic independence to improve the standard of living of their people. Most independence movements came to assume that a 'big push' – linked to import-substituting industrialization – would bring a rapid improvement in living standards for all their people. Within this framework of ideas, Nkrumah's government consulted a large number of distinguished economists – Dudley Seers, Nicky Kaldor, Arthur Lewis, Alfred Hirschmann and Jozef Bognar. All these considerations led Nkrumah towards a socialist solution for Ghana's problems. This also brought him to his most painful and long-lasting dilemma. He was determined to establish a socialist regime in order to prevent the economy remaining in the hands of foreign capitalists. Yet, if he was ever to achieve the industrialization he sought, he needed the backing of Western capital on a massive scale. He expected the state to play an increasing role in the economic life of the country through national economic planning and through the government acting as an entrepreneur and setting up large-scale industrial

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and agricultural enterprises, with the purpose of creating huge profits which could then be used to provide capital for further development.

While Nkrumah pondered on these issues, Adamafo and the radical group eagerly encouraged him to consider the advantages offered by the Eastern bloc. In 1959 the Soviet Union opened an embassy in Accra, and in January 1960 a large delegation of Russians arrived. Soon afterwards, Ghana opened an embassy in Moscow. In May 1960, Kojo Botsio led a small delegation to the Soviet Union, and Adamafo and Tettegah followed in August. Both groups received VIP treatment. Khrushchev welcomed Adamafo in the Crimea and offered substantial help for many industrial and agricultural projects.<sup>5</sup> He also invited Nkrumah to visit Moscow. Several delegations visited Eastern Europe during 1960, and in December Nkrumah signed a formal Ghana-Soviet Agreement, and announced that he would send 3,000 students to the USSR.

Early in 1961, Brezhnev was visiting Guinea when, impetuously, Nkrumah invited him to Ghana. He accepted, and they shared the dais at the formal opening of the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute at Winneba.<sup>6</sup> In his speech Nkrumah forecast the end of the reactionary era in Ghana, which would be brought about by conscious ideological education. The Institute would provide both the ideological education and Positive Action training. The opening of Winneba and Brezhnev's visit coincided with the announcement of the death of Lumumba, and the Soviets were quick to take advantage of the anti-Western outburst which this caused. The radical group welcomed this new opportunity and argued strongly in favour of seeking industrial and financial help exclusively from the Eastern bloc. In many ways this was a symbolic turning point for Nkrumah. The radical group were winning the battle with the old guard, Nkrumah had immense powers as President, and he was shortly to be wooed with all the

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skill and guile that Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Mao Tse-tung, Tito and the Eastern bloc could muster.

The momentum towards an Eastern-facing socialist policy grew steadily, and as it did so, serious tension developed between Nkrumah and Gbedemah. Gbedemah, an able administrator, staunchly upheld efficiency in public affairs. Having organized the 1951 election when Nkrumah was in prison, he had guided the financial affairs of the party and the government from then onwards. He had been the chief negotiator of the Volta River Project, and he was widely respected in the White House, the State Department, Whitehall and around the world. He had become increasingly alarmed at Nkrumah's irresponsible attitude towards finance, an attitude and example which had been rapidly copied in Ghana and in Ghanaian embassies all over the world.

Gbedemah strongly criticized the extravagant attitude of CPP government and party supporters, and as Finance Minister he, more than anyone, realized how rapidly Ghana's financial reserves were being whittled away. After Ghana became a republic and more restraints were removed, Gbedemah had numerous clashes with Nkrumah. A showdown had to come when early in 1961, he could no longer balance the budget. Not only did he disagree with Nkrumah on policy, but he knew that he was the main target for the intrigues of Adamafo and his backers.

Although they had founded the CPP together, Nkrumah had never had a close or friendly relationship with Gbedemah. In the early 1950s, Gbedemah had returned from an official visit to West Germany with a Mercedes, which Nkrumah suspected was a bribe. He was furious, though, typically, he failed to challenge Gbedemah about it. From then onwards he never fully trusted Gbedemah and their relationship remained cool. Nkrumah seemed to regard Gbedemah as self-centred and ambitious, and he certainly did his best to ensure that he never became a serious rival.

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In March 1961, as more Eastern bloc schemes were bandied about, Gbedemah asked bluntly whether the Soviet Union would help to pay off the rapidly escalating Western debts. He was summarily removed from the Ministry of Finance and demoted to be Minister of Health. By this time Nkrumah suspected Gbedemah of intriguing against him, and CIA files now show that this was the case (see the following chapter). As Adamafios's group became stronger, Gbedemah's position grew more precarious and, fearing for his life, he fled into exile. In the atmosphere of plot and counter-plot which increasingly surrounded the CPP regime during the 1960s, Gbedemah genuinely believed that CPP agents would try to kill him. He therefore went into hiding and lived a furtive existence, flitting between London, Switzerland, Togoland and France, sometimes disguised as an Arab business man.<sup>7</sup>

Nkrumah finally grasped the serious issue of corruption among party members when he made the Dawn Broadcast on 8 April 1961. He called on the people to support socialism and to revitalize the CPP. He criticized party members who were self-seeking careerists and were engaged in capitalist pursuits. He criticized ministers who flaunted wealth. He then appointed a Committee of Inquiry to investigate the assets and property of party members – especially their houses, cars, and mistresses. He gave the guilty a stark alternative – either to resign or to surrender any ill-gotten property. At last, he had included in his Dawn Broadcast a serious attack on corruption in the CPP.

The clash with Gbedemah and the Dawn Broadcast signified a major change of policy away from the conservative financial approach which Gbedemah had typified, towards a more overtly socialist approach both to the economy and to the role of government. Having rejected the Lewis-Gbedemah approach, Nkrumah turned to two new economic advisers, Kaldor and Bogнар. They departed dramatically from Gbedemah's policy. Kaldor had a powerful influence on the 1961 budget which was published on

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7 July. It contained a substantial element of compulsory saving which was hurriedly included on Kaldor's advice, and for which the country was almost totally unprepared. It appeared to the people as a massive increase in taxation. Nkrumah's impetuosity played a large part in this new-style budget, which created an immediate uproar. Before the full reaction took place, Kaldor had left for British Guiana (Guyana) where his economic advice created yet another crisis. Meanwhile, Nkrumah – leaving a commission of three to run the country in his absence – flew off with a delegation of sixty party and government members for a prolonged visit to the Soviet Union, Communist China and the whole of the Eastern bloc.

After stopping in Tripoli, the delegation, escorted for the last part of their journey by MIG fighters, landed in Moscow on 10 July 1961.<sup>8</sup> Brezhnev welcomed them and accompanied Nkrumah and his immediate entourage to the Kremlin where they would be staying during their visit. In Moscow, Khrushchev had lengthy meetings with Nkrumah discussing ways in which the Soviet Union could help Ghana, and he also personally escorted them to many of Moscow's great show pieces, including Red Square and the Lenin Mausoleum. At his special request, Nkrumah made a second private visit to the Mausoleum – almost a spiritual pilgrimage. The Ghanaian party then left Moscow for Siberia to visit the site of a huge dam being built on the River Angara. A hectic schedule then took them to Lake Baikal, Tashkent, Kiev and Leningrad. They visited many parts of the country which had been poor and backward at the time of 1917 Revolution and which gave evidence of the remarkable achievements of the Soviet regime. Nkrumah also noted that the Soviets had welded together many people of different colour, race and tongue into a mighty superpower.

Nkrumah had further long discussions with both Khrushchev and Brezhnev, and studied in detail the problems which the

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Soviet Union had successfully overcome. Similar obstacles in Ghana stood as formidable hurdles to its progress from poverty to prosperity. Nkrumah became increasingly preoccupied with the question of whether the Soviet system, which had achieved so much in such a short time, would be the best example for Ghana, and indeed for the whole of Africa, to follow. He began to ask himself whether, with dynamic leadership, Ghana could 'take off' out of its grinding poverty, and whether the whole of Africa could be welded together into a proud and unified country. The Soviet Union, as he had seen, from Moscow to Tashkent, from the Crimea to Leningrad, had achieved this – so why couldn't Africa? Were there not better prospects from this system than from that of the hard-nosed Western capitalists with their sinister neo-colonialist plots against emergent countries which had only single-crop economics? Then, bearing in mind his work and enthusiasm for the Non-Aligned Group of countries, he began to wonder whether it might be possible for Ghana to benefit from both East and West, from socialism and capitalism, from Khrushchev and Kennedy – all helping to build a new scientific socialism adapted entirely to the needs of Ghana and Africa.

The seeds of such ideas, effectively planted by Khrushchev, were nurtured by further visits to Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and then during a five-day stay in Yugoslavia. Here, Nkrumah and his party were the personal guests of President Tito, firstly on his yacht from which Nkrumah took the salute at a naval review, and then on his private island. Here again Nkrumah had earnest discussions with Tito who had already visited Ghana and had offered support for the economy and for Nkrumah's leadership in the Non-Aligned Group. Nkrumah's party next visited Albania, Rumania and Bulgaria, and then returned to Moscow.

After a brief rest, they flew on a Russian aircraft to Peking. Once again Nkrumah received overwhelming hospitality. Chou En-lai received him at the airport and, cheered by crowds estimated at

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half a million, he visited the Gate of Heavenly Peace in Peking. After a lengthy conference with Chou En-lai in Peking, Nkrumah and his party left for Hangchow where he conferred with Mao Tse-tung. The two great Chinese leaders had faced problems similar to those of Ghana and, like their colleagues in Moscow and Belgrade, they offered help, advice, technical expertise and financial support.

Adamafo showed himself to be one of the natural leaders among the Ghanaian delegation. He was well pleased with the reception they had received and with its effect on Nkrumah. One evening after receiving generous Chinese hospitality, Adamafo harangued his group about the need, as soon as they returned to Accra, to get rid of the remaining whites who surrounded Nkrumah. He was clearly referring to General Alexander who still commanded the Ghanaian army, to Sir Robert Jackson – Nkrumah's guide and mentor on the Volta River Project – and to Erica Powell whose unstinting loyalty to Nkrumah was universally respected. Erica overheard this outburst, and felt alarm not only for herself, but for Nkrumah. Adamafo's position seemed so strong at this time, however, that she felt unable to raise this matter with Nkrumah.

Adamafo constantly pressed Nkrumah to go further in making flattering references to the Eastern bloc, and urged him to sign agreements. These included a Treaty of Friendship with China and an air agreement with Albania, although Albania had not a single aircraft and no air services. Under this sort of pressure Nkrumah decided that Ghana must have embassies in all the East European countries. When it was pointed out that no money had been allotted for them and that there was no trained staff available, he waved aside the protest as of no significance – another example of him making an impetuous decision without considering the full consequences.

Towards the end of the Eastern Bloc trip there were reports of industrial unrest in Ghana, but Nkrumah did not return with the

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rest of the delegation. Instead, he accepted a further invitation from Khrushchev for a two-week holiday with his wife Fathia and their children at Khrushchev's retreat on the Black Sea.

After the trip the Ghana Government printed a substantial pamphlet called 'Visit of Friendship' which had first been produced by the Soviet press in Moscow. The pamphlet recorded the highlights of the visit as well as several comments made by Nkrumah. It repeated his praise for the Soviet example in welding together many diverse nationalities. Ironically, since the delegation had returned to Accra to face major strikes caused by Kaldor's budget, the pamphlet also repeated Nkrumah's acceptance of the argument that under the Soviet system, since the state belongs to the workers, there are no strikes because you cannot strike against yourself.<sup>9</sup>

The outburst by Adamafo which Erica Powell had overheard was part of a campaign he was waging to remove all expatriates in senior positions – including British officers in the armed forces – and to replace them with Ghanaian. As Minister of Establishments, and with the support of Enoch Okoh and Michael Dei-Anang, he had already succeeded in removing the majority of expatriate civil servants from their posts. His demand for the removal of military officers had been supported by criticism from the Congo about white officers commanding Ghanaian troops. Initially, Nkrumah had supported the retention of white officers. He realized that in both the military and the civilian fields people like general Alexander and Sir Robert Jackson had a wealth of experience which benefited the Ghana regime and that they could not be replaced easily or quickly. Adamafo's opportunity to oust expatriates came towards the end of the Russian tour when Nkrumah received a telegram from General Alexander, in which he asked, quite courteously, if he could meet Nkrumah in Geneva on his way home in order to give him the latest details on the security situation. Adamafo has described in his book how

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he feigned extreme anger, arguing that it was grossly insulting of Alexander to write to the President and Head of State in that way. This ploy generated enough support from his colleagues to make Nkrumah give in, and on his return, still pressurized by Adomako, Nkrumah prepared to sack the general.

On his return to Ghana Nkrumah also had to deal with the major strike in the industrial areas of Sekondi and Takoradi which had been caused by Kaldor's budget. He personally appealed to the workers to return to work, but they ignored him. Eventually, because all their resources had dwindled away, and not because of Nkrumah's appeal, they grudgingly returned to work. From this point, buoyed up by his Soviet trip, and with their offers of help clearly in his mind, Nkrumah decided that as soon as possible he would implement an overall policy of scientific socialism or Nkrumaism.

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## THE SOCIALIST STATE

Nkrumah returned from his visit to the Soviet Union and China, and from his conversations with Khrushchev, Tito, Chou en Lai and Mao Tse-tung, determined to achieve a rapid socialist revolution in Ghana. Full of confidence and buoyed up by their encouragement, he went on to address the UN General Assembly feeling that he was representing the hopes and aspirations of the entire African continent. He said:

Over 200 million of our people cry out with one voice of tremendous power – and what do they say? We do not ask for death for our oppressors, we do not pronounce wishes of ill-fate for our slave masters; we make an assertion of a just and positive demand. Our voice booms across the oceans and mountains it calls for the freedom of Africa. Africa wants her freedom. Africa must be free...

For years Africa has been the footstool of colonialism and imperialism, exploitation and degradation... Her sons languished in the chains of slavery and humiliation, and African exploiters and self-appointed controllers of her destiny strode across our land with incredible inhumanity, without mercy, without shame, without honour. These days are gone for ever and now I, an African, stand before this august Assembly of the United Nations

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and shall speak with the voice of freedom proclaiming to the world the dawn of a new era.<sup>1</sup>

At the UN he played down the socialist element in his plans but the local press, working on an official brief, spelt it out more clearly:

Nkrumah has spent ten weeks drawing inspiration from the spectacular achievements of former underdeveloped countries which are now giant industrial countries, building happiness and prosperity on socialist foundations. Nkrumah has seen the effectiveness of socialist planning and economy where, by hard work and sacrifice, the whole people have been organized to better the community and eliminate unemployment.<sup>2</sup>

Nkrumah's socialist ideas had been outlined as early as the 1949 Manifesto, which aimed at a socialist state 'in which all men and women shall have equal opportunity and where there will be no capitalist exploitation'. This had been followed by various development plans, 1951-6, 1957-9, 1959-64. All of these were intended to set up the infrastructure to make possible the rapid agricultural and economic development which was to follow.

The Statutory Corporations Act had been passed in 1959, enabling public corporations to be set up without any recourse to parliament, and without any formal rules for audit or control. By the end of that year seventeen subsidiaries of the Industrial Development Corporation had already been established, and the Corporation had taken shares in eleven additional projects. These activities included tobacco and cereal processing, printing, laundries, sawmills, oil processing, cold storage and the manufacturing of matches, soap, furniture, bricks, tyres, biscuits, pottery and shoes. While these developments were progressing, Nkrumah frequently emphasized the need for the government

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to control the means of production, and for the people to have socialist drive and a socialist perspective.<sup>3</sup> State activity in the industrial and commercial field, which was accompanied by considerable socialist propaganda, did not pass unchallenged. In an Assembly debate in April 1961, P. Quaidoo made a brave attempt to defend the old way of life. He defended the chiefs and elders, as well as the founders of the CPP, against upstarts who put forward Marxist nonsense and talked of Nkrumah's immortality. Quaidoo referred to the strength of Ghanaian family life, the role of chiefs and elders, and the traditional respect for authority. Socialist tampering with such matters was perilous for everyone. He believed that Ghana must build upon its own culture and cast aside the alien ideas of Marx and Lenin. The harsher aspects of the regime were seen shortly afterwards, when in the *Ghana Times* of 27 April 1961, Adamafo attacked Quaidoo, calling him a 'Tshombe faced nincompoop who stands out as one of the biggest buffoons... a chaff brained myopic man who dares to challenge the immortality of Nkrumah'. A few weeks later, Quaidoo was dismissed from a government post, and by December 1961 was in prison.

Nkrumah's determination to restructure the Ghanaian economy became clear well before his visit to the Soviet Union. In June 1961 he set up a Committee for Economic Co-operation with Eastern Countries, with twelve principal secretaries whose task was to transform the Ghanaian economy. After his visit he lost no opportunity to elaborate his message to the Ghanaian people. He argued that no newly independent country was strong enough to defeat neo-colonialism, and therefore a socialist approach was essential. While rejecting capitalism, he warned against an uncritical acceptance of socialist ideas, and propounded the idea of scientific socialism adapted to each different African country. The essentials of his philosophy were the common ownership of the means of production; planned agricultural and industrial

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development; and political power in the hands of the people. At this stage, he rejected the concept of Marxist class divisions because African society was different. He therefore advocated socialism by evolution; though later, writing from exile, his views changed dramatically and he supported an armed struggle to establish Marxist states. Similarly, in the 1950s and 1960s, he claimed that the communalist aspects of African society supported his socialist views, but from exile in Conakry he was to condemn this.

Putting these arguments more specifically, and on a more practical level, Nkrumah suggested that state-operated enterprises were needed to compete with the power of the multinational companies. He argued that local businesses would never generate enough surplus capital to provide investment on the scale he needed, and if they did create a surplus it was liable to be hoarded or sent abroad. He therefore developed the theory that state-operated enterprises should create enough surplus capital to carry out the remaining investment needed in the country. He accepted the example of India and of some other African countries where the commanding heights of the economy were in public hands because private enterprise could not be relied upon to develop major sections of the economy. He encouraged businessmen to join co-operatives, but actively discouraged the development of a strong Ghanaian business sector which might threaten his position and develop anti-socialist attitudes. For immediate political reasons, he did encourage Ghanaians to set up small businesses and thereby to compete with or oust the Lebanese, Syrians, Indians and Nigerians in the field. In 1963 the CPP Government passed the Capital Investment Act which encouraged foreign investment and private enterprise, but stipulated that 60 per cent of any profits had to be reinvested in Ghana. At the same time Nkrumah announced that, while he was prepared to co-exist temporarily with private enterprise, his ultimate aim was the complete ownership of the economy by the state.

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Many of Nkrumah's ideas, as he openly testified, were derived from Marx, Lenin, Mao Tse-tung and other revolutionary leaders, but his originality lay in adapting these ideas into a coherent philosophy, relevant to the African scene generally and to Ghana in particular. Nkrumah's philosophy of Scientific Socialism or Nkrumaism was first elaborated publicly when he launched the Programme for Work and Happiness which virtually laid the foundation for the Seven Year Plan. Thus, much of the policy which lay behind the launching of the Seven Year Plan, and his whole concept of the socialist state in Ghana, was his own particular application in the Ghanaian context of more generally accepted Marxist views.

In October 1961 he set up a Planning Commission with E.N. Omaboe as chairman, assisted by J. H. Mensah. These two were the main architects of the Seven Year Plan. The plan took several years to prepare, but the first instalment came in the Programme for Work and Happiness put forward at the Party Congress in Kumasi in July 1962. The programme aimed to produce a socialist society by changing the social and economic structure. This would be carried out by a strong central government, which alone could achieve this objective. A policy of scientific socialism would aim to free the economy from alien control, to protect the people from alien exploitation, and to control the means of production and distribution. Nkrumah reminded the party that their real enemies were imperialism and neo-colonialism. He even suggested that corruption was a hangover from colonialism and was alien to the true Ghanaian nature. In the agricultural field, the plan aimed to develop new cash crops, to increase exports, to process more primary products especially cocoa, and to replace imported food. In the industrial sector emphasis would be on heavy industry with the development of iron and steel industries and a new chemical industry.

Before the official launch of the Seven Year Plan, Nkrumah

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called a conference to discuss its proposals. Attending the conference were a most distinguished gathering of economists – Dudley Seers, Arthur Lewis, Nicholas Kaldor, Albert Hirschman, Jozsef Bognar and Tony Killick. They made some slight criticism of the Seven Year Plan. They felt it was over-ambitious, some groundwork had not been done, and there were too few scientific plans; but, with these few reservations, they accepted the plan as being sound and workable. Indeed Killick wrote 'It was something of a triumph.'<sup>4</sup> Nkrumah was shown to be in step with the views of most leading development economists who also supported his view that the free market economy would never enable Ghana to break out of its poverty.

The Seven Year Plan, launched formally in 1964, gave the most complete detail of Nkrumah's plans to create a socialist state. The introduction stated that with the Seven Year Plan Ghana would enter a period of economic reconstruction and development aimed at creating a socialist society, so that Ghanaians would have a modern standard of living and a high level of public services. The plan spelled out the CPP policy on agriculture and Nkrumah also elaborated his own ideas. He stated that Ghana would need to make a total break with the primitive agricultural methods of the past; and that the rapid development of large-scale agricultural schemes would safeguard the supply of food to the large industrial areas which were being planned, and thus safeguard the whole future of the country.<sup>5</sup> He had little faith in the ability of the thousands of small cocoa farmers to carry through the revolution in agriculture that was needed. He believed that small-scale private farming was a positive obstacle to the spread of socialist ideas. 'It makes for conservatism, acquisitiveness and a bourgeois mentality.'<sup>6</sup> Under the plan, money was poured into large-scale agricultural enterprises, and seemed deliberately to challenge the independent peasant farmer. This challenge came after a decade in which millions of pounds had been milked

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from the cocoa farmers not only in order to finance every aspect of development, but also to finance the whole of the wasteful, corrupt and profligate society which had grown up in Accra and most of the towns of Ghana.

Nkrumah, always a man in a hurry, set off the policy of rapid industrialization almost as soon as he returned from the Soviet Union. Building on the foundations already laid by the Industrial Development Corporation, he now dissolved it and brought all its activities under his more direct control in the Ministry of Industries. In the next few years the list of state enterprises, which were developed under the Seven Year Plan, grew substantially and showed what a comprehensive range of industrial activities was encompassed by the plan. In Accra, state enterprises included distilleries, metal industries, vegetable oil mills, tyre manufacture, bakeries, brick and tile manufacture, and pharmaceuticals. The new town and harbour of Tema had paint manufacture, meat processing (with a branch at Bolgatanga), electronics, steelworks and boatyards. Cocoa processing, paper mills and boatyards were located Sekondi/Takoradi. Finally, Kumasi had two of the least successful schemes- footwear and jute bag production. Significantly the large majority of the industries were in the extreme south of the country. Over forty enterprises had been set up by 1963. In that year £127m. had been invested in state enterprises, and supplementary estimates had brought this total up to £155m. It came as a grievous blow to Nkrumah, who was expecting prosperous state enterprises to channel wealth into further development, to discover that in the single year 1963 instead of making a profit they made a loss of £15m. Instead of creating wealth to further his other schemes and ambitions, they became a bottomless pit eating up public expenditure on an ever increasing scale.

This devastating news was one of Nkrumah's most serious setbacks, for it showed that all his future plans, based on a wealth-

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producing state sector, were now in jeopardy. He reacted quickly. In several speeches, he stressed that state enterprises were not set up to lose money at the expense of the taxpayer. They were expected to show profits in order to build up capital for future investment. State enterprises should provide the bulk of state revenue. They needed managers and staff who were honest and dedicated men, men of integrity, who were incorruptible. He even suggested that, in the future, state enterprises would produce so much wealth that taxes would be lowered or even abolished. The ensuing months and years brought further calamitous news from the state sector, but still Nkrumah, in spite of all the evidence to the contrary, believed that his state enterprises would be successful. On 12 January 1965, opening the National Assembly, he said; 'State enterprises are the main pillars on which we expect to build our socialist state'.<sup>7</sup> As he discovered more and more weaknesses and problems, he saw the answer in tighter political control. As K. B. Asante put it recently, 'Nkrumah believed those imbued with socialism were incorruptible and would always seek the public interest. Even if they took 10% it would be for the party's coffers'.<sup>8</sup>

Nkrumah's personal views and attitude at the start of the great drive for industrialization can be seen in his determination to lift the people of Ghana out of their terrible poverty. As a convinced socialist he was critical and suspicious of the Western capitalist powers, though he realized that he urgently needed their backing and their investments. By 1960, when the country was a republic, he had gained sufficient political power as President to be able to overcome any opposition to his plans. He then went on his prolonged tour of the Eastern bloc and had every encouragement from Khrushchev, Tito, Chou En-lai and Mao Tse-tung. He saw what they had achieved through vigorously applied socialism, and he returned to Ghana with a clear conviction: the best, indeed the only, way to achieve his goals was by a major drive

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to set up a socialist state with state enterprises dominating both industrial and agricultural sectors. He was buoyed up by ties of personal friendship, by positive offers of help, and by formally signed agreements. The confidence produced by such support was reinforced by the advice of the world's greatest experts on development economics who, in 1963, approved the Seven Year Plan. Here was the supreme moment of take-off, with everything working in his favour. Unfortunately, from this high point of hope and expectation nearly everything went terribly wrong.

The industrial sector rapidly became a catalogue of disasters. The Seven Year Plan had suggested a start with small light industries, but Nkrumah was determined to set up heavy industry – a view he had reiterated as early as 1962, when he opened the steel mill at Tema. Nearly every state enterprise became a financial failure. Ghana Airways was one of the greatest. Some Russian Ilyushin planes had been purchased and the Russians insisted that only they could service them. So a totally uneconomic service was maintained via North Africa to Moscow. Hardly any passengers used this service and those who did were officials whose fares were paid by the state. When it was suggested that the Soviet element in Ghana Airways should be costed separately, Nkrumah refused to agree, and Ghana Airways continued to make huge losses every year. There were other examples. The government bought gold mines from a British firm at an exorbitant price, even though it was well known that the mines were almost completely worked out. Every project tried to be more grandiose than the last. A simple project for a small and efficient factory to produce urgently needed drugs and pharmaceuticals was turned down in favour of one which cost ten times as much. A footwear factory was set up with luxurious bungalows, a lavish administration block and a whole range of cloakrooms, at a cost eight times higher than the price recommended by the American adviser. Ghana had a traditional export in valuable hardwoods, carried on by a

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number of successful small firms. A State Timber Corporation was set up; it took over the timber trade and almost at once the whole timber export business collapsed. A German businessman, Dr. Drevici, got Nkrumah interested in a scheme worth over £70m. for housing and industrial units at Tema. By the time of the coup £9m. had been spent, with almost no return except for some huge cocoa silos, which were never used, and which stand today as a gaunt memorial on the Tema waterfront.

Nkrumah had been convinced that a modern political party needed the backing of big business, and this was one reason why he set up the National Development Corporation (NADECO). The formation of NADECO raises the important and complex question of how far Nkrumah himself was corrupt. Various reports, especially those made after the 1966 coup, leveled serious charges. From 1957 onwards, Nkrumah did his best to establish a system under which his Contingency Fund, the Bureau of African Affairs and other organizations were not subject to civil service audit. From the state, from NADECO, and from other sources, huge sums of money passed through Nkrumah's hands, but since everything he did was for Ghana or the party it would not have occurred to him that he was personally corrupt. The Apaloo commission (1966) 'To Inquire into the Kwame Nkrumah Properties' gives another point of view. It found that at the time of the coup, Nkrumah possessed cash and other properties worth £2,322,009.<sup>9</sup>

The issue of corruption in Ghana under Nkrumah was investigated by an American scholar Victor Le Vine who wrote that Nkrumah 'clearly was involved in a variety of corrupt transactions'. Le Vine, quoting W. Scot Thompson, argues that the assassination attempt at Kulungugu unhinged Nkrumah and after that he could not resist temptation. 'For a decade money had flowed about him, but it was always for the cause. . . but now the Ayeh-Kumis of the world got him, and to his deficiencies in

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character was added a new one, avarice.' Le Vine continues:

He used public funds to distribute largesse to his favorites (he tapped the President's Contingency Vote and at least two public corporation votes to buy cars for mistresses and to make various 'gifts' to relatives, friends, associates, and ideological cronies).

Le Vine alleges the NADECO was set up to facilitate the collection and handling of bribes, and he continues:

The prices paid by the government for properties purchased from a Greek businessman (A. G. Leventis) were deliberately inflated so that £1 m . . . could be turned back to Nkrumah for his own use. At least £90,000 from the Leventis transaction went into Nkrumah's private account.

NADECO fronted a number of firms like the Guinea Press, the Ghana Bottling Company, and the Star Publishing Company, which became notorious for siphoning public money into the pockets of Nkrumah and his immediate entourage. It was estimated that by 1966, £1.6 m. had gone through Nkrumah's hands from this source.<sup>10</sup> Under the aegis of NADECO a Mr. Djaba who had been caught out in some corrupt practice gave Nkrumah two Mercedes, £25,000 and a glider.

Le Vine's careful research, which includes evidence from the Swiss Credit Bank, seems to be conclusive. It is supported even by Bing, who remained intensely loyal to Nkrumah but agreed that he shied away from tackling the corruption issue. Having weighed up all the factors, one can only agree with Le Vine's conclusion. 'The evidence clearly shows that Nkrumah was personally involved in various corrupt acts.' Even against this weight of evidence, Nkrumah's dedication to Ghana and the CPP is shown by the will he made just before he left for Hanoi in February 1966. In it he bequeathed all his possessions to the Convention People's

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Party. Corruption became a major factor in Nkrumah's industrial enterprises but the final monument to these policies must be the notorious Job 600. This was a huge luxury complex built for the 1965 OAU Conference. It caused the conference to be delayed because it was not ready, and cost ten times its original estimate, plunging Ghana deeper into bankruptcy.

State enterprises in the agricultural sector proved to be equally disastrous. Nkrumah ignored the ominous warning of the failure of the Gonja scheme in the 1950s which had attempted to establish large-scale farming in the north. With his voluminous reading on the Soviet Union, he can hardly have been unaware of the catastrophe which accompanied Stalin's policy of collectivization in the 1930s, or of the 1960s debacle of Khrushchev's virgin lands policy. Determined to set up large-scale mechanized farming, Nkrumah established over 100 state farms by 1965. With a dire shortage of agricultural experts, the farms were staffed largely by CPP supporters and their families and friends. With generous government backing, they were equipped with expensive imported equipment, especially tractors and combine harvesters. In some cases the state farms were linked with specific production complexes, for example meat canning and tomato canning. In almost every case this led to further failures. The tomato and mango factory at Wenchi may serve as an example. It was set up with luxurious bungalows for the staff and a large administration block, and it had the capacity to process 7,000 tons of mangoes and 5,000 tons of tomatoes. When the factory was completed, it had cost 80 per cent more than the original generous estimate and when the expensive machinery was installed, it was realized that there were only a few wild mango trees in the vicinity and, although some trees were being planted, they took seven years to mature. Similarly, because of hopelessly inadequate planning, a sugar factory at Komenda could not operate because there was no water supply.

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The development of fisheries should have played a major part in the Seven Year Plan, but this too failed. The Ollennu Report which investigated malpractices connected with import licences, gives a salutary example. A young man called Ocran was head of a successful fishing company using Russian trawlers. The Ghana Fishing Corporation, in contrast, was a dismal failure. In 1963 Nkrumah summoned Ocran and offered to put him in charge of the Fishing Corporation which would then absorb his company. Ocran knew of the corruption and nepotism in the Fishing Corporation and declined Nkrumah's offer. Soon afterwards he was threatened with a compulsory takeover. Before this was settled he applied for an import licence for a critical piece of machinery for his fish processing plant. Mr Djin, a long-standing CPP supporter who, in spite of various peccadillos from the 1950s onwards, still held office, refused this licence but offered him as many licences as he wanted if he would join the Fishing Corporation. This issue was still not settled when the coup took place. Thus the state chose to destroy a thriving business because it competed successfully with a state corporation.

The Bolgatanga meat factory was the best known and most notorious blunder in the agricultural sector. A corned beef factory was built at Bolgatanga. From there, hides were sent to a tannery at Aveyime in the south. From Aveyime leather was sent to a footwear factory in Kumasi, and from there boots and shoes were distributed, largely to the major market of Accra. Political factors manipulated this decision, especially in the siting of the linked factories in unsuitable places and the use of unsuitable and obsolete Czechoslovakian machinery. The project failed for a variety of reasons: there was no surplus beef in Bolgatanga, transport costs made the scheme totally uneconomic, the tannery was also forced to use expensive imported hides and the Czech machinery made footwear nobody wanted. Its name CEBO became a byword for rough and scruffy. Finally the minister in charge offered the boots

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to the police. The chief of police begged him not to, because he thought the police would revolt if they were forced to wear the boots which were shoddy, uncomfortable and leaked.

All over the country, farms and factories operated on expensive imported machinery, often supplied by less than honest contractors from both East and West. Antiquated, worn-out, obsolete machinery was palmed off on to careless unsuspecting managers. One manager discovered too late that a vegetable pulping machine had been lying idle for thirty years before it was exported to Ghana. Few machines were provided with an adequate back-up of servicing and spare parts. From that time to this, aid too often came with strings attached, so that farms had tractors and machinery foisted on them from the Soviet Union, the United States, Poland, Britain or Germany – and not a standard part in any of them. All over Ghana lie rusting hulks, a sorry monument to ill-advised policies.

These examples prompt the question: why did it all go wrong and how far was Nkrumah personally responsible? Tony Killick, who worked as an economic adviser in Ghana during the 1960s, gives a penetrating observation:

One thing that puzzles me and other persons who knew Nkrumah, was his capacity to approve things without really intending to adhere to them . . . I have a feeling that Nkrumah approved the Seven Year Plan and the discipline which it was likely to impose on his economic policies and actions, knowing very well that he would not accept the constraints imposed by the plan.<sup>11</sup>

Another economist, Douglas Rimmer, put forward a less generous criticism. He argued that the main purpose of CPP policy was to grasp the opportunity for government ministers, party leaders and party members to enrich themselves. They used the wealth of the country to buy political support and keep themselves in

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lucrative power. Rimmer rejected Nkrumah's socialist message as a smokescreen, maintaining that his real ideology was to amass wealth through graft and the creation of jobs for family, friends and party members.<sup>12</sup> This rather unbalanced and extreme view none the less contains an element of truth, when applied to many of Nkrumah's close supporters, who became socialists overnight in order to obtain party or government jobs.

In setting up so many state corporations at such a speed, Nkrumah vastly increased the requirement for able, honest and properly qualified staff to run these organizations. There were no such staff available. He had led Ghana to independence on the simple slogan 'S-G Now', but he failed to see that the essential criterion for independence was not whether a predominantly illiterate people could queue peacefully and use the ballot box, but whether there were enough people of integrity and ability to run the complex apparatus of a modern state. The swift political success of the CPP had alienated and estranged the very people – the old elite – who could have solved this problem, and this compounded the difficulty. The shortage of people with managerial skills or even basic understanding of administration threatened most of Nkrumah's projects, and this led him to allow party members to draft their families into senior posts in the state corporations. With these fundamental drawbacks, it is not surprising that few projects were successful.

Government and party alike enthusiastically accepted the Seven Year Plan, but no provision was made for it in the ensuing budgets. Many of its projects were absurdly over-optimistic and had been put forward without feasibility studies. While ministers pontificated about the plan and the philosophy, few of them accepted the discipline which the Seven Year Plan should have imposed on them and their departments. Here again Nkrumah set a poor example. When Mensah, the chief architect of the plan, had said that some new scheme was not financially feasible, Nkrumah

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had retorted 'who decides, Mensah or me?'<sup>13</sup> At a time when more and more overnight socialists were jumping on the bandwagon and spouting Marxist jargon, Mensah stood his ground and in a brave public lecture stated that Marxist concepts and class analysis had limited applicability to the Ghanaian situation.<sup>14</sup> He left for a post at the United Nations soon afterwards.

As the economic and financial situation deteriorated, Nkrumah imposed import controls in order to prevent a balance of payments crisis. He intended to achieve a balance between imports and exports, to exclude the import of luxuries and non-essentials, and generally to favour the public sector at the expense of the private sector. This appeared to be a wise policy, but it failed because of the inadequacy of the staff appointed to organize the controls. Similarly, price controls were introduced because of the acute shortage of food, drugs and nearly all consumer goods, and the rampant inflation which accompanied the shortages. Both these measures, instead of solving Ghana's economic problems, created further chaos, with a flourishing black market, more shortages, corruption and the destruction of many flourishing businesses. Some of the worst problems came from the capricious activities of the control staff, from the Director downwards. Following Nkrumah's directions the Import Licence System favoured the public sector, but even here it caused widespread disruption. Factories were refused licences for vital pieces of equipment and for raw materials, and farms were refused sprays and fertilizer. Price controls did little to help the really poor, and merely created another category of control which was open to abuse and corruption.

Criticism of the corruption of Nkrumah's regime has to be guarded because, after the coup, a number of formal investigations were made and the purpose of some of these appeared to blacken him and everything that happened under his rule. But there is little doubt that corruption was one of the most important single

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factors in causing the failure of his attempt to create a socialist state. In assessing why corruption spread so rapidly, it is clear that Rimmer's view, though extreme, came nearer the truth than Nkrumah's belief that all socialists were incorruptible. In a recent interview, Kojo Botsio confirmed that he had had frequent personal discussions with Nkrumah about corruption in the party and government. Nkrumah's answer was always that it would be all right in the end when the economy took off.<sup>15</sup> His indifference to accounts and money matters was rapidly seized upon by vast numbers of CPP supporters whose views coincided much more with those of Rimmer. Four reports, the Ollennu Report on Malpractices over Import Licences (1967), the Jiagge Report on Corruption (1966), the Akainyah Report on Corruption (1964), and the Abraham Report on Trading Malpractices (1964) even allowing for exaggeration, all tell a sorry tale.

Nkrumah's further indifference to financial discipline and accounting gave endless opportunities to unscrupulous people. This led to what can only be called a madness – a belief that there was a totally unlimited supply of money. Appalling examples from Ghana's ambassadors and high commissioners are echoed through every rank in the government and party, down to the lowliest party agent at the village level corruptly using his power to enrich himself. Nkrumah himself, showing that he thought financial restraint was unimportant, spent 200 per cent more than his allowances. The Ghana High Commission in London in a six-month period spent £17,000 on telegrams. In Washington, £200,000 was spent on a building which the Indian Embassy had already rejected as being beyond repair. The Ollennu Report gave evidence of systematically organized bribery and corruption when Djin and Kwesi Armah were Trader Ministers. It said that under their rule even honest importers were forced to use fraudulent, corrupt and extortionate measures.

The Jiagge Commission uncovered evidence of corruption on

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a massive scale, and gave examples of ministers' corrupt wealth ostentatiously displayed in Mercedes cars, luxurious houses, mistresses and girl friends. Girl friends often lounged arrogantly in outer offices or in expensive air-conditioned cars. The report stated 'Here the relationship between Nkrumah and Genoveva Marais perhaps set the tone. If the President could parade his mistress so could others in the top echelons.'<sup>16</sup> Genoveva Marais was a strikingly attractive black woman from South Africa. Educated at Fort Hare and Rhodes University, after teaching for some years she left for the United States to study at Columbia University, New York. Her father had met Nkrumah and had inspired her to support the independence movement in Africa. With this encouragement, she applied and was appointed a Schools Inspector in Accra. She attended the Independence State Ball in March 1957, where Nkrumah noticed her, danced with her and invited her to his house the following day.

During the next nine years she was an intimate friend and confidante of Nkrumah. In her book she has painted an interesting portrait of him which confirms many aspects of his character that have been noted elsewhere.<sup>17</sup> She confirmed that while he frequently appeared cheerful and bubbling over with laughter, he was at the same time desperately lonely and isolated. 'He was surrounded by women. He had a wife. He had me. Yet he was lonely. His solitude was sometimes deep and even despairing.' She maintained that Nkrumah asked her to marry him, though there is no evidence of this from any other source. On another intimate occasion he was discussing his relationship with women. She recalled that he said 'A great man ought to have more than one woman to cater for his various needs and moods'. She added, 'And he had!' Nkrumah sometimes complained that he had no-one to love and no-one loved him, he had no-one to share his joys, sorrows or anxieties. She found this hurtful for she felt she fulfilled all these roles for him. She confirms that Nkrumah worked extremely hard

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but that his leisure interests were varied and absorbing. He played tennis fairly regularly, he played chess, he spent considerable time listening to music, and, having had only one riding lesson, he sent for two white horses from Northern Nigeria. As the pressures built up on him, this relaxed picture disappears. She noticed that he seemed to build a wall around himself, to become more and more tense and lonely. He resented any criticism even from old friends and he refused to believe that anything was going wrong. Viciousness and suspicion surrounded him as everyone seemed to conspire against everyone else, and he ended up not knowing who to believe or trust.

Many CPP leaders in Nkrumah's immediate circle made an ostentatious display of their new-found wealth by buying houses and furnishing them with exotic antique furniture. Ayeh Kumi owned twelve houses, Asafo-Agyei fourteen, and Krobo Edusei twenty-seven. Most of these houses were rented out in order to increase the income of the owner. Krobo Edusei also suffered the embarrassment of having to send back the golden bed his wife had purchased in London for about £3,000 because it hardly suited the image of a dedicated socialist.

The views of many people – both pro- and anti-CPP – who were interviewed after the coup, present another aspect of corruption. Most were cynically unrepentant about corrupt dealings in which they had been involved, and were contemptuous of the successor governments which tried to stop the corruption. They believed that it was justified by loyalty to do their best for their families. Loyalty to their country came low down on their list of priorities. One commentator said 'Nkrumah too was a thiefman (a common Ghanaian expression), he said big things but everyone knew he liked pretty women too much and posh cars and money'.<sup>18</sup> These critical views were widely held in Ghana in the period leading up to the coup, when the CPP leaders flaunted their wealth and the ordinary citizen had no redress against either their arrogance or

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their corruption. Though slightly unfair to Nkrumah personally, they were understandably repeated and recorded in the various inquiries which followed the coup.

Nkrumah's personality and his role in this critical aspect of Ghana's life remain an enigma. He appeared to share in and condone the flamboyant and ostentatious lifestyle of his colleagues, inevitably derived from ill-gotten wealth, yet his own personal needs and demands were simple and modest. His socialist views and his passionate concern for the welfare of the common people in their poverty remained sincere and undimmed; nevertheless, his close colleague, Krobo Edusei, bought twenty-seven houses and a gold bed!

Nkrumah had ruled that his Contingency Fund, the Bureau of African Affairs and the Winneba Institute should not come under official audit, and further millions were spirited away in lavish unchecked spending through these agencies. Yet another gaping wound in Ghana's battered economy came from the operation of suppliers' credits. This was a happy hunting ground for dubious overseas salesmen who, because they were often guaranteed against loss by their home government, offered apparently generous credit terms. As a result, ministers accepted their ten per cent and signed away millions of pounds to be settled at some vague time in the future – easily done because Nkrumah's government had no effective check on suppliers' credits. One incident illustrates this well. A European salesman, peddling some far-fetched scheme, was in Nkrumah's office when Sir Robert Jackson came in. Nkrumah had his pen in his hand ready to sign a contract for over £1m. Jackson said 'Shall I just look it over, Mr. President?' Nkrumah agreed. Jackson carefully took the document away, and the long-suffering Ghanaian taxpayer was saved £1m.<sup>19</sup> Sir Robert Jackson was one of the whites that Adamafo wanted to sack, but he remained as Nkrumah's adviser on the Volta River Project. A man of total integrity, he personally vetted every detail

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in order to defend the Project against corruption, nepotism and sharp practice. It is significant that in the morass of corruption in nearly every walk of life, there was not one example in the VRP.

After the coup, Maxwell Owusu – admittedly a strong opponent of the CPP but a widely respected scholar – conducted a survey in Swedru, a small town in Ashanti which had been a CPP stronghold. He quoted a local chief who said 'I honestly feel that our most important objective should be the prevention of CPP rascals and thieves from power' (sic). He grieved that Nkrumah had reduced chiefs to begging sycophants. Other people suggested that the government at all levels should be handed over to mature and responsible people, both African and European, whose aim should be peace, prosperity and the colonial social order which they knew and understood. They emphasized respect for age, experience, honestly acquired wealth, and education. It was even suggested, surprisingly, that many people regarded the colonial administration as an economic and political golden age."<sup>20</sup>

After the coup the people's aim for the future contained no socialist ideology. In contrast, they sought such things as having the road tarred so that the bus could run; electricity and water supply for their villages; some local industry to stop young people leaving the village, and the provision of a hospital or health centre. These brief comments illustrate one of Nkrumah's greatest failures – that while he spoke of scientific socialism and of his links with the great leaders of the Soviet Union and China, he totally failed to carry any large body of the people with him. Apart from those who embraced socialism in order to gain jobs in the party or government – comfortable socialists, as they were known – only a tiny minority supported his wider socialist aims. In most communities, the image of his socialist government was presented by the largely corrupt and ignorant party workers, who had grabbed all the local jobs with any power or prestige, and by the lazy ill-disciplined members of the Workers Brigade or the

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Young Pioneers, who idled their time away on the state farms and other state enterprises. In every town and village the rest of the people had been totally alienated, and at the coup they had days of merrymaking and rejoicing, and produced placards saying 'Nkrumah – Africa's Number One Rogue and Thief'.<sup>21</sup>

Within his overall plan to revolutionize Ghana's agriculture by the creation of state farms, Nkrumah set up the Workers Brigade. This had the initial laudable aim of training young people in useful industrial and agricultural skills, of helping to solve urban unemployment, and of complementing the labour force on state farms. Intended to be self-supporting and to contribute towards new investment, in practice it became an endless drain on public funds. Even Kojo Botsio, the most loyal of all Nkrumah's supporters, called the Workers Brigade an open drain down which public money poured. Every year it required a subsidy of well over £1m. Nkrumah tried to strengthen the ethos of the Brigade with a call to young people for patriotic service, but it became yet another example of a sound initial concept which largely failed. It failed because of poor discipline and lack of effective control, and because the CPP saw it as another opportunity for corruption on a grand scale.

Political control frequently changed, Tettegah and Krobo Edusei both became briefly involved, but no-one could halt the chaos and corruption which disgraced the organization from top to bottom. The foolish semi-military set-up with brigadiers and adjutants suggested that parades were more important than farming. Commanders of the work camps held daily parades instead of seeing that the men worked on the farms. Both the Workers Brigade and the state farms had an unsavoury reputation for demanding land from the chief or the stool, and often forcibly ejecting farmers from land they had farmed for years. Hundreds of thousands of acres were grabbed in this way, with the chief occasionally receiving a payment or a salary as a reward for

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his co-operation, but the output from all these acres remained derisory. They very rarely produced enough to feed themselves, let alone feed the proposed new industrial towns. Members of the Brigade used corrupt practices at every level. They threatened local farmers, they employed well-known criminals, and they awarded contracts for transport, food and building materials in return for substantial bribes.

One state farm, helped by Workers Brigade labour, undertook to grow sugar. Tate and Lyle sent two advisers, who looked at the arrangements and said they would not recommend it under any circumstances. Nkrumah, suspecting them of neo-colonialist bias, got J.V.L. Philips, his Budget Officer, to call in a world expert on sugar growing from Mauritius, which had a similar climate and labour situation, and which grew sugar successfully. The expert spent two weeks at the site and at the end said:

I wouldn't touch your set-up with a barge pole. Everyone from the top down is bone idle. In Mauritius they start work at 5 am. Here they arrive for work at 8 o'clock and by 8.30 they stop for tea. No one expects to do a real day's work.<sup>22</sup>

At the start of the Seven Year Plan, when Nkrumah launched his major project to establish an effective socialist state and gave details of the industrial and agricultural plans, he said 'Education takes precedence over industry and agriculture as the mainspring of economic progress'. His hopes and aspirations for education had been central to his philosophy from his earliest struggles in the 1940s. All over Ghana, primary and secondary schools, teacher training colleges, technical colleges and universities are a monument to his great achievements in this field. The people of the North, not always his keenest supporters, give credit to Nkrumah for providing them with primary and secondary schools which the British administration had failed to do.

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With the advent of the Republic, education, like many other aspects of life in Ghana, moved into a different milieu. For some time the CPP had its two youth sections, the CPP Youth League and the Young Farmers League, but in 1960, in the National Assembly, Nkrumah spoke of New Horizons, and launched the Young Pioneers, which was to absorb the two youth sections and spread its membership into nearly all the schools in the country. In ringing phrases he said 'Place the young at the head of the awakening masses. You do not know... what magic influence the voice of the young may have.'<sup>23</sup> He set up the Young Pioneers with the backing of the Ghana Council of Churches and with generous support from Britain, Germany, Israel and Yugoslavia. These countries also provided lectures and free overseas holidays for young Ghanaians. Young Pioneer leaders trained at the Ghana Staff College and a Leadership School was formed nearby in Teshie just outside Accra. Leaders gave priority to a high level of skills in agriculture, catering, motor mechanics, radio, refrigeration, seamanship and gliding. The gliding school at Afienya, between Accra and Akosombo, became one of Nkrumah's favourite projects, largely because of Hannah Reitsch, a brilliant woman who had been a pilot under Hitler, and who became a staunch supporter of Nkrumah.

The overall role of the Young Pioneers is still controversial. Some see it as a positive movement which brought invaluable skills and sound attitudes to every facet of society, with the National Pledge, saluting the flag every morning, and national training after secondary school and university courses.<sup>24</sup> Others regard it as a highly dangerous arm of the CPP, which set out to indoctrinate children at a very early age, which taught them to spy on their parents and to report anyone who criticized the CPP, and which spread the blasphemous view that Nkrumah was the Messiah. Many parents at the time were alarmed by the close resemblance of the Young Pioneers to the Hitler Youth Movement, which in

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those years few people could forget. There is some truth in both these views. Like so many of Nkrumah's schemes it had excellent ideas which failed dramatically because, having launched it in a blaze of publicity, he failed to think through the administration. Very rapidly it fell into the hands of party members who suborned it for their own limited or dubious ends, but kept it within the framework encouraged by the CPP that all education should become the medium of ideological propaganda.

Plans for primary and secondary education, even allowing for ideological problems, received general support, but university education produced more controversial issues. As a part of his ideology, Nkrumah had clear-cut views on the role of the university and its function in society, and these views caused serious clashes with the Vice Chancellors and the university authorities. In the years after 1957, when the ideological thrust of the CPP had been gathering momentum, the university at Legon, taking its stand on issue of academic independence, became increasingly critical of Nkrumah's government. In 1959, alarmed at the increasing gulf between the government and the university, Nkrumah fired the first shot in what was to be a long campaign. He warned the university and the Kumasi College of Technology that they were not pulling their weight. They had been lavishly endowed with Ghanaian money, without any help from Britain, and yet they had become breeding grounds for unpatriotic and anti-government elements. He warned that he would not sit idly by and watch these institutions, which were supported by the sweat of the common people, become centres of opposition to his government, but that, if necessary, he would impose reforms so that they would serve the real interests of the nation. He concluded by rejecting tribal loyalties and called for a new pride in Ghana and its Pan African aims.<sup>25</sup>

On other occasions he reiterated the duty of the university to serve the community which supported it, and for students to serve

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their fellow men. His long-standing crusade against imperialism re-emerged when he opened the Institute of African Studies at Legon in 1963. He demonstrated how even African studies had been carried out from a European point of view. He demanded an African-centred approach in order to encourage the study of Ghana and of Africa, and to show the glories and achievements of Africa's past.

The university argued that academic freedom from direct government interference was of paramount importance, and that it was essential for academic standards to remain high enough to attract scholars from the international academic community. In contrast, there were valid local criticisms. The university appeared as an alien institution run largely by expatriates who were paid substantially more than their Ghanaian colleagues. The first Principal D.M. Balme had set out to create an image of Cambridge – unkind critics said Legon was embalmed – and in many ways its courses were esoteric. It had departments of Greek and Latin which had staff but few students, while the country was crying out for middle range graduates to run the state enterprises which were failing for lack of qualified staff. The students did not always follow Nkrumah's lead. When offered courses in African history they usually preferred European history. In the long struggle between the CPP and the universities the major principles were clearly drawn, but very often clashes took place over the treatment of existing members of staff who were suddenly removed from their post or forced to leave the country to make way for some indifferent appointee of the local CPP boss.

The development of applied science to improve the lives of the people in the socialist state became almost an obsession with Nkrumah. He set up an Academy of Sciences with twenty research institutes intended to assist in improving every aspect of society. In 1964, laying the foundation stone for an atomic reactor at Kwabenya, he said:

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We have the resources to create a better life for our people... we need the will and effort to mobilize our intellectual, social and material resources in a dynamic effort to establish a just and prosperous society.

He further envisaged a Science City with a Palace of Science, which would achieve a union of theory and action through which man would 'attain the highest material, cultural, moral and spiritual fulfilment'.<sup>26</sup> This was to lead to an industrialized socialist society. No-one could quarrel with such dazzling vision, idealism and compassion for his fellow men, but the tragic reality was that, beside all the talk of science cities and palaces and atomic reactors, a modest scheme for solar power applied to domestic houses failed for lack of resources, and the palace and cities never materialized.

Nkrumah's genuine attempt to create a socialist state and, by changing the structure of industry, agriculture, education and every other facet of society, to lift his fellow men and women out of their bondage, must be accounted a failure. He spoke of idealism and integrity, but the message never really got across. His greatest single contribution to the failure of all his schemes lay in his indifference to financial issues, and his refusal to demand honest accounting. This opened the floodgates to corruption at every level. Secondly, while he conjured up one brilliant scheme after another, he had neither the ability nor the patience to think through all the implications of cost, staffing and commercial viability. His visions of an atomic reactor and science city contrast only too tragically with the building of the science museum in central Accra. Still unfinished, it moulders away in the harsh tropical climate, like the rusting hulks of tractors which still litter the Ghana countryside.

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## FOREIGN POLICY

WHEN GHANA BECAME A REPUBLIC ON 1ST JULY, 1960, Nkrumah was already a well-known figure in the diplomatic field. He had already achieved the country's independence and its union with Guinea; he had addressed the UN General Assembly; he had attended the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference; as Head of State he had visited the US, Canada and India; and he had stayed at Balmoral where he was made a Privy Councillor. Ghana's independence in 1957 had encouraged nationalist movements all over Africa and in 1960 fourteen African states gained their independence.

British colonial policy had been moulded by Arthur Creech Jones, the Colonial Secretary in Attlee's administration in the 1940s. His mantle of responsible pragmatism had been carried forward by Lennox-Boyd, though Ghana's independence undoubtedly altered the pace of change and the attitude of Whitehall and Westminster. During the 1950s Britain encouraged the move to independence in many areas of the Commonwealth, and introduced a variety of democratic constitutions. It usually backed what it considered the more mature and responsible elements in an emergent state – inevitably those akin to its own political culture – but occasionally it found that a rival faction won the crucial election. When this happened, the pragmatic approach

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enabled it to continue to work with the successor regime. This happened initially in Ghana; it happened with Tunku Abdul Rahman in Malaysia, with Lee Kuan Yew in Singapore, and later with Mugabe in Zimbabwe. This policy achieved a reasonably peaceful and successful handover of power, except in the Middle East where decisions were often influenced by strategic or financial interests or by outdated notions of grandeur. The containment of communism, which had caused concern to Attlee and Bevin, runs as a thread through most of the negotiations of the 1950s and it re-emerged dramatically in the Congo in 1960. By 1960, in eastern Africa, Kenya had survived the trauma of the Mau Mau rising, Nyerere was coming to the fore in Tanganyika, and hopes were high for the Central African Federation.

Harold Macmillan, who was Prime Minister 1957-63, had been convinced as early as 1957 that Britain's policy in Africa should be more flexible, but he made no decisive move until 1959 when he appointed Iain Macleod as Colonial Secretary. Macleod, who had to face the complex problems of the white settlers in East Africa, had a sharp mind and a clear philosophy. In a famous memorandum he stated: 'I have tried to define the pace of British Colonial Policy in Africa as "not as fast as the Congo and not slow as Algiers". He believed that if Britain was likely to have a Congo situation it would be in Kenya, or an Algerian situation could arise in the Rhodesias. With Belgium and France dropping out as colonial powers, he expected greater pressure on Britain from the newer members of the United Nations.<sup>1</sup> Macmillan, who visited Ghana and had discussions with Nkrumah in February 1960 on his way to South Africa, chose Cape Town as the place to announce to the world the major change in Britain's policy. His Wind of Change speech on 23 February elaborated the theme of African national consciousness and advised his horrified listeners in the White Cape Parliament that they had to accept the growth of national consciousness as a fact.

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In this generally favourable situation, Nkrumah held to his twin aims of African unity and non-alignment. He had put forward his views on non-alignment in a speech to the US Senate on 24 July 1958, in which he quoted a Ghanain proverb, 'When the bull elephants fight, the grass is trampled down' - meaning that the small African countries could have little direct influence on the two super powers. He stressed that non-alignment did not signify indifference to the great issues of the day: it was not isolationism, it was not anti-West or anti-East. For Africans, now on the threshold of the modern world, there was a particular tragedy in the nuclear threat, that 'all this richness of opportunity may be snatched away by a destructive war.'

The general African and Commonwealth scene appeared to be promising in 1960, but Nkrumah's relations with his West African neighbours already caused concern. He had already antagonized Houphouet-Boigny in the Ivory Coast by claiming some border territory which was inhabited by the Nzimas, Nkrumah's own people. On his eastern border, his relations with Togoland had not improved since the difficult days of 1957. He had publicly stated that he would ensure that Togoland became the seventh region of Ghana. Nkrumah had been taken aback that Togoland had achieved independence as early as 1960 under its distinguished leader Sylvanus Olympio, who was a highly respected figure in the UN. Olympio rejected Nkrumah's views on African unity, and quickly turned to the francophone states for allies. Refugees and insurgents from both countries kept up the tension, and when in early 1960 Nkrumah ordered General Alexander - the Commander of Ghana's armed forces - to carry out manoeuvres close to the Togo border, Nigeria publicly guaranteed the security of the Togoland State. Nkrumah had already antagonized Nigeria in different ways, and he offended it still further when he broke up the various West African joint boards left by the British - for example, the West African Airways Board. He considered these

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to be relics of colonialism, while Nigeria and other West African countries believed, correctly, that they could have led to closer co-operation between them.

The achievement of independence by fourteen African countries in 1960 brought a major change in the African scene which Nkrumah was slow to recognize. Other national leaders now shared the limelight and often resented his superior attitude. While he had from the first offered to surrender part of Ghana's sovereignty in the cause of African unity, few others were ready to give up any vestige of their newly won independence, and regarded Nkrumah's claims for African unity with suspicion. In 1958 Ghana had initiated the Conference of Independent African States (IAS) which was based on the UN and became one of Africa's more successful inter-state organizations. It held its second conference at Addis Ababa in 1960. The Ghana delegation hoped that the conference would accept its proposals for a Union of African States, saying 'To us in Ghana the concept of African unity is an article of faith'. The proposals were rejected, however, and instead a number of speeches showed that many of the newly independent states rejected Nkrumah's ideas and his methods. The Nigerian representative Y. M. Sule openly attacked Ghana, maintaining that African unity was premature; that unity must come from the bottom up, not from the top down. In a more personal criticism of Nkrumah he said, 'If anyone thinks he is messiah who has got a mission to lead Africa, then the whole purpose of Pan Africanism will be defeated.'<sup>2</sup> The conference brought out several dangerous divisions among its members, between revolutionaries and pragmatists between unitary and federalist. A further division was soon to be seen in the Congo between those who supported Lumumba and those who supported Kasavubu. In addition to the Ghana-Nigerian clash, the conference highlighted quarrels between Egypt and Tunisia, Ethiopia and Somalia, and Guinea and Cameroun.

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The Congo crisis faced Nkrumah with a great diplomatic challenge which he handled skilfully, but in the end he was humiliated by the forces of the Cold War which frustrated his genuine attempt to solve the crisis by African countries acting through the UN. The people of Belgian Congo, who since the 1880s had suffered under a savage and repressive regime, had received no preparation for independence. By 1960 there were hardly any Congolese university graduates and few Congolese with experience of government or administration at a senior level. Then abruptly, as a result of serious disturbances in 1959, the Belgian Government panicked and decided to abdicate its responsibilities for Congo immediately. On 10 May 1960 Belgium passed the Loi Fondamentale which set up the constitution for the Congo Republic. The first elections followed later the same month. Three political leaders emerged: Tshombe from Katanga, his power derived from the wealthy industrial complex based on the copper belt; Kasavubu from Leopoldville, who had some general support; but the largest single party was the Congolese National Movement (CNM) under its intelligent young leader Patrice Lumumba. Lumumba, the only leader to support the concept of a single Congo state, formed a coalition government with other smaller parties. The Belgian Congo had originally been set up on the theoretically unifying factor of the great Congo-Lualaba river valley, but in fact there was little natural unity, and both Katanga – the copper state – and Kasai – the diamond state – displayed dangerous separatist attitudes.

The Congo was stunned by the precipitate and irresponsible withdrawal of the Belgians on 1 July 1960, the official date of independence. Five days later the Force Publique, the Congolese military force which was entirely officered by whites, mutinied and demanded the withdrawal of all white officers. The mutiny led to widespread violence, massacres and general mayhem, and on 10 July Belgian troops intervened to protect European lives

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and property. At the same time, Tshombe announced Katanga's secession from the new Congo state. On 12 July, Lumumba, the Prime Minister of the legal and duly elected Congo Government, appealed to the UN to send forces to prevent the secession of Katanga, his highest priority being to bring Katanga back into the Congo state, preferably with the help of African troops under the aegis of the UN. The Security Council realized that Tshombe's secession was heavily backed by the powerful Union Minière, by Belgian finance and by Belgian troops, but it demanded the immediate withdrawal of all Belgian forces.

Following this Security Council resolution, Lumumba visited Ghana to see Nkrumah. On 8 August, while he was in Accra, Nkrumah initiated a debate in the Assembly on the Congo crisis. He said that it was urgent for the crisis to be solved by African countries, under the UN, with no outside interference. Referring to the Katanga secession he warned of the danger of Africa being Balkanized, and of the imperial powers maintaining puppet governments.<sup>3</sup> The Assembly agreed to the immediate use of Ghanaian troops as part of the proposed UN Force. Nkrumah and Lumumba issued a joint communiqué demanding the withdrawal of Belgian troops and an end to the secession of Katanga, and secretly, they signed an agreement that Ghana and the Congo should be united as the nucleus of a Union of African States. Thus Nkrumah was rapidly drawn into the vortex of the Congo. Speaking a few days later, he reiterated that the UN forces had been invited into the Congo by the legitimate government under Lumumba, and that the UN had no right or authority to deal with the rebel state of Katanga under Tshombe. He repeated that the whole purpose of the UN Force was to restore Katanga to the Congo State.

Nkrumah had reacted swiftly to the Congo crisis but the Americans had matched his speed. Even before the Congo's independence the CIA had been actively preparing the ground,

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and the US ambassador in Leopoldville, Timberlake, was poised for action. He supported Lumumba's appeal to the UN on 12 July 1960, because he estimated that a UN operation could give valuable cover for US activity. The UN Secretary General, Dag Hammarskjöld, had strong leanings to the West, and in the Congo operation he had two American assistants, Dr Ralph Bunche, the Deputy Secretary General, and Andrew Cordier, one of his deputies in the UN service who was strongly anti-communist. In contrast to Lumumba's urgent call for the UN forces to overcome the secession of Katanga, the US saw the maintenance of law and order throughout the Congo and the restriction of any Soviet penetration as the highest priorities; it was content to postpone the Katanga problem since it had no left-wing or subversive implications. The hopes of Lumumba and Nkrumah that, by the prompt despatch of Ghanaian troops, the Cold War could be kept out of the Congo were soon dashed. Nkrumah needed air transport to get his troops to the Congo in response to the UN appeal in July 1960, and the Soviet Union had responded with two Ilyushin civil aircraft and some lorries. This incensed the Americans, and they became even more obsessed about Soviet penetration when Lumumba, frustrated by the lack of action over Katanga, appealed for help to other countries including the Soviet Union.

Hammarskjöld, who was later to lose his life because of the Congo operations, went to the Congo himself, and on 12 August flew in to Katanga to discuss matters with Tshombe. This started a bitter dispute with Lumumba. Nkrumah understood Lumumba's frustration at the refusal of the UN Force to deal with Katanga – the only reason they had been invited in – but he begged Lumumba to do his best to co-operate with Hammarskjöld and the UN. On 19 August, he wrote again to Lumumba, appealing to him to use the well-disciplined Ghanaian troops to restore law and order in Leopoldville, and to disarm the mutinous members of the Force Publique. He was afraid that if the chaos continued,

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'There is a grave danger that the Congo will become a battlefield between East and West. That would be a disaster for all of us in Africa.'<sup>4</sup> From this point onwards, the pro-American team in the Congo proved too powerful for any opposition. Among their key figures were the Commander of the UN Force Carl von Horn, the CIA Chief Lawrence Devlin who had close contacts with the Congolese commander Colonel Joseph Mobutu, and the influential US ambassador Timberlake. This group also had the direct backing of the Eisenhower administration. Typical of the information going to Washington at this time was the CIA despatch of 18 August 1960 which said 'Lumumba is a commie or is playing the commie game'<sup>5</sup>

Early in September 1960, the Congolese National Army, representing the legal Congo Government under Lumumba, made significant advances across the diamond-rich state of Kasai towards Katanga. During the advance there were lootings, rapes and massacres - news of which reached the world's press. Andrew Cordier, temporarily in charge of the UN operation after the departure of Bunche, put pressure on Kasavubu to get rid of Lumumba, by holding him responsible for the violence and barbarity in Kasai. Kasavubu, who was the ceremonial President of the new Congo State with no legal executive powers, had neither the strength nor the experience to resist Cordier or Timberlake. Prompted by them, he suspended the Congolese parliament on 14 September 1960. On the same day Colonel Mobutu staged a coup. In the confusion after the coup, Lumumba, with the Vice-Premier Antoine Gizenga, moved his government to Stanleyville.

Conflicting loyalties, indecision in the UN command, and the general confusion in the Congo played into the hands of the American group in Leopoldville, and militated strongly against Lumumba. At a critical moment when Kasavubu, Mobutu and other groups were working against Lumumba, the UN Command ordered General Alexander, who commanded the

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Ghana troops in the Congo and virtually commanded the UN military operation, to prevent Lumumba's forces taking over the radio station in Leopoldville. This they did, though it caused a bitter but temporary rift between Nkrumah and Lumumba. Throughout these difficult months Nkrumah tried desperately to effect a reconciliation between Kasavubu and Lumumba; he felt this was the only possible hope of a united Congo State free from imperialist exploitation. He wrote urgent letters to Kennedy and Macmillan asking them to use their influence to safeguard Lumumba's life.

Nkrumah had another opportunity to argue his case when he addressed the UN General Assembly on 23 September 1960. He made an eloquent presentation of the case for a solution of the Congo problem by the independent African states, and argued strongly in favour of a Non-Aligned Group to help solve the world's problems. His speech gained respect, but it failed to influence events in the Congo, and by November 1960 when the UN debated the Congo, he and Lumumba were becoming dangerously isolated because of the latter's clash with Hammarskjöld.

John F. Kennedy was elected President in November 1960 and, within days, received urgent letters from Lumumba and Nkrumah. Nkrumah said that Lumumba, the democratically elected Prime Minister of the Congo, was a prisoner, held in degrading conditions, at the risk of his life, by an armed gang belonging to a puppet government, and he asked Kennedy to intervene personally to secure Lumumba's release and to stop Belgian military intervention. He concluded: 'The reputation of the US could be irretrievably damaged if it sits by and watches the crumbling up of democracy in Africa by one of your close military allies' (Belgium).<sup>6</sup> Kennedy's rejection of Eisenhower's hard line policy, and his known sympathy for African nationalist leaders, encouraged Lumumba, but indirectly put him in dire peril. Unbeknown to Kennedy, Eisenhower had, as early as August

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1960, signed Lumumba's death warrant.

In *The Congo Cables, The Cold War in Africa*, Madeleine Kalb wrote:

The order to assassinate him (Lumumba) was given by President Dwight D. Eisenhower at a National Security Council Meeting on 18 August 1960 in Washington.<sup>7</sup>

Given this backing, the CIA had prepared various schemes to eliminate Lumumba, including a cobra venom poison, but they were biding their time until they could achieve their object without being discovered. The change of policy which Kennedy was expected to inaugurate prompted the American group in Leopoldville to take action before it was too late. Even Hammarskjöld appeared to go along with these ploys by arguing that he could not help Lumumba, who had been captured by Mobutu's forces in December, because it would be interfering in the Congo's internal affairs.

By January 1961 Gizenga, with some Soviet backing and operating from the north of the Congo around Stanleyville, began to make substantial advances – the people rallying to his call for a united Congo. Fear of this advance prompted Mobutu and the Americans to take Lumumba from his prison in Thysville near Leopoldville on 17 January and fly him to Elizabethville in Katanga.

On the flight he was so brutally beaten up that the flight crew who witnessed the attack were physically sick and shut themselves into the forward cabin. Lumumba arrived at Elizabethville and shortly afterwards was murdered, though his death was not made public until 14 February 1961.

On the day after he heard of Lumumba's death, Nkrumah made an emotional broadcast to the Ghanaian people. He blamed the death on UN incompetence; he outlined the recent events in the Congo, and warned his people that it was a colonialist war in

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which colonial and imperial powers were hiding behind African puppet regimes. His comments on African puppet regimes proved to be all too accurate. After Lumumba's death, his supporters were eliminated. In the ensuing years, in spite of widespread support for Lumumba's cause, Kasavubu, Mobutu and Tshombe remained in power, each supported by alien imperialist powers.

Nkrumah had suffered several rebuffs at the Addis Ababa conference early in 1960 and events in the Congo during that year had weakened his position, but he achieved a greater success at the next conference of African States at Casablanca in January 1961. This conference, attended by Morocco, the host, Ghana, the United Arab Republic, Guinea, and Mali, had been called because of the crisis over the African members of the UN Force in the Congo. Nkrumah came under great pressure, especially from Nasser, to pull the Ghanaian forces out of the UN Force, but he refused to agree to this and finally won his point. In return he accepted the view of the conference in its attitude towards Israel, and in recognizing the new Algerian Government. He gained the support of the other members of the conference for his cherished Pan African assembly, for a common market and for a joint high command. No other conference of African powers during Nkrumah's lifetime was to give so much support to African union. In spite of Nkrumah's success with the Casablanca group, that conference heralded a deep division among the independent African states. After Casablanca, a more moderate group of states led by the diplomatic Nigerian leader, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, began to emerge. They opposed Nkrumah's views on African unity and proposed that the first steps towards union should come from willing alliances between neighbours. This group, which included Balewa, Tubman of Liberia, Olympio of Togoland and Senghor of Senegal, attended a conference at Monrovia in Liberia. Hoping to prevent a major rift, they invited the Casablanca group to attend but Nkrumah and the other Casablanca leaders refused.

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The division between the radical Casablanca group and the more moderate Monrovia group remained an obstacle to African unity for some years. In an editorial, *West Africa* of 22 April 1961 summed up the situation:

Dr Nkrumah believes effective co-operation can only follow some kind of political union. Sir Abubakar of Nigeria and President Tubman of Liberia both believe that the political union, if ever it comes, can only grow out of co-operation in many other ways.

Nkrumah suffered a severe personal trauma over the death of Lumumba, and at the same time he was becoming dangerously isolated from his fellow African leaders. In contrast to this he was entering an era when he was to be courted by the leaders of both the Eastern and the Western blocs. Some idea of Nkrumah's situation and the pressures on him can be seen from the events of a few days in February 1961. He had just entertained President Tito and had established a firm rapport with him over the aims for a Non-Aligned Group. A few days later he entertained Brezhnev, by coincidence on the same day that he received the news of Lumumba's death. Brezhnev invited him to Moscow, adding that Khrushchev was very keen to meet him. On the same day, Russell, the US Ambassador in Accra, who had attended the ceremonial dinner for Brezhnev, assured Kennedy, in a cable, that Nkrumah 'is most anxious to keep out of the Soviet orbit and wants to talk with you'.<sup>8</sup> Russell added that if Kennedy established a rapport with Nkrumah it could also defuse the Casablanca group. Barbara Ward, who played a key role over the Volta River Project (see Chapter 12), backed up Russell's argument. She assured Kennedy that Nkrumah – whom she considered temperamental and mercurial – had been caught in the shifting sands of the Cold War in the Congo, and that he genuinely wanted to keep the Cold War out of Africa. She believed that Kennedy could win over Nkrumah

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and it was important for the West that he should do so.<sup>9</sup>

It was agreed that Nkrumah should visit Washington and then address the General Assembly in New York in March 1961. The pressure on him did not diminish. The United States remained suspicious that Brezhnev's visit to Accra had been used to coordinate the Congo policy of the Casablanca group, and that Ghana was the base for Eastern bloc supplies to the Gizenga forces in Stanleyville. Russell warned Kennedy about the influence of Bing, 'one of the most pro-communist in Nkrumah's circle of advisers.'<sup>10</sup> The CIA made their own superficial contribution to an assessment of Nkrumah:

when you cut away all the trappings and the fanfare, you are left with a 49 year old showboy and a vain opportunist, who knows his people and can play on their vices as well as their virtues . . . a politician to whom the roars of the crowd and the praise of the sycophant are as necessary as the air he breathes.<sup>11</sup>

At the General Assembly Nkrumah stressed that the real issue before them was African unity, peace and security. He demanded that superpower and NATO involvement must stop, that all Belgian staff must leave the Congo, and that a new UN military command under African control should be set up and given powers to disarm Congolese units.

While the Americans were entertaining Nkrumah, the Soviet Union and its supporters had not been idle. They realized they had a great opportunity in Ghana, both with the genuine Marxists like Kofi Batsa, Yaw Baffoe, John Tettegah and Eric Heyman, and also with those who were gathering round Adamafo to use the situation for their own ends and their own ambitions. Adamafo cleverly schemed to establish control of Nkrumah's government and to get rid of leaders like Gbedemah and Botsio. He was also busy arranging the details of Nkrumah's trip to the Soviet Union

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and the Eastern bloc.

Using the Preventive Detention Act, Adamafo had managed to silence most of the internal opposition, but in May 1961 the Assembly held a debate on foreign policy. It came at a time when twenty African states were attending the Monrovia Conference, while Ghana, with four of the Casablanca Group, was boycotting it. In the debate Joe Appiah, the opposition spokesman on foreign affairs, who was shortly to be detained under the Preventive Detention Act, made a last brave and dignified stand. He criticized the formation of the African Affairs Secretariat in Flagstaff House – a move, he said, which would cut out all parliamentary supervision or criticism. He criticized the government's corruption and nepotism. Then he said: 'We find ourselves, now, the damned, the vilified, not by Europeans but by Africans. Then it is time we sat up and took stock of ourselves. Twenty nations, twenty states of Africa (i.e. those at the Monrovia Conference) certainly cannot all be wrong.'<sup>12</sup> This courageous stand achieved little, partly because the Casablanca-Monrovia issue was dictated by extraneous forces.

In spite of its current unpopularity with its neighbors and with Nigeria, Ghana was still the mouthpiece of the genuinely independent African states, and there was some truth in Nkrumah's criticism that the francophone group were the puppets of French neo-colonialism, since France provided 80 per cent of their budgets. Similarly, some moves by the European Economic Community were regarded with suspicion as a new form of imperialism. Barbara Ward saw this, and advised Kennedy not to back the Monrovia group since they were seen as being only partially independent. The Monrovia Conference discussed the Congo and French atom tests in the Sahara, without any clear conclusions. They found unanimity only in condemnation of Ghana's divisive attitude. A leading Nigerian newspaper, the *West African Pilot*, reflected the tone of the conference in its editorial of

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18 May 1961:

The truth is, Dr Nkrumah must be at the head of anything or outside: it . . . He must be told that his reckless pursuit of his ambitions for expansion will lead him nowhere',

While his relations with his neighbors were less than cordial, Nkrumah was still able to pursue his ideal of a Non-Aligned bloc. He had put forward the idea in his UN address in September 1960 and had pursued it further when Tito visited Accra in February 1961. Considerable diplomatic activity followed this meeting, prior to the Belgrade Non-Aligned conference of August 1961. Nkrumah went to Belgrade directly from his Eastern bloc tour (see chapter 13). Nasser, Tito, Nehru and Nkrumah were the key figures. The conference agreed that non-alignment meant not being in an international group like NATO, SEATO, or the Warsaw Pact, not having an alliance with a major power, and not having foreign bases in one's country. Until 1960 most African countries had been pro-Western in their attitude but the events of the Congo, the Western pressures in the UN, and France's attitude to Algeria had changed the position substantially. At the Belgrade conference, Nkrumah proposed total disarmament, the end of colonialism by 1962, the recognition of two separate German states, and the admission of communist China to the UN. He also proposed what was a predominantly Russian idea of appointing three deputies to the UN Secretary General, one Western, one communist and one non-aligned. While no formal bloc was set up, Nkrumah maintained that the conference had created a moral third force to balance East and West in the cause of peace. After the conference, Nehru, who had disagreed with Nkrumah on several of these points, was most reluctant to share the same plane on the way to Moscow. Nkrumah's proposal, coming at the end of his Eastern tour, caused great anger in the

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United States and brought considerable criticism from friendly liberal observers in the West. The Kennedy administration, still eager to stop Nkrumah's lurch to the left, was partially reassured by a report from Chad Calhoun, who had actually seen Nkrumah in Belgrade during the conference. Calhoun wrote:

Nkrumah still has his feet on the ground and knows where he is going. He is for Ghana, Africa, and particularly African unity, but not the communist route. . . He is opposed to imperialism and colonialism in any guise, whether it be East or West.<sup>13</sup>

*The Times* of 1 August 1961 gives an example of the sort of remark by Nkrumah which caused concern in the West; it quoted his comment: 'Had it not been for Russia, the African liberation movement would have suffered the most brutal persecution'.

Nkrumah returned from the Belgrade conference and his Eastern tour to a highly volatile and dangerous situation. The Soviet Union was pressing its advantage and had offered to finance the Volta River Project, and to train Ghana's military cadets. In the Cabinet, Adamafo and the radical group pressed Nkrumah to accept these proposals. The July budget, with its disastrous compulsory savings scheme initiated by Kaldor, had caused the widespread strikes in September and made the regime dangerously unpopular. In Washington, Kennedy still had to make major decisions about the Volta River Project and was under strong pressure from a lobby led by his brother Robert to cut all support for Ghana and give it instead to those countries like the Ivory Coast and Senegal which were more stalwart in the cause of freedom - stalwart had been a favourite word of J. F. Dulles in the more aggressive phases of the Eisenhower regime.

While Nkrumah had been away, Gbedemah, one of the three Presidential Commissioners running the country in his absence, had certainly considered the possibility of staging a coup. He visited

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the American ambassador Russell, who offered him support.<sup>14</sup> He was also in touch with the CIA which had a powerful team in the US embassy in Accra. The thread of CIA influence and activities continued until the 1966 coup. The CIA found that Gbedemah backed off from the actual decision to stage a coup, and his plot was demolished anyway when a supporter telephoned the details to the United States on an open line which was tapped by the Ghana Police. Both Gbedemah and the CIA were compromised by this gaffe and Gbedemah fled soon afterwards, in October 1961. In exile he continued to plot and it is known that in November in New York he visited a US agent who had been party to his original scheme.<sup>15</sup> Gbedemah, an Ewe, was respected as an able minister but never had a wide popular following. At the same time, other opposition leaders were also plotting, many from bases in Togoland, their activities monitored by the CIA.

The radical group, which forced Nkrumah to sack General Alexander and the remaining British officers, paradoxically increased Nkrumah's peril. Certainly no British officers would have been party to a coup, but when they left, a number of Ghanaian officers with differing tribal loyalties moved into positions of power. Much of Nkrumah's danger stemmed from his bad relations with Olympio of Togoland, and also from the atmosphere of intrigue and violence which Ghana had created by its support for African freedom fighters. Ostensibly volunteers to fight against colonialist regimes, in practice they were often exiles who were prepared to engage in clandestine activity against the governments of countries like Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Niger or Togoland. This atmosphere was to sour Nkrumah's relations with most of his neighbours in the ensuing years.

Few other African states had responded favourably to Nkrumah's ideas of African unity and he tried, instead, to gain influence by financial means. In July 1961 he made loans of £1m. to Guinea and 5m. to Mali. Seeking wide support for the cause

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of union, which had been rejected by the Monrovia group, he approached Nyasaland, the Gambia, and Chief Awolowo, the opposition leader in Nigeria. When Upper Volta faced a financial and economic crisis, Nkrumah rushed in with offers of help and proposals for union (June 1961). A further conference of African states had been arranged to take place in Lagos in 1962 and, prior to this, Ghana's able representative at the UN, Quaison-Sackey, had done his best to achieve reconciliation between Ghana and its neighbours. His efforts and those of Houphouet-Boigny in trying to eliminate divisions were negated because, at the last moment, the Casablanca powers decided to boycott the Lagos conference; an opportunity was thus lost and deeper divisions ensued. This incident revealed another division in Ghana - that between the able professionals like Enoch Okoh, A. L. Adu, J. V. L. Phillips and Quaison-Sackey on the one hand, and on the other, the party ideologues and party hacks who did untold harm to Ghana's image abroad.

At this stage, some of Nkrumah's more adulatory and uncritical supporters began a practice which was to contribute substantially to his downfall. Whatever happened, they presented it as a great Ghanaian success - even when it had been an abject failure. Michael Dei-Anang, the Ghanaian author and a close supporter, claimed that the African High Command - one of Nkrumah's favorite schemes - had changed UN Congo policy. In fact, the High Command never existed. Similarly, Kofi Baako spoke glowingly of the benefits achieved by the African Common Market, which never existed either. Gradually, this refusal by his sycophantic supporters to see or recognize the truth made Nkrumah increasingly isolated and dangerously ill-informed both on home and foreign issues. Adamafo, at this time Nkrumah's closest colleague, prevented any word of criticism reaching him. Operating through the African Affairs Bureau with A.K. Barden, Adamafo distributed lavish sums to African freedom fighters and

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also to a host of dubious and disgruntled exiles. Nelson Mandela who worked briefly in Accra on the *United Front of South Africa*, wrote 'Barden is systematically destroying Ghana'.<sup>16</sup>

In November 1961, to Nkrumah's great delight, the Queen and Prince Philip made their long awaited visit to Ghana and brought some cheer into a period of high tension and gloom. In spite of serious worries over security, which had involved visits by Duncan Sandys on behalf of the British Government, the visit was an enormous success. Nkrumah judged correctly that the Queen's popularity would bolster his own position. Adamafo had strongly opposed the visit, but some time later he paid a quaint compliment to Prince Philip. He made a list of the world leaders he had met including Kennedy, Khrushchev, Nehru and Chou En-Iai, and said that Prince Philip impressed him more than any of them.<sup>17</sup> Nkrumah's equivocal attitude is illustrated by one incident during the visit. He was waiting with Mr. and Mrs. J. V. L. Phillips for the Queen to arrive, and - in his own words - was 'totally overawed by the honour' done to him. He said the room the Queen stayed in would remain untouched in perpetuity, and then, in the next breath, and before the Queen actually arrived, he said the only imperialist he trusted was a dead one.<sup>18</sup> Perhaps another example of the closed compartments in Nkrumah's brain.

Togoland forms the background to the next dramatic event in Nkrumah's life. During 1960 Nkrumah and Olympio had candid discussions but failed to resolve their differences. Olympio headed an austere regime and remained highly critical of Nkrumah's policies, which he said would lead to disaster. Olympio also had negotiations with Nigeria and with Guinea, and this angered Nkrumah. Nkrumah then stepped up the activities of the Bureau of African Affairs, which had over 100 agents trained in ideology and subversion, operating all over Africa against what Nkrumah considered were bourgeois regimes. The Bureau also broadcast revolutionary radio programmes attacking most neighbouring

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states in West Africa. During 1961, the large-scale smuggling of cocoa from Ghana into Togoland, because of the artificially low price in Ghana, further exacerbated relations between the two countries. Towards the end of 1960 there was a serious attempt to assassinate Olympio, and Ghanaian agents were clearly implicated. Olympio, expecting an invasion from Ghana, called on Houphouet-Boigny and also on his defence arrangements with France. In the tense situation which ensued, the professional diplomats genuinely sought reconciliation; while Barden and Tettegah urged Nkrumah to a more aggressive policy.<sup>19</sup> The attack on Olympio clearly influenced the Lagos Conference of January 1962. The seven African heads of state attending warned Nkrumah that if he did not stop this subversive activity they would break off diplomatic relations with Ghana. Awolowo, the leader of the Yoruba Western Region of Nigeria, had been in touch with him at about this time, and Ghana was again implicated in the unsuccessful coup attempt which Awolowo carried out in Nigeria in August 1962.

Nkrumah's hopes of a new step towards African unity had been encouraged when Upper Volta, his northern neighbour, got into financial and economic difficulties and accepted his offer of help. He proposed customs and commercial agreements and offered President Yameogo a £2m. loan. Early in August 1962, after attending the CPP conference in Kumasi, Nkrumah travelled with a large contingent to Bawku in north-west Ghana prior to his official visit to Upper Volta. From Bawku he travelled on to the small town of Tenkudugu and here he completed the formal agreements with President Yameogo. The small town did not have enough accommodation for Nkrumah's large party and there was considerable chaos. There was further chaos the next morning when a huge convoy of cars had to move off in driving rain. Adamafio has described the events of the next few hours.<sup>20</sup>

Because of the chaotic conditions with dozens of cars in driving

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wind and rain, his car was, unusually, a considerable distance away from Nkrumah's in the motorcade. He was approaching Kulungugu when he heard a loud bang. He drove on, reached Kulungugu and then heard that Nkrumah had been injured in a grenade attack. It appears that the local schoolmaster had got Nkrumah to stop to receive a bouquet from a pupil. While the boy was presenting the bouquet a grenade was thrown, the boy was killed and many people injured. Nkrumah was hit by flying metal and was rushed to hospital in Bawku, where Adamafo, Okoh, Dei-Anang, Cofie Crabbe and Ako Adjei soon assembled. After making sure that Nkrumah was not seriously injured, they discussed whether to tell the people about his injury. Adamafo's own comment is interesting:

I considered that political sagacity dictated that we should not give our enemies the satisfaction of knowing that they had hit Kwame Nkrumah's person who we had sold to the world by efficient propaganda as an invincible, impregnable and invulnerable personality. Kwame agreed that it was not politically wise to reveal his vulnerability to his enemies.<sup>21</sup>

A bulletin was issued saying that he had escaped unhurt. Nkrumah then travelled to Tamale where he stayed for a week in the hospital. His entourage stayed with him and then they all flew back to Accra.

Adamafo's intense and ruthless ambition and his determination to remove any possible rival in Nkrumah's confidence and affection had created a dangerous phalanx of enemies. Many suspected that his ambition included the removal of Nkrumah himself. When the news of the Kulungugu attack reached Accra, the first reaction of Madame Fathia - and quite separately of Erica Powell - was to ask 'Where was Adamafo?' This is evidence enough of the suspicion and antagonism he had created. Just over two weeks

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later, on 28 August Cofie Crabbe, Ako Adjei and Adamafo were arrested for their alleged connection with the attack. The fact that Adamafo for once was not next to Nkrumah in the motorcade at Kulungugu, was a major item of evidence against him.

Before Kulungugu, Adamafo and the radical group had effectively seized power in the party and in the government, but they had made dangerous enemies and had created an appalling atmosphere of suspicion, intrigue and distrust. They tried to get Nkrumah to sack Erica Powell but he refused. On another occasion they had a partition built to separate her office from Nkrumah's, which was removed on Nkrumah's orders. After Kulungugu, with the leading suspects in detention the atmosphere of scheming and distrust did not improve. Nkrumah returned to Accra a shaken and a sunken, man. He confessed to Erica Powell that she was the only person he could really trust. The sickening tension continued. Even with his assurances of trust, some time later in the presence of two security officials Nkrumah confronted Erica Powell with a security report claiming that she was the paid agent of a foreign power, and he ordered her to produce a report to refute the allegations. In the country as a whole Kulungugu ushered in a period of severe repression. After the incident the government detained 500 people, and the Preventive Detention Act sustained the repression until; the coup in 1966.

In the field of foreign policy, Kulungugu became a watershed. In spite of the newly signed agreement with Upper Volta, Nkrumah immediately closed Ghana's borders. This negated the agreement, and as a result Yameogo turned to Houphouet-Boigny. He, with Sekou Toure and Olympio, now formed a formidable group which was highly critical of Nkrumah, and which completely surrounded Ghana's land borders. The sudden elimination of the Adamafo group paved the way for the return of Krobo Edusei, Welbeck and Kojo Botsio, who shortly became Foreign Minister. It also led to an increase in the power of the serious and genuine

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Marxists like Kofi Batsa, Tettegah and Heyman. Nkrumah turned to the Soviet Union for help, and this was when Khrushchev sent Rodionov to Accra as ambassador. He gained a strong influence over Nkrumah. Soon after this, Botsio got Nkrumah to agree to close several of the new embassies which had been opened in Eastern Europe because they had not been budgeted for and because there was no suitable staff available. Rodionov persuaded Nkrumah to change his mind and keep them open. In Accra, the newspapers, following government directions and using Soviet handouts, became strongly Marxist in tone, and Kofi Batsa started publication of *The Spark*. Given such a wonderful opportunity to extend their influence, the Russians proved inept. In spite of the outstanding work of Rodionov, they drove a hard bargain and failed to capitalize on their advantage. They provided a lot of expensive and often obsolete machinery for the state farms but gave no help with the scientific and technical advice which Ghana desperately needed. East European and Chinese agencies followed a similarly unsuccessful pattern, and the whole Eastern connection became increasingly unpopular with the Ghanaian people.

Nkrumah's drive towards a scientific socialist solution to all his problems included the publication of *Consciencism*. It is believed that this book, purporting to provide the philosophy of the African revolution and full of abstruse philosophical concepts, was substantially the work of Professor Willi Abraham, the first African Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford, and of some Marxist scholars who had recently arrived in Accra.<sup>22</sup> Its publication illustrates another aspect of Nkrumah's problem - that his Marxist colleagues allowed him to hear only sycophantic adulation. After the publication a delegation of market women came to congratulate him on the best book he had ever written. There was not a literate woman among them.

Although Nkrumah faced a difficult internal crisis and rapidly

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deteriorating relationships with his West African neighbours in the aftermath of Kulungugu, on the world stage he still had ambitions out of all proportion to his real situation. His growing links with Nasser through the Casablanca group inhibited his relations with Israel and, though he had no clear plan, he vainly thought he might mediate between the Arab States and Israel. He also offered to mediate in the sporadic border dispute between India and China which had grumbled on from 1959 and flared up again in 1962. As tension between the two countries rose during that year, Nkrumah published a letter clearly showing a preference for China's case. The Indians reacted strongly, and then when Nehru was already in Lagos on his way to Accra, Ghana cancelled his visit for security reasons. In a similar situation, he felt genuinely distressed by the clash between the Soviet Union and China, and appealed to them to settle their differences and join in the common struggle against imperialism. They ignored him.

There had been some sympathy for Nkrumah after the attempt on his life, but this had been quickly dissipated after he closed Ghana's borders. In the face of this the leaders of the francophone states, together with Tubman and Balewa, gradually assumed the initiative for any steps towards African unity. In October 1962 Sekou Touré, when he addressed the UN General Assembly, made a thinly veiled attack on Nkrumah. He said that Africa had no need for philosophical formulae or doctrinal theories, it needed honest co-operation. Unity could not mean a single party or an African superstate. A major obstacle to unity 'had been the conception that it had to be formed around a single state or a single man'.<sup>23</sup>

During the autumn of 1962, plot and counterplot between Ghana and Togoland kept up permanent tension. In a series of explosions in Accra, twelve people were killed and many injured. Busia and Gbedemah were known to have stayed with Olympio. Angry letters crossed between Nkrumah and

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Olympio with claim and counterclaim. Ghana claimed evidence of Togolese complicity, in Kulungugu. Togoland denied it. The British representative in Lomé, Geoffrey Dawson, briefed by Sir Geoffrey de Freitas, the British High Commissioner in Accra, warned Olympio about the danger of assassination plots, but the warning came too late. On the morning of Sunday 13 January 1963 he was murdered. The killing appeared to have been carried out by Togolese soldiers, but there is little doubt of Ghanaian complicity in the plot, and CPP leaders, even claimed credit for the killing.<sup>24</sup> Sekou Touré and Balewa both criticized Ghana and were rewarded by scurrilous abuse from the *Evening News* such as 'braying like a neo-colonialist ass' or 'Save the world from this crop of Balewa's fawning sycophants'.<sup>25</sup> Nkrumah who had for years been obsessed with taking over Togoland, and had given free rein to some dubious plots, to his chagrin now found that Grunitsky, who had succeeded Olympio as President, opposed Ghana more strongly than Olympio.

The death of Olympio isolated Nkrumah still further and as Scott Thompson wrote 'a revulsion against Nkrumah spread across Africa at a critical time for Ghanaian diplomacy'.<sup>26</sup> It made certain that the initiative towards African unity passed to Ethiopia, Guinea, Nigeria and the Ivory Coast. This group proposed a meeting of African countries at Addis Ababa to take place in May 1963. Nkrumah realized by this time that he was extremely isolated, but he pressed on with new and more specific proposals for a union government for Africa. He saw imperialism as the main enemy and he divided Africa into three main groups: those where Anglo-American imperialism held sway - Nigeria, Liberia and Ethiopia; those still in the grip of French imperialism - the Ivory Coast and the francophone group; and the radical states - Ghana, Tanganyika, Mali and Egypt.

The Addis Ababa conference of May 1963 started with a meeting of foreign ministers. Ethiopia put forward proposals to

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this meeting for an 'organization of African States' with a charter and a permanent secretariat. As the meeting began, the Ghana delegation arrived with large numbers of copies of Nkrumah's new book, *Africa Must Unite*. (This book was allegedly written by an Israeli for Nkrumah in 1959, but had been suitably updated).<sup>27</sup> The Ghanaians hinted that Nkrumah might not attend the Heads of State conference unless the foreign ministers supported Ghana's proposal for union government. The foreign ministers ignored this bluff and Nkrumah duly arrived. The conference consistently voted down the Ghanaian proposals, but Nkrumah did succeed in imbuing the discussions with some of his fervour and idealism. In the end, after a personal request from Haile Selassie, he agreed to sign the Charter for the Organization of African Unity, (OAU). Refusal to sign would have emphasized Ghana's isolation, but although all Ghana's proposals had been rejected Nkrumah returned to Accra claiming 'The political unification of the African continent, my life long dream, is here'<sup>28</sup> - illustrating, as he was to do with increasing frequency, the deep chasm between reality and rhetoric. Four issues faced the OAU - its own internal organization, the liberation of the remaining colonial territories, and the vexed questions of subversion and refugees.

Nkrumah's agents at the OAU deliberately set out to delay the establishment of the new secretariat so that at a more suitable time Ghana might obtain control and thus change its direction towards Ghana's concept of a united Africa. Once again, Nkrumah in Accra was given details by his officers in Ethiopia, which were less than honest and pandered to his known wishes. The Ghana delegation took an obstructive line to prevent the appointment of a Secretary General and to postpone a decision on a permanent base for the secretariat. Ghana's dubious tactics were extremely unpopular, and consequently it was not made a member of the OAU Liberation Committee. Nkrumah took this as a personal rebuff, and the Ghana press started making critical references to

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the OAU as imperialist lackeys.

Because of his obsession with a union government for the whole of Africa, Nkrumah made vigorous attacks on any proposed regional groups. In East Africa there had originally been opposition to any form of federation in case it was dominated by white settlers, but things had changed by 1960. After initial discussion at the Accra conference of 1958, Nyerere and other East African leaders set up the Pan African Freedom Movement of East and Central Africa (PAFMECA). As Tanganyika moved towards independence, Nyerere offered to delay if this would facilitate the creation of an East African Federation, which would include Tanganyika, Kenya, Uganda and Zanzibar. Tanganyika became independent in 1961 and Uganda in 1962, but the East African Federation did not materialize because Kenya did not gain its independence until 1963. Nkrumah continued to be highly critical of these proposals, even though the countries of East and Central Africa extended the scope of their co-operation to Southern Africa and became the clear leaders in the Pan African movement. In 1963 Nyerere, Kenyatta and Obote made further proposals which Nkrumah casually dismissed as an imperialist trap. This stung Nyerere who saw the proposed federation as a great step towards unity within the framework of the OAU. Increasingly, the East African leaders and other OAU members treated Nkrumah's views with contempt.

The OAU Charter had included, at Houphouet-Boigny's insistence, a clause condemning political assassination and subversion among member states. He made it clear that he expected Nkrumah to stop supporting Nzima dissidents from the south eastern part of the Ivory Coast. These and other dissidents who flocked to Accra were rarely noble patriots fighting against neo-colonialism. David Williams, the former editor of *West Africa*, has described amusingly, how any ne'er-do-well, petty criminal or smuggler in exile from his own country would go to Nkrumah

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with a story about the iniquities of his home government and would immediately get financial support.<sup>29</sup>

President Kennedy had quickly realized that Ghana was the key to his whole African strategy, and in June 1962 he sent William P. Mahoney as ambassador to Accra. He soon achieved a close rapport with Nkrumah. He became popular locally because he brought his very large family to Accra and they went to local schools including Achimota. Fairly soon after his arrival he produced a major assessment of the situation in Ghana for his own information and for President Kennedy. The report dated October 1962 considered contingency plans should Nkrumah be killed or removed from office. It estimated that if the radical group - Baako, Boateng, Tettegah and Adamafo - seized power, there would be further trouble in Africa. If the moderates - Busia, Robert Gardiner, Ayeh-Kumi and Halm (the Ghana ambassador to Washington) - succeeded, it would help Ghana's relations with the West and with other African countries. The report attributed Ghana's economic crisis to 'the senseless extravagance of Nkrumah on prestige projects and in disseminating his brand of Pan Africanism.'

American policy at the time is illustrated by comments which suggest that any assistance from the Soviet bloc to the radical group would necessitate Western intervention and 'Any attempt by the Soviet bloc to intrude should be prevented'<sup>30</sup> Mahoney's own balanced comment suggested that, lacking any effective rival, Nkrumah would remain in power for the foreseeable future. Mahoney thought it was an encouraging sign that Sekou Touré in Guinea was so openly disillusioned about his dependence on the Soviet bloc.

Mahoney continued to produce sound, balanced and sensitive reports. In November 1962 he wrote that Nkrumah was under great pressure, was angry and frustrated, and occasionally acted irrationally. A respected Ghanaian doctor had said that Nkrumah's

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irrational reactions suggested that 'he had gone over the hill'.<sup>31</sup> At the same time a CIA report, based partly on exaggerated information supplied by Busia, tried to assess which Ghanaians might be included in a successor government, and reported, again, that Nkrumah was in a highly nervous condition. News had come from Cairo that Nasser had taken away Nkrumah's Cairo house so that if he was overthrown he would not go to Egypt. The CIA became incensed when the Ghana press started to blame it for the Kulungugu incident, but noted also that a large shipment of Soviet arms had arrived in Ghana. A series of difficulties and tense situations ensued, until early in 1963, when Mahoney, frustrated by further Ghanaian outbursts against the United States and the CIA, suggested a reappraisal of US policy, but he still warned Washington that the US must persevere because the Soviets would grab every chance to move in.<sup>32</sup>

Early in 1963 Nkrumah wrote a long personal letter to Kennedy, pleading for nuclear disarmament and urging Kennedy to keep the Cold War out of Africa. He criticized Robert Kennedy who had likened Ghana to South Africa, and then outlined Ghana's economic problems, pointing out that underdeveloped countries could only prosper by building up industry and by ceasing to be exporters of their primary products and minerals. This fairly cordial relationship was fostered by another visit from Chad Calhoun, who found Nkrumah highly critical of Bulgaria and the Soviet Union, Calhoun wrote:

Nkrumah said the Soviets do not like the kind of economic system he is trying to construct and are constantly endeavoring to talk him out of it. He was steering a middle course but was being criticized from all sides. Nkrumah said 'Unless you say to the Soviets you are a communist they don't trust you.'<sup>33</sup>

Mahoney made the most of this opportunity, but relations remained uneven. Shortly afterwards he complained about an

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attack on the CIA by a South African communist in the *Ghana Times*. 'If we remember, the CIA arranged the murder of Patrice Lumumba, the coup in Iraq, the Bay of Pigs in Cuba, then we realize the fate of every school child in the Congo, Iraq, Cuba and Ghana are interlocked'.<sup>34</sup>

During the treason trial of Adamafo, Crabbe and Ako Adjei for their alleged complicity in the Kulungugu attack which started in March 1963, the prosecution made frequent suggestions that the CIA was involved. In 1962 Andrew Tully, a former CIA agent, had published his book *CLA, The inside Story*.<sup>35</sup> Nkrumah bought a number of copies and gave them to his visitors. He became obsessed about the role of the CIA in Ghana, and with his encouragement, the local press made vigorous attacks on US policy. American resentment increased. Kennedy, with his backing for the vast US investment in the Volta River Project, was still worried about Nkrumah's pro-Soviet gestures. Contradictory pronouncements, which showed that Nkrumah had little control over the ideologues in his government, caused further confusion. The members of the American Peace Corps, which made a major contribution to secondary and university education, were periodically criticized as CIA agents. On the same day that Nkrumah openly praised the work of the Peace Corps, an *Evening News* editorial demanded its withdrawal.<sup>36</sup>

Britain and the West became increasingly alarmed at Nkrumah's left-wing policies, but there were very substantial factors keeping Ghana in the Western camp. The whole state apparatus - the law, the civil service, the army and the police - remained predominantly British in style and outlook. Education from primary school to university, helped at this time by the Peace Corps input, was conducted in English. This factor alone prevented any major Russian contribution. Schools were staffed by a large majority of people with British training and qualifications, and 80 per cent of Ghana's overseas students were studying in the West. The

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students in Bulgaria or Moscow who often grabbed the headlines were a tiny minority. In the economic and industrial field, in spite of the socialist slant of the Seven Year Plan, the banking system, the financial institutions, the Volta River Project and most of the country's effective industry were in private hands and linked strongly to the West.

In contrast, the pro-Soviet factors were ephemeral. Nkrumah made flamboyant pro-Soviet remarks, and surrounded himself with left-wing advisers, but apart from fairly wide suspicion of neo-colonialism there was little real support in Ghana for the Eastern bloc. The bloc had many opportunities through trade links and special agencies, but muffed every chance it had. Most goods from the East were of poor quality, credits had very difficult conditions attached, Hungarian buses proved hopelessly unreliable, and Nkrumah had personally to intervene over a shipment of Russian cars which were sold as new but proved to be old cars resprayed.

Botsio had been restored to favour and became Foreign Minister. During these tense and difficult times, Mahoney had patient discussions with him and with Nkrumah. They discussed the CIA allegations, the Peace Corps, the pro-Soviet *Spark* which published handouts from *Pravda*, the role of Ghana at the UN, and other sensitive issues. In some straight talking to Botsio, Mahoney regretted that Ghana had become a major platform in Africa for Soviet propaganda and seemed to be substituting one form of imperialism for another. He thought that if Ghana adopted Scientific Socialism it might as well go over to the Soviets at once, and he repeated that Ghana's reputation was increasingly seen as pro-Soviet.<sup>37</sup> The CIA reported that the CPP Government was becoming increasingly authoritarian, and that Nkrumah since Kulungugu was confused, irrational and highly nervous. At a children's party a bird alighted in a tree over his head and he fell flat on his face. On another occasion when one of his own

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guards carried out his normal drill, Nkrumah ran off saying 'You have come to kill me.'<sup>38</sup> The CIA continued to monitor events and, without overtly encouraging action, were in touch with most opposition elements both in Accra and in Togoland. But they felt that the opposition United Party offered no effective alternative. With their leaders in prison or in exile they had lost contact, and in this situation Gbedemah seemed to lack the necessary qualities to lead a revolt.

The most valuable, balanced and penetrating analysis of Nkrumah at this time came in a report from Hannah Reitsch to Mahoney. An amazing personality, Reitsch had been Hitler's personal pilot and had flown out of the Berlin bunker while the Russian shells were actually falling. Some time later she had run a flying training school in India for Nehru, and it was on his recommendation to Nkrumah that she came to Ghana. She was a single-minded woman – a zealot. A devout Roman Catholic who attended mass each morning, and who hailed from a Junker family in East Prussia, she had very strong anti-communist views. She definitely saw her role as being helpful to the United States against the Soviets in the struggle for the allegiance of Ghana. Just as she impressed such sophisticated characters as Ambassador Mahoney and Sir Geoffrey de Freitas, so she was impressed by Nkrumah. His dedicated belief in what he was trying to achieve struck a chord with her. She established a remarkably close rapport with him, and dined with him and his wife Fathia each week. She also enjoyed a close relationship with the Mahoney and de Freitas families. Her work at the gliding training school for Young Pioneers – one of Nkrumah's favourite projects – put her in frequent touch with him both professionally and socially. Thus, as she enjoyed a relaxed relationship with Mahoney and with Nkrumah, and as an admirer of what Nkrumah was trying to achieve in Ghana, she was ideally placed to give balanced, responsible and well-informed comment on Nkrumah's position.

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She reported with admirable detachment and objectivity. She said that Nkrumah liked Mahoney, but that he had deep and strong feelings about race relations in the US. (After the appalling race riots in Alabama in May 1963 when Kennedy made his famous speech on negro rights in America, Nkrumah was overcome with emotion and sent Kennedy his sincere and profound thanks.) She continued that Nkrumah had relaxed and friendly meetings with Rodionov, the Russian ambassador, and that he particularly admired Khrushchev, who had taken him on holiday to the Black Sea and had treated him like a brother. Similarly he had a strong emotional attachment to the Chinese communists who had given him an overwhelming welcome in 1961. His warm feelings for China created problems for him during the India-China dispute and finally soured his relations with Nehru.

Miss Reitsch was adamant that Nkrumah was not a communist and would never hand over his independence, but that he was extremely emotional and almost child-like in his attachment to people. He swallowed the whole anti-capitalist line fed to him by the Eastern bloc, and this reinforced his prejudice against capitalism and big business. This assessment roughly equates with the comment of Barbara Ward – ‘our poor Nkrumah, bamboozled by communist offers and slogans.’<sup>39</sup> Miss Reitsch argued that the communist powers were the great imperialists of modern times, but that Nkrumah always refused to face this fact. He had much communist dogma planted in his mind, but would not tolerate any interference in his actions. He tended to let personal feelings override his judgement and because of his emotional make-up found it hard to make a balanced judgement. With her background in the Third Reich, the views of Miss Reitsch on communism may be suspect, but her Roman Catholic stance seemed to influence her most profoundly and she retained a valuable and balanced attitude in a situation that was highly controversial. She remained deeply attached to Nkrumah personally.<sup>40</sup>

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The uneven and touchy relationship between the US and Ghana continued, despite Mahoney's diplomatic efforts. Nkrumah had just made more criticisms of the Peace Corps, when Mahoney discovered, to his fury, that the CIA had been paying an allowance to Danquah.<sup>41</sup> This created a crisis in Washington and, with Kennedy's personal backing, Mahoney got it established that the CIA would not undertake any activity without the prior approval of the ambassador. This significant event prompts the question: If the CIA acted behind the back of a powerful ambassador like Mahoney who was known to have close and direct access to Kennedy, what did it do when Mahoney left and there was no American ambassador in Accra during the crucial months before the coup – May 1965 to January 1966? Mahoney faced a further crisis when Senator Thomas Dodd, using information provided by Busia to a Senate sub-committee, wrote an article for the *Washington Post* alleging that Ghana was a Soviet satellite.

Finally in November 1963, Kennedy interviewed Mahoney in Washington in order to get an up-to-date briefing on Nkrumah. Mahoney was able to provide evidence of Nkrumah's increasingly frenetic attacks on neo-colonialism. Because he was being increasingly rebuffed by other African leaders, he blamed his reverses on neo-colonialist intrigues. When asked if Nkrumah was a Marxist, Mahoney replied that he was a badly confused and immature person, not sure what he wanted, except that he wanted to lead all of Africa. 'Nkrumah often serves the purposes of Mao and Khrushchev but he is too much of an egotist to be their pawn.' Mahoney believed that Nkrumah's Marxist bark was worse than his bite, and that, although it was irritating, the US should learn to live with it. Finally he recommended that the US should continue to support the Volta River Project.<sup>42</sup>

The assassination of Kennedy on 22 November only three days after this interview caused Nkrumah deep personal grief and changed overnight the attitude of the US administration towards

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Ghana. Kennedy, with his sensitive and concerned attitude, was replaced by Lyndon B. Johnson. His attitude may be summed up by a quotation from Averill Harriman, who was asked to keep the new President informed about Ghana. Johnson rang and said 'Tell me, Av, what's the goddam name of that place?'<sup>43</sup>

Two weeks after Kennedy's assassination, Barbara Ward visited Nkrumah in Accra. On his desk he had a photograph of the Kennedy family, which Jacqueline Kennedy had given him. With tears in his eyes he said 'I have written to her, and I have prayed for them both. Nothing shocked me so deeply as this.'<sup>44</sup> He had always felt that if there were misunderstandings between Ghana and the United States, they would be resolved if only he could get through to Kennedy, whom he saw as his friend, the friend of Africa. The bomb attack on Nkrumah in Kulungugu had caused him psychological damage and, understandably, he became neurotic and paranoid about security. After the violent deaths of Lumumba and Kennedy, to both of whom he was emotionally attached, he became convinced that he would be the next victim. His obsession with African unity at all costs meant that, just when he had lost his major prop and support in Kennedy, he was facing growing hostility and growing isolation from the other African leaders.

In 1964 a series of crises set back any momentum towards African unity: Algeria was in dispute with Morocco, Somalia with Ethiopia, and France intervened in Gabon. Ghana's reaction to the continuing unrest in the Congo isolated it still further from the other African states. All this prompted Nkrumah to call for an African high command and further attempts to achieve union government. After the East African mutinies of January 1964, when British troops had been involved, Nyerere called a special conference at Dar-es-Salaam. Botsio, representing Ghana, tried again to use this as an opportunity to establish an African high command. He gained no support, and most countries at the

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conference were incensed by Nkrumah's continued criticism of the East African Federation as a neo-colonialist plot. Nkrumah continued to seek new allies. He sent a large delegation to Malawi's independence celebrations and also welcomed a friendly approach from Sir Albert Margai, the new prime minister of Sierra Leone. All this active diplomacy was the prelude to the Heads of State Conference of the OAU powers in Cairo in July 1964.

The Cairo conference highlighted Nkrumah's almost total isolation. He had once again instructed the unfortunate Botsio to persuade the foreign ministers to place union government and an African high command on the agenda. This was totally rejected, and when Nkrumah tried to raise these issues at the main conference Leopold Senghor of Senegal said very bluntly that it had already been decided that a Pan African government could not be formed, and that Ghana should not constantly refer back to it. On 26 July, refusing to face reality, Nkrumah made a disastrous speech. He said that if the OAU was not ready for union government 'those of us who are ready to do so could go away from Cairo having agreed to the establishment of a Union Government of Africa'.<sup>45</sup> Nyerere, in a dignified but ruthlessly critical speech, castigated the phrase 'go ahead and unite' as the final absurdity. On nearly all the other issues Ghana's views were rejected. Nkrumah offered £100,000 to the liberation committee, but it was rejected and Ghana again failed to be elected to the committee. Discussion of an African high command resulted in another rebuke to Ghana which pointed out that a high command would not be necessary if members did not practise subversion against other members. Nkrumah, still failing to see that he had alienated nearly all the other members, made a final and almost incoherent plea for an agreement in principle to union government. Balewa and others made scathing attacks, Nasser and Haile Selassie tried to save him from complete humiliation, but Sekou Toure had the final word 'The principle is not admitted'.<sup>46</sup>

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The Cairo conference was an absolute disaster for Nkrumah, but the disaster was compounded when the ideologues in the Ghana Government briefed the local press to hail it as one of his greatest triumphs. Wilfully blind, they attributed any criticism to British imperialists and to the neo-colonialist press. Nkrumah still refused to face reality and continued to delude himself that union government was a practical possibility. He therefore offered to host the OAU Conference of 1965 and decided to build a huge complex which would house the conference and – a further and greater delusion – could serve as a future capital for a union government of Africa. Job 600, as the complex was known, cost £10 m. when the Ghana Government was already deep in bankruptcy, and it became the symbol of all Nkrumah's foolish prestige projects. The final irony was added when, because of rampant inflation – over 30 per cent in 1965 – and shortages of even basic foodstuffs, queues for food stretched right round the site of Job 600.

Nkrumah's isolation, rebuffs and humiliation at the Cairo, conference brought about a major change in his philosophy, which was substantially to increase his already formidable difficulties. After the rejection of his offers by the OAU Liberation Committee, he decided it was time to step up subversion against those reactionary states which opposed him. His rationale was that Ghana must help to train freedom fighters from all over Africa because the time had come to fight imperialism and neo-colonialism by armed revolution. Through Barden and the Bureau of African Affairs he had subversive agents in nine African countries, including Togoland, Ivory Coast, Upper Volta, Niger and Senegal. The Bureau set up training camps in remote border areas and staffed them with Chinese and East German subversion experts.<sup>47</sup> The Soviet Union co-operated closely and used Ghana as a base for transporting Russian weapons to Stanleyville in the Congo. Barden, who was disastrously incompetent, shortly

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afterwards had a mental breakdown, but by then grave damage had been done to Ghana's image abroad.

Groups of Ghanaian subversive agents had been captured in Ivory Coast, Togoland and Niger. Houphouet-Boigny therefore took the lead among Nkrumah's West African neighbours and publicly threatened not to attend the OAU conference in Accra in 1965 unless the subversion stopped and the so-called refugees were expelled. In 1961 Houphouet-Boigny had formed a group of fourteen states (formerly the Brazzaville Group) into the 'Organisation Commune d' Afrique et Malgache' (OCAM), and in February 1965 this group agreed to boycott the OAU conference and publicly condemned Ghana for supporting subversion against their states. They concluded with a fierce personal attack on Nkrumah for his title *Osagyefo*, the Messiah, the Saviour, and for appearing to think that he had a mandate from God to command the African universe.<sup>48</sup> Nigeria now moved closer to this group and this prompted a new wave of vituperation from the Ghana press.

Such widespread condemnation eventually impinged even on Nkrumah, and he now used Botsio, who was respected as a man of integrity, to defuse the situation. Botsio, who remained totally loyal to Nkrumah, was at heart a Ghanaian patriot who believed that things would come right for Ghana in spite of some temporary aberrations on Nkrumah's part. The message which Botsio received, and which he himself urged, was that Ghana should give up the idea of continental union, eject all refugees and work within the OAU charter. Any hopes of improved relations received a serious setback when it became known in February 1965 that J.B. Danquah had died in Nsawam prison. This distinguished Ghanaian, who in 1947 had invited Nkrumah to return to the Gold Coast, was now seen by a shocked world as Nkrumah's victim. Protests flooded in from all over Africa. Nkrumah's image was that of a compassionate man, but he seemed to have a blind

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spot about the sufferings of the hundreds of people who were held under Preventive Detention in Nsawam prison, and the terror felt among the general public at the way the police swooped, usually at night, on apparently innocent victims.

An even more serious setback followed in April 1965 when a guerrilla who had been trained in Ghana and in China attempted to assassinate President Diori of Niger. Diori escaped but several people were killed and injured. This clear evidence of Ghana's involvement in violent subversion infuriated the OCAM group which renewed its attack on Nkrumah, now dubbing him the agent of Chinese imperialism. In a lame response, Ghana claimed that the whole incident was a neo-colonialist plot to cause division among the African states. No-one accepted this excuse, and Houphouët-Boigny publicly released details of the guerrilla training camps staffed by Chinese instructors. Nkrumah responded personally to these criticisms by repeating that there would be no subversion if union government was achieved.

Balewa, although he had been savagely criticized by Nkrumah, called a meeting of OAU foreign ministers at Lagos in June 1965 in order to discuss the crisis. Most members were worried that, although Nkrumah was now isolated, he could still cause damage to the OAU by divisive tactics. Amazingly, Nkrumah showed that he was still not facing up to the obvious realities of the situation, when he instructed Botsio to try to prevent the conference discussing either refugees or subversion. Any hope of Botsio succeeding in this quest was quickly dashed when Niger made a devastating attack on Ghana. Niger's foreign minister Adamou Mayaki gave full details of Ghana's attacks on his country, and named seven different guerrilla training camps with their Chinese and East German staff. He stressed the real danger of China, the Soviet Union and the United States intervening in Africa and blamed Nkrumah for producing a tragic confrontation over ideologies which were totally foreign to Africa.<sup>49</sup>

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Botsio tried to side-track these allegations but the solid evidence against him was overwhelming. He worked desperately to achieve a compromise, and after long and bitter discussion the conference agreed to a resolution that did not actually name Ghana. Instead it demanded that all refugees 'whose presence is undesirable' must be sent away before the OAU leaders finally met in Accra. This was a major achievement by Botsio, but when he returned to Accra it was rejected by Nkrumah. Tension therefore rose still further and urgent negotiations continued in an attempt to prevent the Accra conference being abandoned altogether. Eventually a breathing space was obtained because Job 600 had not been completed and Ghana asked for the conference to be put back to October 1965. In further negotiations over the change of date, the issue of removing refugees and their families remained predominant. Finally, because Nkrumah refused to co-operate over the refugee problem, Houphouet-Boigny, together with the leaders of Upper Volta, Togo, Niger, Dahomey, Gabon, Chad and Madagascar, refused to attend. Many countries were involved in this intractable issue, and it can be illustrated by one example. Nigeria had demanded the permanent expulsion of Sammy Ikonu, a Marxist Nigerian exile who wielded considerable power in the Bureau of African Affairs, and who deliberately stirred up trouble between Ghana and Nigeria. Nkrumah merely sent him on a trip to Moscow during the conference and he returned immediately afterwards.

The Accra conference of October 1965 had been built up by the Ghana Government and press as the moment when Nkrumah would achieve his goal of African union government. £10m. had been invested in the huge complex to house the conference, and East German security technicians had ensured that all the meeting places and the bedrooms were bugged. Nkrumah was determined that Accra should appear as the showpiece of Africa. For years it had suffered serious problems and grave shortages of even basic

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foodstuffs, but when the conference opened, the city was flooded with every type of exotic food and luxury consumer goods. The actual conference, after such a prolonged build-up involving nearly all the independent states of Africa, was a total anti-climax. After months of pressure by Botsio and Quaison-Sackey, Nkrumah at last appeared to see that some form of compromise was necessary to achieve any agreement on the issue of African union government. He hoped that since his sternest critics had refused to attend, he might gain the support of those present. He was refused even this solace. The conference rejected his plea even for a sub-committee to consider the issue. In near despair and close to collapse he considered withdrawing from the OAU altogether, but he was saved from this final ignominy by the friendly intervention of an older and more mature African leader - Haile Selassie, who may have disagreed with Nkrumah's views on union government, but still respected him for his achievements in Africa, and looked forward to the role Ghana might play in the future. Nkrumah's sycophantic entourage had billed the conference as the moment of African unity. Instead, he emerged from it a broken and defeated man, isolated from all his neighbours and rejected as an idiot even by such an old friend as Hastings Banda.<sup>50</sup>

Effectively, this was the end of all his cherished hopes for African unity, but an obsession cannot be lightly set aside. A few weeks after the conference, he confided in Erica Powell that he would like to give up the time-consuming demands of being President of Ghana, and devote himself entirely to African unity.<sup>51</sup>

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## DENOUEMENT

The assassination attempt at Kulungugu in August 1962 affected almost every aspect of Nkrumah's policy and outlook. Ultimately it produced a situation which damaged him still further. Adamafo, Crabbe and Ako Adjei, the three major suspects in the plot, were tried under the Chief Justice, Sir Arku Korsah, and Justices Van Lare and Akufo Addo. The trial dragged on for months with the strong feeling, encouraged by the government-controlled press and the usual coterie of sycophants, that a verdict of guilty was a foregone conclusion. When, in December 1963, the Chief Justice announced a verdict of Not Guilty, it came as a bombshell to Nkrumah. He swiftly over-reacted. Two days after the verdict, he dismissed the Chief Justice, and rushed a bill through the Assembly which gave the President the power, in the national interest, to set aside any judgement in the country's courts. This rapid demolition of the independence of the judiciary did more than anything else to convince the world that Nkrumah had embarked on a course leading to dictatorship. Protests flooded in from Britain and America, and even Nkrumah's most loyal supporters grew alarmed. C. L. R. James, who in 1962 had publicly thanked Nkrumah for being the greatest leader in the emancipation of Africa, now chided him publicly and privately. James had previously warned him to investigate the reasons

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why people wanted to kill him and, very shrewdly, had asked if the people around him were telling him the truth. Now, in an anguished appeal James said 'You cannot dismiss your Chief Justice. . . You must go and make a public apology.' He concluded by saying that if the Chief Justice was dismissed 'You dismiss all of us'.<sup>1</sup> This action further sullied Nkrumah's reputation both at home and abroad.

His foreign policy had alienated all his neighbours and had created an atmosphere of serious international tension; at home the shortcomings of the party, of the government, and of the security services had alienated most of the Ghanaian people. Basil Davidson, a sympathetic commentator, spoke of 'the offensive ballyhoo of the Nkrumah cult'.<sup>2</sup> Others have spoken of the atmosphere of terror. Students who applied for visas to visit Britain were told that if they spoke one word of criticism while they were abroad they would go straight to Nsawam prison when they returned to Ghana. The public who applied for visas were made to queue for hours in full view of suspects who were being held in chains and were standing in their own vomit and faeces while the prison guards laughed at them.<sup>3</sup>

A proposal had been made at the CPP Conference at Kumasi in 1962, just before Kulungugu, that Ghana should become a one-party state. The proposal was enthusiastically endorsed in the emotional aftermath of Kulungugu. The referendum on the one-party state held in January 1964 illustrated how little Nkrumah was able to control his local party members. The CPP claimed a 99 per cent vote in favour, but reports showed that the votes were shamelessly rigged. In some areas the 'No' votes were simply emptied into the 'Yes' boxes. In others the 'No' boxes were sealed to prevent any votes going in, or party stalwarts threatened anyone voting 'No'. In the whole of Ashanti not a single 'No' vote was recorded. These figures convinced no-one, but they showed how more and more power was being concentrated in

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the hands of Nkrumah, and how completely the opposition was being eliminated. The referendum and its obviously false figures reinforced the criticisms Nkrumah had received over the sacking of Sir Arku Korsah. But, while the CPP wielded immense power, there were still a few members in the Assembly brave enough to criticize. The government suffered acute embarrassment on several occasions during 1965. M. Kwatia initiated a debate on the Ghana National Trading Company, which showed clearly that the managers in this government monopoly were mostly corrupt, and by their corrupt practices were largely responsible for the serious shortage of basic foods and most commodities. A pass book system gave special privileges to party members. Instead of investigating the problem, Nkrumah merely changed the minister in charge – Djin again – and abolished pass books. This caused further chaos and the party soon found other ways of working the system to their own advantage.

The state farms and the Workers Brigade came in for similar sharp criticism. In the Assembly it was stated openly that Nkrumah was not being given the true facts, and he was blamed personally for listening to sycophants and incompetents. Later in the year Suleman Ibbin Idrissu, an Opposition speaker, made two severe attacks on the government and on the CPP members of the Central Committee. He called them a get rich quick clique who, when their corruption was found out, were merely moved to another ministry. He quoted the case of Ambrose Yankey, an entirely baleful influence, who, when his son was caught receiving a huge bribe from some Syrian traders, used physical violence to have him freed, and then had the head of Special Branch sacked. Nkrumah clearly condoned this action, and so his reputation suffered further.

Idrissu charged openly that the radical group were deliberately preventing Nkrumah from knowing the truth about the state of the country. This charge was supported by Erica Powell, Nkrumah's

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secretary, who was now in a slightly less vulnerable position since Adamafo had been removed from the scene. She, for example, had told Nkrumah that there was a severe shortage of every type of drug even in the hospitals. He made a superficial inquiry and was assured that there was no shortage. Shortly afterwards Erica fell ill and was taken to a doctor who ran a large clinic, and he confirmed that there were no drugs at all. She told Nkrumah again, and he was finally convinced.<sup>4</sup> A more serious question is whether there was a deliberate policy to create such shortages so that Nkrumah would be blamed, and could then be overthrown by the traitors who had caused the shortage in the first place. For Nkrumah, the question arose again, more urgently. Whom could he trust? In September 1965 Iddrissu renewed his attack on the CPP hierarchy, who, he said, were more Marxist than Marx, more Nkrumah than Nkrumah. He then spoke openly of the fear, already felt by Erica Powell, that the present leaders were more dangerous dogmatists than Adamafo had been. 'What they are after is leadership . . . In fact they are actively preparing the ground to forcibly take over the leadership.'<sup>5</sup> This debate led to a meeting of Nkrumah with the party leaders at Peduase Lodge, but little improvement was made. Not surprisingly, Iddrissu was shortly afterwards expelled from the Assembly.

After the 1964 referendum the country gradually became accustomed to Assembly members being nominated instead of elected. Alhaji Alhassan, a lawyer now living in Tamale, has described how, in 1965, he was having a drink in the Ambassador Hotel in Accra when a news bulletin reported that he had been nominated to the Assembly as CPP member for a place he had never heard of. He attended the Assembly a few times, but he was shocked because there was no discussion of anything – just endless repetition of party propaganda.<sup>6</sup>

In 1965 the atmosphere of intrigue and distrust around Nkrumah increased in intensity. The charge against Erica Powell

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of being a foreign agent illustrated his insecurity and his vain search for someone he could trust. As the tension increased after the crisis over the Chief Justice, Nkrumah tended to withdraw from Flagstaff House and seek refuge in Christiansborg Castle. Here, another attempt was made on his life. On New Year's Day 1964, one of the guards, Seth Ametewee, fired several shots at Nkrumah before he was eventually overpowered. This incident, which was never satisfactorily explained, was used by Nkrumah's propaganda machine. An obviously posed photograph of Nkrumah overpowering his attacker was widely publicized to illustrate his moral, spiritual and physical strength over his enemies, and to support the myth that he was indestructible. Ambassador Mahoney and President Johnson sent immediate expressions of regret and concern – partly to allay the expected allegations from Ghana sources that the CIA were behind the attack. Nkrumah promptly sacked the top police commanders, but by alienating the police he made his own position more precarious. Mahoney, in a despatch to the President, stated that Nkrumah's regime was in greater jeopardy than ever before, and thought that the military might well stage a coup.<sup>7</sup> Shortly afterwards, it became known that the Russian Ambassador Rodionov had suggested at a Cuban embassy reception that the British were behind the assassination attempt.

Later in January, Mahoney made another assessment of the Ghana situation for Washington. He believed that Nkrumah lacked the ideological creativeness and the inner strength to cope with the problems which his own policies created, and he therefore turned to simplistic Marxist solutions. Nkrumah had 'a demonstrated capacity for wishful thinking . . . and had not the vaguest notion of impending disaster'. Mahoney continued 'He is pre-eminently a mixed-up kid'. In planning for the future, Mahoney suggested that the USA should make long-term plans and should identify with the Ghanaian people, not with Nkrumah's regime. He concluded:

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We should not seek an early change in the regime. . . and, harsh as it sounds, we are probably better off if Ghana experiences much more fully, the bitter consequences of Nkrumah's brand of socialism.<sup>8</sup>

The tension centred around Nkrumah's obsession with security escalated a few weeks later when, after a flurry of military activity on the night of 31 January 1964, there were rumours of a takeover bid by Generals Ankrah and Barwah. The *Evening News* of 3 February commented 'What these wicked capitalist murderers of Lumumba and Kennedy failed to do at Kulungugu they are trying to achieve by slander'.

This officially inspired outburst was quickly followed by an angry demonstration against the US embassy in which the American flag was pulled down. The demonstration appeared to be directed by several well-known members of the Russian community. The strong US protest about this incident was caught up in a further crisis over the sudden dismissal of four American professors from the University at Legon. Conor Cruise O'Brien, the Vice Chancellor, who, after his outstanding UN role in the Congo, had been personally offered the post by Nkrumah, protested vehemently. O'Brien became the staunchest upholder of the independence of the university against the interference and encroachments of Nkrumah and the CPP. The Americans vigorously supported O'Brien's protest against the dismissal of four distinguished legal scholars on the totally false charge that they were CIA agents, in order to make way – as they saw it – for a number of ill-qualified party hacks. At the height of the crisis, fearing strong-arm tactics, O'Brien removed his most sensitive documents for safe keeping to the US embassy.<sup>9</sup> Nkrumah stood firm and the professors left. Later, when Mahoney suggested to Nkrumah that they had been unfairly treated, he did order that they receive the balance of their contract salary.

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In this highly volatile and extremely tense situation, with Nkrumah welcoming ever more Russians to Accra and making fierce attacks on imperialism, neo-colonialism and the CIA, one of the great ironies was his warm and friendly personal relationship with Ambassador Mahoney and his large family. This seems to be another example of Nkrumah's brain being in water-tight compartments, or it may be explained by his affection for children and his longing for close and sensitive personal relationships. Mahoney was Kennedy's personal choice for the Accra post, and this, too, may have contributed to the cordial reception he had from the start. The younger Mahoney children used to go regularly to Flagstaff House to play with Gorkeh - Nkrumah's eldest child of his marriage to Fathia. They have very happy memories of their times there and they remember in particular watching the animals in Nkrumah's zoo. He had around forty animals including giraffes, an elephant, and a chimpanzee which spat at everyone. Nkrumah maintained it was Nigerian! In the afternoon Nkrumah always tried to spend some time with the children and the animals and was always full of tenderness and laughter. Such is the affection of the Mahoneys for Nkrumah that in 1987 on their ranch in Arizona, their favourite horse is a lively young Arab with a high forehead called 'Kwame'.

In many moments of crisis, Nkrumah turned to Mahoney as an old friend who would give him a straight and honest answer. They shared a deep attachment to John F. Kennedy. Mahoney was a devout Roman Catholic and he also knew of Nkrumah's Catholic upbringing. On receiving the news of the Kennedy assassination, Nkrumah, in a voice breaking with emotion, telephoned Mahoney to find out if it was true, and asked what he could do. Mahoney, also beside himself with grief, replied 'Say a Hail Mary' and Nkrumah whispered 'I am already on my knees'.

On the crucial issue of the CIA, in spite of the frequent public outbursts by the Ghana Government, Mahoney was able to talk

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openly with Nkrumah. He told him there were five CIA officers in the US embassy and that they were under his direct control, whereas he knew that two-thirds of the huge Soviet embassy staff were KGB agents. Mahoney realized that Nkrumah was constantly goaded by Adamafo and others to attack the CIA. On the other hand, he had the difficult task of trying to reassure the State Department, which was neurotic about communists, that, in spite of Russian and Eastern bloc activity in Accra, Nkrumah was not a thorough-going communist.

Mahoney's confidence on this critical point was shown during the Cuban crisis of 1962. Called urgently to Washington and briefed personally by President Kennedy, he flew back direct to Accra with photographs of the Soviet missile bases in Cuba. On Kennedy's behalf, he requested Nkrumah not to give overflying or landing rights for Soviet aircraft. Nkrumah agreed at once and said 'At last you are acting as a great nation.'<sup>10</sup>

The death of Kennedy, and Nkrumah's isolation both within Ghana and outside, brought him closer to the final denouement. Unaware of its approach, he continued with his high hopes and ideals. Conscious that after the death of Kennedy, he had to make a new start with Johnson, he wrote him a remarkable letter in which he outlines his general philosophy, and comments on the problems between the two countries.

THE CASTLE,  
ACCRA,  
GHANA.  
26th February, 1964.

Dear President Johnson,

I wish to take the opportunity of the return of my Ambassador to Washington, after a brief visit to Accra, to send you this personal

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note concerning one or two matters which are of interest to Ghana and the United States.

In the first place, I should like to repeat the expressions of regret already conveyed to your Government over the recent incidents in Accra, and to reaffirm the assurances I gave to the late President Kennedy in regard to my Government's policy of non-alignment. As you are probably aware, we have pursued this policy unflinchingly from the very day of our independence.

In my first meeting with President Kennedy, I explained how dangerous it is for the emergent States of Africa to take sides in the diplomatic manoeuvres and political disputes among the Great Powers. One of our principal aims has been to protect ourselves from the dangers of involvement in these manoeuvres and disputes. It follows from this that Ghana must establish good relations with all countries of the world, irrespective of the political systems of their governments.

You will appreciate, Mr. President, that the success of this policy depends on the extent of mutual respect which can be shown in the relationships that subsist between ourselves and the Governments which wish to maintain links with us.

It is on this issue that I must express some concern about that which has come to notice within recent times as a result of the activities of certain United States citizens in Ghana. There appears to be two conflicting establishments representing the United States in our part of the world. There is the United States Embassy a diplomatic institution doing formal diplomatic business with us; there is also the C.I.A. organisation which functions presumably within or outside this recognised body. This latter organization, that is the C.I.A., seems to devote all its attention to fomenting ill-will, misunderstanding and even clandestine and subversive activities, among our people, to the impairment of the good relations which exist between our two Governments.

If my analysis of this situation is correct, and all the indications

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are that it is then I could not, Mr. President, view this without some alarm. Neither will any other Government in a developing State, however weak its economic position, accept this situation without demur. We of the Independent African States wish to be left alone to pursue policies and courses which we know to be in the best interests of our people, and at the same time conducive to the maintenance of good relations with other governments of the world.

Mr. President, permit me to say a few words here about Ghana's socialist ideals and the place of foreign investment within the socialist structure which we intend to build. It should be obvious to anyone who has followed the history of Africa's development with impartiality that a planned economy and rapid industrial and agricultural development can be best achieved through a socialist course.

Mr. President, the ravages of colonialism and its effect upon the territories now emerging from colonialism make it difficult and almost impossible for us in Africa to follow the traditional path of capitalist development. We must therefore ensure that the public sector of the productive economy expands at the maximum possible rate, especially in the strategic areas of production upon which our economy essentially depends. It is my primary ambition, therefore, to secure and maintain the economic independence of Ghana in such a manner as to forestall the danger of the growth of those social antagonisms which can result from the unequal distribution of economic power among our people.

Within the framework of this position there is an open door for foreign investment in Ghana. The Ghana Investment Act – the best in all Africa yet – makes this quite clear. Ghana welcomes foreign investors in a spirit of partnership; they can earn their profits here, provided they leave us an agreed portion for promoting the welfare and happiness of the majority of our people, as against the greedy ambitions of the few. From what we

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get out of this partnership we hope to be able to expand the health facilities for our people, to give them more and better educational institutions and to see to it that their housing conditions are improved and that they have a steadily rising standard of living. This is, in a nutshell, what Ghana expects to achieve from our socialist objectives.

I am sure, in these circumstances, Mr. President, that you could appreciate the aims and aspirations of Ghana. It seems to me, however, that a large section of the American Press either does not understand our way of life, or is unwilling to appreciate the changing scene in Africa.

This section of the Press continues to indulge in scurrilous and unjustified attacks, not only on the policies of my Government, but also on me personally. As long as this continues, we can be sure that a kind of Press warfare between Ghana and the United States will continue to be an embarrassment to our two Governments.

In the interests of good relations between Ghana and the United States, I, Mr. President, will do whatever in my power lies to ensure that Party papers follow courses which will improve the relationship between our two countries.

Mr. President, I have attempted to write as frankly as I can to let you appreciate Ghana's position. I hope I have been able to indicate that all we wish to do in Ghana is to establish a happy and prosperous State for the good of our people. In this endeavour, all that we wish to do in Ghana, which I know you, Mr. President, generally support, is to establish a happy, prosperous and stable State for our people. In this endeavour we expect nothing but understanding and goodwill from our friends.

I am asking my Ambassador, Mr. M.A. Ribeiro, to deliver this message to you personally.

Wishing you and Mrs. Johnson continued health and happiness, and with my most sincere and respectful regards,

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KWAME NKRUMAH  
PRESIDENT  
REPUBLIC OF GHANA

This letter, which received a courteous but formal acknowledgment, was followed by another to President Johnson in April 1964 in which Nkrumah offered to help in solving the Middle East problem. His ambitions to play a major role on the world stage were soon to be undermined by the harsh realities of the situation in Ghana. At a Cabinet meeting on 11 February 1965, the Finance Minister Amoako-Atta announced that Ghana's reserves were less than £500,000.<sup>11</sup> Nkrumah was so shocked by this that he sat in silence for fifteen minutes and then broke down and wept.

The intense pressures on Nkrumah built up relentlessly: through Kulungugu; the Flagstaff House assassination attempt; the constant failure of the state enterprises; the constant goading of the left-wing group; the need to keep Western support to finish the Volta River Project; the public bitterness and outrage over the hundreds jailed at Nsawam; his constant rejection and humiliation by other African leaders; the virtual state of war with his neighbours because of his subversion; the desperate need for loans to prop up a bankrupt economy; the frequent rumours of a coup. Over all these tensions lay the atmosphere of malevolent intrigue and distrust, initially created by Adamafo but which festered on after his imprisonment. In such an atmosphere Nkrumah embarked on what he hoped would be his greatest international triumph, which would gain recognition for him as one of the world's great statesmen – he would end the war in Vietnam. He genuinely believed that, through his personal contacts with the leaders in the White House and in Communist China, and from his position as leader of the Non-Aligned group of nations, he would be in a unique position to help.

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After lengthy preliminary discussions, it was formally proposed at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference in July 1965 that Nkrumah should be a member of a small group of Commonwealth leaders to visit Hanoi. Nkrumah eagerly accepted the invitation, though his own position was threatened during the conference by serious rumours of a coup led by General Ankrah and Brigadier Otu. Because of these rumours, Nkrumah twice changed his plans to fly back to Accra. Soon after his return, at the Armed Forces Day parade he presented special medals to Ankrah and Otu – presumably in a belated attempt to buy their loyalty.

Hanoi rejected the offer of a visit from the Commonwealth group but agreed to welcome Nkrumah. Further flattered by this suggestion, Nkrumah quickly contacted President Johnson. The Americans were amazed at how little Nkrumah knew or understood about Vietnam, and he appeared interested only in obtaining a meeting with Johnson. He wrote, 'I would very much like to come to Washington . . . I fervently look forward to meeting you personally.'<sup>12</sup> Oliver Troxel, who was in charge of the American embassy after the departure of Mahoney, neatly stalled this suggestion. He felt that Nkrumah had nothing of substance to discuss with Johnson, and that he was merely seeking publicity and personal kudos in order to strengthen his position at home.

Nkrumah then sent Kwesi Armah (Ghana High Commissioner in London) to Hanoi to arrange the details of his visit. Armah's trip proved to be quite significant. He went first to Moscow where he refused to address a major press conference. This refusal deprived the Russians of a chance to score a propaganda victory over the US and they then turned nasty and prevented Armah and his party from catching the plane to Hanoi. The group eventually travelled via Rome to Peking. Here, Armah again refused to address a press conference, and his party were again treated very badly. After considerable delay they were provided with a dilapidated old plane to take them to Hanoi. In Hanoi, Armah was terrified by

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the bombing and spent much of his time rushing in and out of air raid shelters. Ho Chi Minh made it plain that he could not guarantee Nkrumah's safety anywhere in Vietnam. While Armah was in Hanoi, Nkrumah cabled that he was coming at once - a suggestion which Armah thought was the height of madness and which he firmly rejected. Against Nkrumah's instructions, Armah returned to Accra and told Nkrumah he was wasting his time with the Chinese and North Vietnamese, and that he would be wiser to go and see Johnson to discuss Ghana's problems. After the débacle of Armah's trip, Nkrumah, still eager for a meeting, wrote again to Johnson. The CIA report on this correspondence suggests that Nkrumah wanted a meeting with Johnson and some success in Vietnam in order to strengthen his position before the OAU Conference in Accra.<sup>13</sup>

In the autumn of 1965 the issue of Nkrumah's proposed visit to Hanoi became enmeshed in the Central African Federation crisis. Although Nkrumah was facing very serious problems at home and had alienated many African leaders, he was still respected in the wider world context. At the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conferences of 1964 and 1965, he played moderate and constructive role, and at the 1965 meeting he proposed the idea of a Commonwealth Secretariat which all members accepted. In addition, Ghana was currently a member of the Security Council, represented by the able Alex Quaison-Sackey. The Rhodesian crisis and the involvement of the Commonwealth gave Nkrumah an opportunity which he used to the full to counteract his growing isolation in Africa. Helped by Bing and Quaison-Sackey, he succeeded in bringing the Rhodesian issue before the Security Council, and so regained some prestige among other African countries.

In October 1965, the British Prime Minister Harold Wilson, returning from Salisbury, diverted his flight to meet Nkrumah in Accra. They met briefly at the airport. Little detail emerged from

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these talks, but they were significant in that Nkrumah made it plain that, when their views clashed, his African interests would be paramount over his Commonwealth interests. This was soon to be tested, for less than a week after the Wilson meeting, Ian Smith in Salisbury made his Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI).

Nkrumah quickly urged military action against Smith's illegal state in Rhodesia. Military action by Britain was never a likely option, since it was opposed by a very large majority of the British people who hoped that sanctions would be as effective as Wilson had promised. For Nkrumah, the crisis created an opportunity to reopen his demand for an African High Command. He quickly found that the situation had changed substantially from the moment in August 1960 when he had held the world's attention during the first Congo crisis. His proposals gained little support. Instead, the OAU called an urgent conference to consider the Rhodesian problem, and resolved that all members should break off diplomatic relations with Britain. This placed Nkrumah in a serious dilemma, since he genuinely valued his Commonwealth links. He pondered over this at length and on 16 December 1965 accepted the resolution, and severed relations with Britain. There was no anti-British feeling in Accra, and the High Commission staff left with mutual expressions of affection and regret, which Nkrumah himself shared.

The loss of the Commonwealth link came at about the same time as the uproar over the publication of his book, *Neo-Colonialism - The Last Stage of Imperialism*. The most immediate result of this publication was the understandable outcry in the United States and its effect on the Volta River Project (see Chapter 12). An interesting contemporary comment came from Conor Cruise O'Brien who wrote a review of the book in November 1965. He regretted that most of the book was a compilation of economic statistics which any competent university economics department

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could produce – and probably did. Nkrumah could have written about politics which he knew about, rather than economics, which he did not. O'Brien noted that Nkrumah, as expected, related everything to the lack of a union government in Africa, and to the evils of neo-colonialism. He reminded Nkrumah that even Frantz Fanon had blamed African nationalists as much as the neo-colonialists, and he argued, correctly, that no country could achieve African unity at that time. With a sympathetic look at the independent countries of Africa, he concluded:

What they can do is to look to their economy and administration to provide a solid base for progress. Africa's greatest need is for honest administrators and technicians. No country had so many as Ghana and no country has lost more, because it is impossible for people of sense and integrity to work effectively - outflanked by climbing yes-men, shouted down by party demagogues, often with socialist slogans in their mouth and contractors' money in their pockets. . . The continuation of the cult of personality is liable to choke the growth of what is still probably the most hopeful country in tropical Africa. The cult drives out the most gifted of the rising generation on whom the real liberation of Africa depends.<sup>14</sup>

The military were becoming increasingly disaffected with Nkrumah. They had seen their service starved of resources, their once proud soldiers reduced to rags and tatters, while the Russian-trained President's Own Guard Regiment appeared to be generously favoured. Rumours of coups involving the military were recorded from the Spring and early Summer of 1965. The CIA noted that a coup had been expected in March, in April and again in June or July. After General Ankrah's failure to act in July, the middle-ranking officers became increasingly critical of their seniors. Into this dangerous situation Nkrumah now introduced

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a new element. Although his demand for military action against the racist regime of Ian Smith in Rhodesia had been rejected or ignored by other countries, on 25 November 1965 he introduced a bill to mobilize the armed forces ready for war with Rhodesia. The officer corps considered this proposal ludicrous because, apart from the thousands of miles separating the two countries, there were no supplies, no reserves, no spare parts for vehicles or weapons, and a desperate shortage of petrol and ammunition. An element of desperation was added to their feelings.

At the opening of the Volta River Project in January 1966 (see Chapter 12), Nkrumah appeared to the guests to be fairly normal and cheerful, though he was showing signs of stress and tension. A few days later, on 1 February, he made what was to be his last address to the National Assembly and to the people of Ghana. Ghana was very conscious of the recent coup in Nigeria in which the moderate leader, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, had been overthrown, and Nkrumah started his speech with his favourite theme. Only union government for Africa could prevent such neo-colonialist plots. Only union government could make Africa strong enough to deal with the wider forces of neo-colonialism and the racist regimes of Rhodesia and South Africa. He justified single-party rule provided it was in a socialist state - since it then worked for the people as a whole. If it was not in a socialist state it could lead to despotism and tyranny. Next he dealt with the budget and outlined the achievements of the large number of state enterprises. He assured the people that the state farms were producing larger proportions of the country's food in spite of a small group of traitors, supported by the opposition, who were trying to sabotage the whole effort in that field. This final speech proved once again that Nkrumah was still obsessed by his notion of union government, even though it had been totally rejected by all the countries which attended the OAU Accra Conference in 1965, and rejected even more vehemently by those countries

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which had refused to come. Similarly his references to the success of food and other state enterprises bore no relation to the harsh realities of the situation, and showed that he was being deliberately misled. Believing that the state enterprises were supported by the whole people except for a few saboteurs was the final example of self-deception.

In the new year of 1966, apart from the great occasion of the Volta Dam, he had been preoccupied with his proposed visit to Vietnam. The visit of Armah in August 1965 had been a setback, but Nkrumah had continued to correspond with Ho Chi Minh, Chou En-Iai, and President Johnson and with President Tito as the other prominent leader of the Non-Aligned group.<sup>15</sup>

As he set out on his historic mission to Hanoi to attempt to end the Vietnam War, the whole of Accra was agog with rumours of a coup. At the airport the more cynical were taking bets on when it would happen. His closest advisers strongly urged him not to go. However ill-informed he was about the domestic situation in Ghana, he must have had some inkling of the truth. He was well aware that he was totally isolated from the OAU powers, and in a state of virtual war with most of his neighbours in West Africa. He made brave protestations, but it seems possible that he ignored the warnings of a coup because he had reached the end of the road politically and the end of his tether psychologically. He realized he had no answer to the appalling problems his own policies had created. He had no answer to the seething unrest in the country, no answer to the fierce hostility of his West African neighbours, no answer to the empty treasury, no answer to the failure of all his cherished schemes. In his own mind, was the trip to Hanoi and the likelihood of a coup one possible solution to all these intractable problems? This idea is reinforced by the fact that he made his will just before leaving for Hanoi.

He left Accra airport on 21 February 1966 and on 23 February the coup took place. When he arrived in Peking, the Chinese gave

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him a great welcome, but thoughtfully waited until he was in a private room before breaking the news of the coup to him.

After the widespread talk of a coup when Nkrumah was leaving for Hanoi, it was not a great surprise to the people of Ghana when at 6 a.m. on 24 February Colonel E.K. Kotoka announced on Ghana radio 'The myth surrounding Nkrumah has been broken'.<sup>16</sup> Three figures masterminded the military action leading to the coup: Colonel Kotoka, Major A.A. Afrifa and the Police Commissioner, John Harrley. Their plans were helped by the general belief that large-scale military exercises were taking place in preparation for a Rhodesian expedition. A battalion moved south from Tamale, joined up with forces in Kumasi, and moved on Accra without arousing any suspicion. They moved into position on the night of 23 February, and in the early hours of 24 February attacked Flag-staff House, the radio station and other key points in Accra. The coup was almost bloodless except for the killing of General Barwah, who was shot while resisting arrest, and some casualties in the area of Flagstaff House where Colonel Zanlerigu and the President's Own Guard Regiment put up some fierce but brief resistance. There was no resistance or opposition anywhere else in the country. Almost at once General Ankrah, who had been dismissed by Nkrumah, was brought in to head the Revolutionary government.

The motives of the military in carrying out the coup appear straightforward. They shared the general dissatisfaction at the corruption and mismanagement of the Nkrumah regime. To this was added their anger at the infiltration of army units by CPP agents. They resented the severe shortages of resources and the special treatment of the POGR. They were anxious at the prospect of the proposed Rhodesian expedition. Some genuine liberal motives were expressed by Afrifa who considered Sandhurst a great liberal institution which taught that all men are equal!<sup>17</sup>

The coup was swift and effective. The National Liberation

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Council quickly rounded up known CPP leaders, partly for their own protection, but apart from this the CPP seemed to disappear overnight. They put up no resistance, and the civil service continued to administer the country without any major upheaval.

A question still hangs over one aspect of the coup. What role did the CIA play? After the 1962 crisis over payments to Danquah, President Kennedy had guaranteed that every ambassador would be fully informed of any CIA activity. Mahoney had warned Howard Bane, the CIA chief in Accra, that if he took one step out of line; he would be sacked.<sup>18</sup> Mahoney had a firm grip on affairs, but he left in May 1965 and in the interregnum until January 1966; when Franklin Williams arrived, the number of CIA agents in Accra increased from five to ten. Howard Bane remained in post in a very powerful position once Mahoney had left. Under his direction, the CIA were in touch with all the likely plotters, and records show the dates when coups had been expected including 17 February 1966.<sup>19</sup>

After Mahoney's control was removed the CIA stepped up their activities and also had an increased budget. Details of their activities have come from a number of sources including John Stockwell who wrote *In Search of Enemies*, and the investigative journalist Seymour Hersh who wrote an article in the *New York Times* of 9 May 1978 entitled '*CIA said to have aided plotters who overthrew Nkrumah in Ghana*'. Howard Bane was in a noticeably more powerful position after the departure of Mahoney. He put forward a plan to mount a 'blackface operation' (i.e. Commando-style attack) on the Chinese embassy at the same moment as the coup. He aimed to kill all the occupants and take away all the security and coding equipment. The CIA headquarters in Washington rejected this plan, and Bane was reported by Hersh to have said angrily 'They don't have the guts to do it'. Although Bane's plan to attack the Chinese embassy was rejected, the Accra station was given substantial credit for the success of the coup. The

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CIA claimed that eight Soviet agents were killed in the fighting around Flagstaff House, but the Soviet authorities denied losing any men.<sup>20</sup> Some years after the coup a similar view was given in *The Daily Telegraph* of 21 January 1972. It alleged that the CIA had a staff of twenty in Accra and it concluded 'The work of the Accra station was fully rewarded.'

It is certainly significant that after the coup, Howard Bane received rapid promotion within the CIA to their most senior post in Africa. Franklin Williams, the new ambassador, had been a fellow student of Nkrumah at Lincoln in the 1930s but they had not been close friends. Williams had been chosen for this post because of these links with Nkrumah. The high hopes the US administration had for this appointment were not to be realized because Williams arrived only weeks before the coup. He found that, far from welcoming him, Nkrumah suspected that he was a CIA operative. Nkrumah was later to allege that Williams offered \$13 m. to Afrifa, Harlley and Kotoka to assassinate him as he was leaving for Hanoi, but there is no evidence to support this.<sup>21</sup> Significantly, on the day of the coup, a tour had been arranged by the embassy, for Williams to be away from Accra.

It is widely known that the National Liberation Council, which engineered the coup to topple Nkrumah, was in urgent need of hard currency. They co-operated closely with the CIA and for a fee of \$100,000 sold Soviet military equipment including three anti-aircraft guns, of a type used in Vietnam, to the CIA.<sup>22</sup> In a recent interview Professor Walt Rostow, who in 1966 was a White House aide to President Johnson, agreed that the CIA were in touch with the coup leaders but, he said 'We did not throw a match in the haystack.'<sup>23</sup> After weighing up all this evidence, it would be reasonable to conclude that the CIA were closely in touch with the coup leaders, that they were very well briefed and that they were satisfied with the information they obtained, but that they did not actually set the coup in motion or take part.

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When Nkrumah received the news of the coup he was stunned but remained self-controlled. Until clearer news arrived from Accra he bravely continued with his public engagements in Peking, but cancelled his trip to Hanoi. As he started to plan his return trip to Africa his senior political colleagues, like Quaison-Sackey, deserted him. He was left only with his immediate security personnel. Various countries offered him hospitality but he accepted the offer of Sekou Toure in Guinea where he would be reasonably close to Ghana, and from where he could carry on the African revolutionary struggle. He travelled from Peking via Moscow, Belgrade and Algiers, and on 2 March 1966 arrived in Conakry, where he was given the Villa Syli on the coast. The following day, in a public ceremony, Sekou Touré made him joint Head of State of Guinea. Nkrumah was overwhelmed by the generosity of this gesture, and wrote 'There began one of the most fruitful and happiest periods of my life.'<sup>24</sup> In his writings from exile in Guinea, Nkrumah maintained that the coup was carried out by reactionary military elements manipulated by neo-colonialist agents in the embassies of the United States, Britain and West Germany, and that the Ghanaian people were desperate for him to return. The facts were very different.

Evidence from every possible source shows that in Accra and throughout Ghana news of the coup brought universal rejoicing. The newspapers - themselves suddenly freed - came out with the headline 'freedom at Last'. They showed pictures of excited crowds with tears of joy running down their cheeks, welcoming the first of over a thousand detainees to be released. There was jubilation all over the country. The women of Makola Market in Accra led the way in singing and dancing. Thousands gathered to see the statue of Nkrumah pulled down. One description sums it all up:

There was non-stop drumming and dancing for forty-eight hours.

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All work stopped, and there was such a feeling of joy and relief. Firms gave their workers the day off and they joined the milling crowds in Parliament Square.<sup>25</sup>

The press described the detainees: 'Their only crime was that they had the courage and the fortitude to resist the myth of Nkrumah which has now been destroyed for all time.' Under a headline 'The End of Tyranny' a leader stated:

The tyranny of Nkrumah is broken for all time and the country is freed from the dark night of misery and suffering. . . The army and police with the full support of every man, woman and child in Ghana smashed the chains of tyranny and dictatorship. New hope will arise from the moribund and corrupt system which committed heinous crimes in the name of socialism.<sup>26</sup>

The people of Winneba rejoiced as the Ideological Institute was closed down. The Brong Ahafo House of Chiefs spoke of liberation from economic and political disaster. General Ankrah, supported by Kotoka and Afrifa, appealed to Ghanaians who had fled from Nkrumah's tyranny to return and help to build a new Ghana. They also appealed to all their neighbouring countries for a new start leading to good relations. On the other hand, their fear of Nkrumah was such that in many centres, including Achimota, they ordered that Nkrumah's books be burned.

In the Villa Syli in Conakry, Nkrumah, with a retinue of over seventy, quickly set up an efficient unit. These supporters were primarily for his protection, but some helped him to research his writings while others kept him in contact with the African freedom fighters. He quickly built up a library of books both on Marxism and on guerrilla training. His host Sekou Touré considered sending troops to Ghana to restore Nkrumah, but Houphouët-Boigny refused any passage through Ivory Coast. Nkrumah quickly began

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his broadcasts to the people of Ghana from the Guinea station 'Voice of the Revolution'; these broadcasts took place periodically from March to December 1966.

While Nkrumah was still in office he had welcomed investment and aid from both East and West, but as his writings became more theoretical his views became more revolutionary and more extreme. He wrote extensively of the African Socialist Revolution and of the armed struggle to establish a totally socialist society and of the aim to rescue enemy-held areas from the imperialists. As the years passed he remained convinced that the people of Ghana were waiting for his signal to rise up and overthrow the neo-colonialist tyrants. Similarly, he saw the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, which his achievements in the 1950s had encouraged, as part of the world-wide socialist revolution. His capacity to delude himself remained unimpaired. He began to claim that it was the success of Ghana's development plans, not their failure, which prompted the reactionary neo-colonialist element to stage the coup – because his plans threatened the whole neo-colonialist structure.

In 1968 Nkrumah set up a publishing company called PANAF to publish his books. He wrote several new books and republished others. These included *Axioms* with a special edition for freedom fighters, and *Consciencism*. In 1970 he also made another will leaving everything to PANAF.

His final philosophy, published in 1970 as *The Class Struggle in Africa*, is devoted entirely to the African Revolution as a part of the world socialist revolutionary process. The book, fully illustrated with flow charts, outlines how the African People's Revolutionary Party would achieve power supported by the All African People's Revolutionary Army. These were to be parallel organizations with members ranging from the village and platoon at the bottom to the Political Executive and the General Staff at the top. They would be supported by peasants, workers, students, co-operatives

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and enlightened members of the bourgeoisie. Within this context, he considered setting up an embryo Union Government of Africa. His outline of the class struggle emphasizes the negative role of the bourgeoisie which, he wrote, often took over at independence and staved off the real revolution. He was highly critical of bureaucrats, who were usually chosen by the departing imperialists in order to maintain the capitalist system, who showed no loyalty to their own people, and who seemed prepared to serve the most bloody dictators. There were over twenty coups in Africa between 1966 and 1970 which, he asserted, were engineered by bourgeois officers in order to protect capitalism and prevent the African socialist revolution. He stressed the need to politicize the army and to co-ordinate an All African Trade Union Congress, so that the organized socialist workers could forge an alliance with, and give a lead to, the peasants.

By the end of 1970 Nkrumah was seriously ill, and in August 1971 when he flew to Bucharest for medical treatment he was too ill to walk to the aircraft. Cancer had been diagnosed, but it was too far advanced to respond to treatment. After grievous suffering he died on 27 April 1972 in Bucharest. On 30 April his body was flown to Conakry, where Sekou Touré paid him a generous tribute:

Kwame Nkrumah was one of those men who mark the destiny of mankind fighting for freedom and dignity. Kwame Nkrumah lives and will live for ever, because Africa which is grateful to him will live for ever.

Sekou Touré tried to negotiate with the Ghana Government, then under General Acheampong, for suitably dignified ceremonial for the return of Nkrumah's body to Ghana. He also pleaded for an amnesty for Nkrumah's supporters who were still imprisoned, but this request was refused. Eventually, on 7 July 1972 his coffin was

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flown to Accra where it lay in state before burial at Nkroful.

The final tribute to Kwame Nkrumah came from Amilcar Cabral, the great patriot and freedom fighter from Guinea-Bissau, whom the Portuguese later murdered. In a deeply moving speech he coined several particularly memorable phrases. 'Nobody can tell us that Nkrumah died of a cancer of the throat or some other illness. No, Nkrumah was killed by the cancer of betrayal.' Then, warning that no-one should belittle the achievements of Nkrumah, he said, 'For us, the best homage we Africans can render to the immortal memory of Kwame Nkrumah is to strengthen vigilance at all levels of the struggle, to intensify it, and to liberate the whole of Africa.'<sup>27</sup>

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## RETROSPECT

IN GHANA TODAY, A GENERATION after Nkrumah's overthrow, his weaknesses have been largely forgotten and the jubilation at the news of the 1966 coup has also been forgotten. Now he is seen as the charismatic Ghanaian leader who was wooed by East and West, the man with an inspiring, confident and comprehensive philosophy. In the bleak 1980s young Ghanaians say 'We need our heroes', and they look back enviously to the excitement and the idealism of the Nkrumah years.

From the perspective of the late 1980s, the government of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) under Flight Lieutenant J. J. Rawlings, like most of the post-1966 regimes, sees Nkrumah as the Ghanaian leader par excellence. Dr. Asamoah, the PNDC Secretary for Foreign Affairs, at a major conference in May 1985 at the University of Ghana at Legon on 'The Life and Work of Kwame Nkrumah' stated:

In recalling the achievements of Dr Nkrumah, not only is it fit and proper that we do him reverence and honour, it is also necessary and important that we keep alive the gift of his vision and the inspiration of his leadership.

In reality, there is a danger that as Nkrumah is assessed 'with reverence and honour' his shortcomings will be overlooked and the

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mistakes he made will then be repeated. At the Legon Conference most speakers took the Nkrumah period as the touchstone for all their present aims. K.B. Asante, in a paper on Nkrumah's State Enterprises, said:

We have for too long blamed Nkrumah for bequeathing us problems. . . our inability to profit from the State Enterprises bequeathed to us by Nkrumah's efforts is a serious indictment of our generation. . . The State Enterprises are a challenge to us. We cannot blame those who bequeathed them to us. We cannot fail our children.

Other papers at the Legon Conference dealt with different aspects of Nkrumah's regime: the economy, the constitution, the nation state, education, public administration and culture. All paid tribute to his great achievements. He appeared in every sphere – and especially in the field of education – as the leader who created a spirit of urgency and purpose.

As Ghana continues to face problems of ethnicity, the present generation of Ghanaians see Nkrumah as the leader who fought for the unified nation state against the centrifugal forces exemplified by the NLM and other area-based parties and organizations. They also see him as the leader who created the concept of a national economy and a managerial class which was national and not regional in outlook. This view was supported by another conference in London, in March 1986 entitled 'Nkrumah Twenty Years On'. Abubakar Siddique of Ahmadu Bello University commended Nkrumah's Pan African aims and also his aims for Ghana's unity in face of 'the chauvinism, secessionism and the irridentism of Ashanti, Ewe, Togoland, Nzima and "the one-north advocates".<sup>1</sup>

More significant in the long term than all Nkrumah's other reforms, was his attempt to create a socialist economy, with

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the means of production and distribution controlled by the government. This did not succeed and in consequence he has been blamed for ruining Ghana's economy. If, however, he is assessed against the achievements of all the successor regimes, it can be seen that none of them has succeeded either in restructuring the economy or in solving Ghana's economic problems. The National Liberation Council (February 1966-October 1966) under Generals Ankrah and Afrifa followed an economic policy of devaluation and austerity. After the elections of 1969 when Busia and the Progress Party came to power, Busia stressed agricultural development and the encouragement of the private sector. He claimed bravely 'We must wean people away from the notion that the most important thing in life is money and that the true end of politics is wealth'.<sup>2</sup> He tried to reverse Nkrumah's ideology and harked back to the old customs and traditional institutions as the foundation for future progress. But Busia completely failed to overcome Ghana's economic problems, and his devaluation of the cedi in 1971 led directly to the coup by General Acheampong in January 1972. This began a lengthy period of military rule, initially under the National Redemption Council.

After Busia's anti-Nkrumah policy, Acheampong moved slowly towards further state intervention but without Nkrumah's ideological framework. Acheampong emphasized a more equitable distribution of resources, sound economic development and above all self-reliance. But the rhetoric that accompanied these intentions masked a regime which became increasingly brutal and decadent; a regime in which government thugs assaulted doctors in the hospitals and import licences were controlled by prostitutes.<sup>3</sup> In vain Acheampong published a Charter of National Redemption, which attempted to echo the main features of Nkrumaism. It demanded an ideology for a self-reliant nation with revolutionary discipline leading to the goals of one nation, one people, one destiny. These ringing phrases did not cover up the food shortages,

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rising inflation, increasing debts, declining production, widespread corruption, and the gross mismanagement of an increasingly disastrous regime. In 1977 the professional classes – doctors, teachers, engineers and lawyers – went on strike protesting against the horrors of the Acheampong government. This eventually led, in July 1978, to General Akuffo replacing Acheampong. Akuffo tried to rectify the worst features of the Acheampong regime, but, although he accepted IMF support, things did not improve. Thus Busia, Acheampong and Akuffo had completely failed to solve the problems left by Nkrumah and they had also failed to gain the effective support of the Ghanaian people.

During his exile in Conakry after 1966, in his writings Nkrumah developed his ideas on the African revolutionary struggle and on the armed phase of the African Revolution. These views carry increasing weight with those revolutionary leaders who are grappling with Africa's problems today. In Ghana, Nkrumah's philosophy again came to the fore when Flight Lieutenant J. J. Rawlings took over the government on 4 June 1979, and formed the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC). Rawlings aimed to cut out all corruption and profiteering, to carry through a moral revolution to awaken the people to their rights and duties, and to return the country to civilian rule. This clarion call carried much more conviction than Acheampong's pale echo of Nkrumah's ideology. Rawlings showed his real determination to end corruption when Acheampong, Akuffo, Afrifa and four other senior officers were executed in June 1979 during a major purge of the whole administration.

Later that year, with the support of Rawlings and the AFRC, Ghana prepared for its return to civilian rule - thirteen years after the 1966 coup. The Third Republic, set up in 1979, had an executive President, a Council of State and a 140-member Assembly. The constitution prohibited political parties from the previous regimes, but the two major parties to emerge bore a striking likeness to the

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NLM and the CPP. The People's National Party (PNP), which resembled the CPP, won the election, easily defeating the Popular Front Party which was based largely in Ashanti and espoused NLM aims.

The veteran campaigner Imoru Egala dominated the PNP. He had the support of former CPP activists, together with a group of younger men who romanticized Nkrumah's image. Egala worked behind the scenes, and the party put forward Dr Hilla Limann as their presidential candidate. The PNP took over in September 1979. It aimed to reconstruct the state apparatus after years of military rule, to restore the economy, and to regain the support of the people for the government. Limann immediately faced the urgent task of cutting down the huge bureaucracy, curbing the power of the military, and bringing order into an economic and financial situation which was in complete chaos. Regrettably, because his government failed to take effective action, the economic situation rapidly worsened. By 1981 the economy had virtually collapsed. There were shortages of all commodities, endless queues for basic foods, and rampant inflation. The Limann Government had lost what little credibility it had possessed.

As the pressures increased, the PNP split into warring factions. Kofi Batsa and some older members tried again to invoke the magic of Nkrumah's name, but Egala's death in 1980 reduced still further the chances of the government's survival. Although, in their election campaign, the PNP had tried to rally support around the name of Nkrumah, their dismal failure in government seemed to do no harm to his image. In fact, almost the reverse was true – the puny efforts of his successors appeared to add to his stature.

Statistics illustrate the real damage to Ghana's economy caused by inadequate government policies. The per capita income in 1982 was 33 per cent below the level achieved even under Acheampong in 1974. Production in all areas of the economy minerals, gold,

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diamonds and all manufacturing industry - declined dramatically. There were ever increasing budget deficits, rising debts and accelerating inflation. The Limann Government failed to solve its internal economic problems and to cope with the effects of world inflation and the recession of the late 1970s. The people of Ghana once again had to face serious shortages and a virtual breakdown of services provided by the state.

In this situation, Rawlings carried out a second coup on 31 December 1981. This time he came to power with a carefully thought-out programme, seeking nothing less than a revolution to transform the social and economic order of the country. With the help of several colleagues trained in Colonel Gaddafi's Libya and a powerful group of Marxist intellectuals from Legon, he established the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC). In 1979 he had ousted a military government, but - a significant difference - in 1982 he removed a democratically elected government, albeit one which had totally lost the support of the people.

Under the rule of Rawlings and the PNDC, Nkrumah's ideas again came to the fore. Within the PNDC two groups emerged, both claiming to be Nkrumah's heirs. The June Fourth Movement - an extreme Marxist group - aimed to establish a fully socialist state and to cut all ties with imperialism and neo-colonialist agencies like the IMF and the World Bank. A second left-wing group, the New Democratic Movement, put forward a policy based on the ideas of both Mao Tse-tung and Lenin, but it was less doctrinaire than the June Fourth Movement. Among the welter of ideas put forward in this situation, there was little coherent leadership. Initially the PNDC sought help from the countries of the Eastern bloc, but found - as Nkrumah had before - that they drove a very hard bargain, and anyway could not supply the financial help on the scale Ghana required.

In the Rawlings Cabinet, Dr. K. Botchwey controlled the financial and economic plans, and although he supported the

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New Democratic Movement, he was gradually forced to call on the help of the IMF. Before he did so he drew up a severe programme of reform and retrenchment which impressed the IMF. By 1984 the PNDC Government had received over \$400m. This was allotted to roads, railways and transport in order to get the economy moving and to help exports. The Cabinet included some veterans from the 1960s, among them Mrs Susan Alhassan who had been a minister under Nkrumah, and Captain Tsikata who had been a member of his Young Pioneers. The PNDC Government also received the support of the Kwame Nkrumah Revolutionary Guards, an organization formed in 1980 which aimed to popularize the principles of Nkrumah's scientific socialism.

On the economic front, by 1983 Botchwey and Dr. S. Abbey had launched Ghana's Economic Recovery Plan which aimed to cut imports and government spending and to stimulate the economy. At the same time Rawlings had deliberately taken on the mantle of Nkrumah by working actively in the Non-Aligned Group and by giving support to the OAU Liberation Committee.<sup>4</sup> There were other similarities to Nkrumah's situation - tension with Nigeria, cool relations with the Ivory Coast, and hostility towards Togoland.

Nkrumah had made a major blunder when he tried to impose socialist policies from above before there was any support for socialism among the people. Rawlings had learned this very important lesson, and from 1982 onwards he encouraged the formation of People's Defence Committees (PDCs) and Workers' Defence Committees (WDCs), with the main purpose of involving people in the villages and workers in the industrial areas in the social revolution he was trying to achieve. The PDCs and the WDCs worked slowly and laboriously and did not at once produce the vitality and spark that had been hoped for - partly because of an understandable reluctance among some Ghanaians to embrace

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something which seemed to resemble the less attractive aspects of the old CPP. Many mature and responsible Ghanaians who could have given sound leadership, held aloof from the PDCs and WDCs. As a result, some of the more violent elements in society which had given the CPP a bad name now came forward in the PDCs.

As the PDCs and the WDCs were not an unqualified success, Rawlings tried again to involve the people more fully in his revolutionary aims by establishing a completely new scheme of local government. This provided for 110 District Assemblies with executive and legislative functions, to come into operation after new elections in 1988. It remains to be seen whether these new structures can galvanize the Ghanaian people into a long-term political commitment which neither Nkrumah nor any of his successors were able to achieve.

Rawlings and the PNDC Government's attempts to carry through a social revolution and to gain the support of the people have been plagued by a number of attempted coups, some of them based in Togoland. Nine attempted coups were recorded between March 1982 and January 1985, many of them backed by relatively junior servicemen from Ghana's northern areas. Most of these attempts appear to emanate from rival revolutionary groups and are not reactionary or neo-colonialist, though there are some opposition groups in Britain and West Germany suspected of having links with the CIA.

Today, government agencies and advisers attempt to account for Ghana's economic decline but, whatever their school of thought, they look back to Nkrumah's regime as the norm. Rawlings now has an infinitely more difficult task to perform than Nkrumah had because of Ghana's run-down economy and the burden of its debt. He has to rebuild the country after twenty years during which hundreds of able Ghanaians have left for successful careers in Europe and North America. During these

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years corruption and smuggling have seriously eroded support for the state. Many Ghanaians have embraced the *kalabule* system (the black market), and entire communities have had to go back to their own plots of land for bare survival. It is a far cry from the heady days of Nkrumah when Ghanaians were buoyed up by their achievements and by seeing their Kwame rubbing shoulders with the world's leaders in London, Moscow, New Delhi, Peking or Washington.

The successor regimes have achieved scant success, and the quest for legitimacy may now rest with attempts to identify with the Nkrumah regime. But for all his gradual reinstatement as the father of the nation, Nkrumah made mistakes which must be realistically assessed. At independence Ghana had enjoyed substantial advantages - a well-ordered society, a prosperous economy, substantial sterling reserves and an educated group eager to play its part in the country's future. Nkrumah, always a man in a hurry, allowed haste to dominate his judgments. After his return to the Gold Coast he immediately carried out his successful campaign for Self-Government Now. This was perhaps too easy and too rapid. He never considered the option of building up a coalition and consensus of social groups and economic forces which would provide a durable and permanent social and political base. In contrast, Nyerere in Tanzania had to build up a coalition of interests, and in Ivory Coast Houphouet-Boigny built up a sound coalition of the elite together with farmers, landlords and entrepreneurs. Significantly, both these rulers survived longer than Nkrumah. His ideological and revolutionary approach made consensus politics difficult and from the time of his break with the UGCC in 1949 there was an ever increasing gulf between the CPP and the opposition. As a result, the majority of the elite who could have made an important contribution to the life of the country were alienated, and a firm base for co-operation between different classes or interest groups became impossible. In several

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parts of Africa, when one party grasped power at independence, it frequently assumed the attitude that it had the right to rule, and, very dangerously, began to consider its opponents as enemies or even traitors. Such attitudes certainly developed in Ghana under Nkrumah.

In assessing the success or failure of newly independent countries, the role played by the peasant farmer has often proved to be crucial. Examples from Africa and Asia show that the political stability of a newly independent country depends on the relationship between the regime and the abler and more prosperous peasants. In this context, Ghana under Nkrumah must be included among those states which, with disastrous results, failed to build on such loyalties. In the 1950s Ghana possessed a prosperous, intelligent and well organized peasant farmer class which had established itself effectively and which produced two-thirds of the world's cocoa supply. This was an asset which should have played an important part in the success of an independent Ghana. Ghana like many countries of sub-Saharan Africa depended heavily on the export of a single crop. Under the British colonial regime, marketing boards – for example, the Cocoa Marketing Board in Ghana and the Cotton Marketing Board in Uganda – were set up to protect the farmer against the wide fluctuations of world commodity prices. At independence or even before it, the post-independence governments saw the marketing boards as an invaluable source of revenue too tempting to be resisted.

With his passionate ideology to make Ghana a heaven on earth in ten years, Nkrumah eagerly took over from the British the colonial-style Cocoa Marketing Board and began to use its funds to finance all the development programmes he wished to drive through. This decision illustrated some of the weaknesses in his leadership and the opportunities these weaknesses gave to the more dubious elements in the CPP. It showed his indifference to money and to any form of financial responsibility. It also showed

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his refusal to accept financial restraints and discipline, and this played into the hands of corrupt CPP members. All these factors established the belief that there was an unlimited supply of money, and started the CPP on a headlong dive into corruption. This happened at the expense of the cocoa farmers who received less and less for their crops, and saw themselves as the deprived victims of a hateful town-based group of verandah boys and hoodlums. In this situation, it was Gbedemah backed by Nkrumah who, when he made his fateful decision in 1954 not to increase the cocoa price for the farmer, set off the conflagration which became the National Liberation Movement. This Movement was backed to the hilt by the Ashanti cocoa farmers. The rise of the NLM shows the extent to which Nkrumah had alienated the abler peasant farmer group on which future economic success and political stability for the country depended.

From the mid-1950s onwards the CPP Governments continued to take a major part of their revenue from the cocoa farmer. Nkrumah saw this as a sound and essential part of his philosophy: he was using all available revenue for the development of the country as a whole. From the perspective of the 1980s it can be seen that he was eroding the one factor which both Asia and Africa have shown to be the mainstay of stability and prosperity – the richer peasant farmer. In the longer term, the effect of Nkrumah's policy towards the cocoa farmers proved disastrous. He rejected them as allies in his plan to revolutionize Ghana's agriculture. He channelled agricultural investment into the state farm projects, and appeared deliberately to undermine the interest of the peasant farmer. In a few years the cocoa farmer was alienated and the pre-eminence of the Ghana cocoa industry and all that it meant to Ghana's prosperity was rapidly lost to the Ivory Coast and Togoland.

Nkrumah's state farm policy failed almost from the start. There was scarcely a successful example of a state farm or collective

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farm project in the world, but this did not deter Nkrumah. He did not even wait to set up a pilot project. In the first year of his state farm project 1961-2, he poured in £16m even though there were too few agricultural experts to run the scheme properly, and it had to be staffed largely by unqualified CPP party members.

The problems of the state farms contributed substantially to the overall failure of Nkrumah's regime, and by 1966 this failure was apparent for all to see – illustrated by the universal joy and jubilation at his overthrow. Yet, he will remain as one of Africa's great leaders. By skilfully guiding Ghana towards independence, he, more than anyone, inspired the African revolution. In the following ten years this led to independence for most of Africa and to the overthrow of many of the white racist regimes of Central and Southern Africa, and it led the battle for African freedom and dignity to the heartland of apartheid.

In his conclusion to *Dark Days in Ghana*, written in 1968, Nkrumah wrote 'Africa is ripe for armed revolution. . . imperialism and neo-colonialism must be attacked. . . and protracted peoples' wars must be fought until victory is achieved'. In contrast to this, before 1966, although he was obsessed by his concept of African union government, he was one of the most successful pragmatists and achieved massive support for Ghana from the capitalist world. His close links with President Kennedy illustrate some of the fundamental issues. Kennedy had a sincere passion to help the Third World succeed in breaking out of its poverty and he genuinely wanted Ghana to lead the way. He hoped that Nkrumah would build a sound and prosperous economy based on Ghana's rich natural resources, and helped by effective industrial investment. He grieved when Nkrumah's attention was diverted from sound schemes for the benefit of the Ghanaian people to the allure and glamour of the world political stage, and towards union government, the Non-Aligned group and his more reckless socialist ambitions.

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An honest and fair appraisal of Nkrumah must contain much criticism but, whatever criticism is levelled, Nkrumah's great ideal which was still a possibility perhaps as late as 1961 – was to create something totally new. It was to create an African socialism and to construct a Ghanaian socialist state – a state backed by Western capitalism and by Eastern socialism, which would bring the benefits of both to the Ghanaian people and help them in their struggle to lift themselves from poverty and exploitation. Nkrumah's dream was to bring East and West, Kennedy and Khrushchev, capitalism and communism to the help of the African people and he came close to achieving this. His vision which so nearly succeeded still inspires the people of Africa today.

Perhaps Nkrumah's greatest weakness, and the greatest warning to his successors, is that although he had brilliant vision many of his fantasies bore little relation to stern reality. While he preached endlessly about the evils of neo-colonialism and exploitation, he presided over one of the greatest swindlers' bonanzas the world has ever seen. He became renowned as a soft touch by sharp businessmen, by ne'er-do-wells, and by crooks and diamond smugglers from Freetown to Calabar. While he preached about socialist ideals, his corrupt minions sold Ghana's future to greedy flocks of entrepreneurs, and every wasted pound was largely paid for by the sweat of the overburdened cocoa farmer.

In the late 1980s as Ghana with renewed resolution attempts to overcome its problems, some of these lessons have been learned. The views of many Ghanaians may be summed up in the words of Kenneth Dadzie, the then Ghana High Commissioner in London, speaking at a conference on 'Kwame Nkrumah and Pan-Africanism' at the Commonwealth Institute in September 1984. He said:

Nkrumah continues to be revered for his revolutionary vision and action, aimed at the eradication of colonial rule and the

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achievement of economic independence, the social and economic transformation of society in the interest of the common person, and the attainment of African unity.

He concluded that Nkrumah would be remembered 'for his strenuous search for a correct theoretical basis for an ideology uniquely appropriate to Africa and other Third World countries. He still provides great inspiration to our revolutionary process'.

Nkrumah's inspiration is enshrined in the newly established Kwame Nkrumah Foundation. At its inaugural meeting on 19 September 1987, in Accra's Arden Hall (named after Arden-Clarke), the chairman Kojo Botsio paid tribute to 'Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah, founding father of modern Ghana and the leading architect of African liberation and unity'. The Foundation will encourage young Ghanaians in educational and historical research, and will aim to establish a Kwame Nkrumah chair at the University of Ghana. Professor Akilagpa Sawyerr, Vice Chancellor of the University of Ghana, said 'The most significant aspect of Nkrumah's life and work was Nkrumah the Visionary'. Professor Sawyerr asked Ghanaians to focus on the essential Nkrumah, 'The Nkrumah who belongs to all of us, because he symbolised the best in all of us'. From the Howard University, Washington, Dr Battle referred to Nkrumah as the 'Man to whom we all owe a debt of gratitude for having inspired our people to free themselves from colonial bondage and to seek a better understanding of their role in the world. I come to bask in the glow of this Black Caesar'.

In the years to come, Nkrumah will be remembered for his vision and for the excitement he created. This touched a sympathetic chord among black people in the United States as they prepared for their great civil rights campaign. Nkrumah achieved all this, but he made the fundamental mistake, that, while he stood on the world stage and propounded his visions, he neglected his home base and had to pay the price. Other leaders - Kaunda, Nyerere

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or Kenyatta - may not have reached the heights of Nkrumah, but they were more successful politicians because they made their base secure. They have ruled their countries for longer than Nkrumah ruled Ghana, and they have not been overthrown by force. They were less brilliant as visionaries but more effective politicians.

Today most of Africa is ruled by military governments in one-party states, while the continent is condemned to poverty and famine by the debt system - a far cry from the idealistic goal of Nkrumah. He made serious mistakes, but in the future these will largely be forgotten. Africa will remember him as the leader who sought a united world effort to overcome Africa's poverty. His hopes were encapsulated in his ultimate goal of a United Africa in which its rich natural resources would be used for the benefit of all its people and would not be filched from them by foreign financiers and other exploiters. It may take centuries for Nkrumah's goal to be achieved, but, when it is, he will be revered as the leader with the dynamism and the intelligent imagination to take the first brave steps.

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moment he must be blamed for all the subsequent problems in Ghana.

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**David Rooney** is a specialist on Ghana from Cambridge. His research for this book unearthed unpublished material in Ghana, Britain and the United States, where he had access to CIA papers. He has written extensively on the Commonwealth and modern Africa, and is the author of a biography of Sir Charles Noble Arden Clarke.



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Rooney, David. *Kwame Nkrumah : Vision and Tragedy*.

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