

THE GOLD COAST REVOLUTION

*The Struggle of an African People
from Slavery to Freedom*

GEORGE PADMORE

London

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KWAME NKRUMAH

'I came out of gaol and into the Assembly without the slightest feeling of bitterness to Britain. I stand for no racialism, no discrimination against any race or individual, but I am unalterably opposed to imperialism in any form'—PRIME MINISTER NKRUMAH
(*The Times*, 14.2.51)

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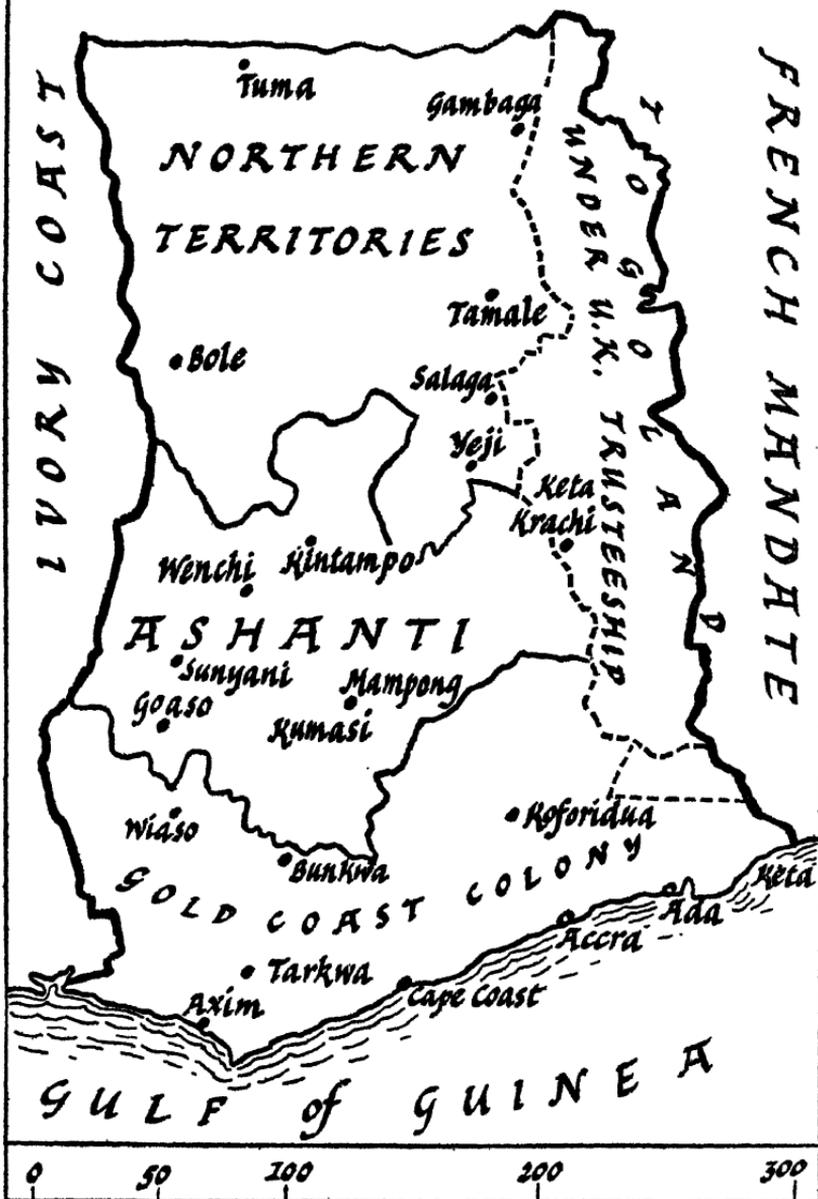
*Dedicated to Dorothy,
who encouraged me to write
this account of Ghana's
struggle for Freedom*

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THE GOLD COAST

IVORY COAST



INTRODUCTION

THE PURPOSE OF this book is to trace the evolution of Gold Coast nationalism from the foundation of the Ashanti Confederacy to the emergence of the Convention People's Party and after. It makes no pretence to be a detailed constitutional history of the Gold Coast. The emphasis of the book is upon the rise and development of post-war nationalism, in particular the economic and social unrest leading to the promulgation of the Coussey Constitution in 1950 and the methods of agitation used by the several nationalist pressure groups and political organizations in conducting the struggle for constitutional reforms and independence.

While political consciousness among the masses is something quite recent, Gold Coast nationalism has deep roots and a long tradition founded in well-established political institutions. Present-day nationalism also draws emotional inspiration from the former Sudanic Empire of Ghana, whence, from the thirteenth century, migrated the Akan tribes to the territories they now occupy. Hence the new name Ghana which the nationalists have adopted for the Gold Coast.

'Having his origins in Western Sudan', the Gold Coast African has been described as 'a born individualist, virile and irrepressible by nature', who 'tends to be suspicious of outside influence and intolerant of dictatorial methods in any form.'¹

Thanks to their traditional spirit of independence,

¹ *Report on Gold Coast Constitutional Reform*, Colonial No. 248, p. 8.

the Akans were able to evolve a high degree of political cohesion long before they came into contact with European nations. Both the Ashanti and the Fanti branches of the Akans had created well-defined governments and states contemporaneous with the Stuart period in England. And although the hereditary system is recognized in the Gold Coast, 'democratic principles in the main underlie the traditional principles of this country. No chief, for example, speaks as the head of his state, except with the consent and approval of his councillors, who are the acknowledged representatives of the people.'¹

The elders and the people also reserve the sovereign right to get rid of an autocratic and dictatorial ruler by destooling him. The Stool (or throne) is the symbol of chieftaincy. The conception of democracy, therefore, is nothing new to Gold Coast Africans. The introduction of Western parliamentary democracy as part of the recent constitutional changes 'is rather to emphasize its vital importance in a reformed system of government and to provide for a fuller realization of an imperfectly realized idea'.²

However, in attempting to create a more perfect democracy, Gold Coast nationalist leaders—traditionalists and reformers—are agreed upon conserving the best of their country's political and social institutions and adapting them to the requirements of the twentieth century. For example, the Nkrumah Government are retaining the institution of chieftaincy and at the same time have restored to the common people those sanctions and powers of control over the chiefs which they exercised before the British transformed them from constitutional rulers into imperialist agents under the system of Indirect Rule or so-called Native Authorities.

Although the chiefs will no longer play the role of political agents of the British Government, chieftaincy,

¹ *Report on Gold Coast Constitutional Reform*, Colonial No. 248, p. 15.

² *Ibid.*

as a socio-religious institution, still has strong roots in the life of the people, especially in the rural areas and throughout the Northern Territories.

Until recent official pronouncement, the role of chieftaincy in the rapidly evolving society of the Gold Coast was in doubt. Now that the status of the chiefs has been defined in relation to the democratically based central and local government, it may still be possible to make use of their prestige in their traditional capacity as fathers of their people, giving moral leadership and wise counsel to their subjects in the building of a healthy and virile modern democratic society. What they make of this new opportunity depends upon the chiefs themselves. For there is a substantial body of opinion among educated Africans, not only in the Gold Coast but elsewhere, that chieftaincy is a social anachronism that must adapt itself to the rapidly changing social order or disappear, if Africa is to take her place in the modern world.

AIMS AND METHODS OF BRITISH COLONIAL POLICY

While the ultimate goal of British colonial policy has been frequently enunciated and the broad lines of advance indicated, no Secretary of State for Colonies—Tory, Liberal or Socialist—has ever set a time-limit for a colony's emergence into complete self-government or independence. The rate of progress is set by the degree of pressure put upon the imperial authority by the natives themselves. This in its turn depends upon the degree of political consciousness in a colonial population, and the ability of the leaders to mobilize popular support behind the demands of the nationalist movement for rapid constitutional advance. It is only when mass pressure has assumed an explosive character that the imperialists grudgingly make any substantial concessions. If the people make no demands, their rulers make no changes. That has been the history of every subject nation, as I have shown in the comparative

study of nationalist movements in Chapter XI. In this respect the Gold Coast has been no exception. It has reached its present stage by long efforts of agitation, sometimes assuming the form of 'Positive Action'.

Whatever the form and method resorted to as a means of accelerating the pace of constitutional advance, the colonial territories pass through five well-defined stages before reaching complete self-government. This pattern of British colonial policy evolved not as the result of a premeditated philosophy, but grew empirically as a former Under-Secretary of State for Colonies, Lord Cranborne, has pointed out. 'We have no cut and dried pattern', he once admitted. 'We have adopted and adapted existing systems, changing them readily as the need arose and experience taught.' This approach is typically British for, like the Romans, they are fundamentally a practical people who despise theory.

The first and longest stage of British colonial government is a form of benevolent dictatorship. The Governor is vested with all legislative and executive powers. In the performance of his duties he is usually advised by a council consisting of senior British officials and a few hand-picked prominent upper-class natives. Since the official majority can always outvote the unofficial (i.e. non-civil servant) minority members, all legislation proposed by the Governor to the Council is assured of adoption.

The introduction of the elective principle ushers in the second stage. This concession is at first limited to the middle-class stratum of the population and is based on educational and property qualifications. Members elected on this limited franchise, together with certain nominated unofficial members, still constitute a minority in the Legislative Council. The Governor is still in a position to get his policies endorsed. Describing the Reichstag-like performance of *ex-officio* members, Sir Anton Bertram says that 'the sight of a long row of officials who scarcely

otherwise open their lips, exclaiming "yes" and "no" in succession, by official order, whatever their private opinions may be, moves the resentment of politically minded spectators'.¹

By degrees the number of elected members is increased and the franchise is widened until the point of universal suffrage is reached. This process leads to the elected members becoming a majority in the Council and the official members receding. At this stage of constitutional advance, the Governor is no longer guaranteed an official majority vote in support of his policies. To counteract this position within the Legislature, the Governor's powers are sustained outside of it by the powers of certification and veto which are conferred upon him. That is to say, he can refuse assent to any Bill passed by the unofficial majority or can make law any Bill presented to the Council but rejected by the unofficial majority. Such action is taken in the interests of public order, public faith and good government.

These special powers of the Governor in effect neutralize the elected majority in the Legislature, and the emphasis moves from the Legislature to the Executive, which is the instrument of government. The struggle for power is sharpened, and to placate the nationalist hunger for real power the Governor invariably co-opts a few of the elected unofficial members of the Legislative Council on to his Executive Council, which at this stage has an *ex-officio* majority.

This step marks the end of representative government and the beginning of the third stage, that of responsible government. The emphasis from now is upon converting the unofficial minority in the Executive into an unofficial majority. This is achieved step by step until the unofficial members of the Executive are given control of groups of civil service departments. This might be described as the embryo ministerial stage. More and more authority is

¹ *The Colonial Service* by Sir Anton Bertram, C.U.P., p. 175.

delegated over internal affairs. The key posts of defence and external affairs, finance and justice are firmly held by the last three *ex-officio* representatives in the Executive, namely, the Colonial Secretary, the Financial Secretary and the Attorney-General. This trio represents the last residue of the imperial authority, which remains until the final stage of graduation from Crown Colony government to full self-government is reached.

The evolutionary process is completed when the three *ex-officio* Ministers disappear from the Legislature and surrender their portfolios to representative native ministers, retire to their substantive positions as ordinary civil servants and cease playing politicians. With their departure, the Executive Council becomes wholly unofficial and the Leader of the Legislature emerges as the Prime Minister. This may sometimes, as in the Gold Coast, take place even before the formal retirement of the *ex-officio* members from the Executive. But it is always a sign of the expiration of their term in the Executive or Cabinet.

Having reached this fourth stage, a colony can be said to be on the threshold of independence. It is now only left for the Governor to relinquish his powers of veto and certification and to act solely upon the advice of his ministers. When all the technical details have been completed and the constitutional instrument, namely an Act of Independence, passed by the British Parliament to give legality to the new status, the colony can be said to have reached the fifth stage of a Dominion with the right, as provided by the Statute of Westminster, to remain a member of the Commonwealth or to secede. Membership of the Commonwealth must not be confused with the right to self-determination. This last is the direct concern of the colonial people and the British imperial government, and does not require the assent of the other Commonwealth members. However, in recent years, some British imperialist spokesmen such

as the Tory Colonial Secretary, Mr Oliver Lyttelton, have asserted that the Dominions have first to be consulted regarding the admission of new members into the Commonwealth 'club'. If this latest interpretation of British constitutional procedure is correct, Britain may well be the loser if she continues to allow her attitude to the coloured races of the Commonwealth and Empire to be influenced by South Africa's *Apartheid* and *Herrenvolk* doctrines.

As I have shown in Chapter VI, up to the end of the last war the rate and degree of constitutional reform in the Gold Coast was regulated by the Colonial Office to conform as closely as possible to the empirical methods of British imperial practice. Beginning from absolute autocracy, the Gold Coast got its first Crown Colony Legislative Council in 1850. It was not until 1925 that the second stage was reached, when the principle of elected representatives was conceded. The elected representatives remained a minority until 1946. After that the pace quickened. Between 1946 and 1950, the Colony secured two constitutions as compared with three during the whole previous period: in 1850, 1916 and 1925. The latest reform has brought the Colony to full responsible government—the threshold of Dominion status.

Closely inter-related with the latest constitutional reforms and the new status of the chiefs in the context of responsible government is the land tenure system—the very basis of economic democracy. The right of ownership continues to be vested collectively in the tribes represented by the Stools; while the administration and control over the use of land has been transferred from the Chieftain Councils to the newly established local government councils elected jointly by the citizens and traditional authorities. This bloodless agrarian revolution will enable the Government to make the best use of the land for carrying out its agricultural and industrial development plans. It will at the same time prevent the

emergence of native landlordism and arrest foreign exploitation of the timber and mineral resources of the country.

LAST CHANCE IN AFRICA

The Gold Coast Revolution, which is still unfolding, has already given inspiration and impetus to Africans in other parts of the once Dark Continent. Dr Nkrumah and his Cabinet colleagues have given more than a hint of the potentialities of African statesmanship even when the political aspirations of a dependent people have been only partially satisfied. As long as colonial nationalists are condemned to remain frustrated by the denial of active and fruitful participation in the administration of their countries, there is no hope of peace, progress, or prosperity in Africa.

Africa can only be economically developed with the active co-operation and willing support of the Africans themselves, and their goodwill will not be secured until they are given the opportunity of shouldering the political responsibilities of self-government. The problems facing Africa are manifold, and in East and Central Africa they are aggravated by the complexities of what are fashionably termed 'plural societies', that is, areas settled by Europeans. In these territories there is much talk from the alien communities about 'trusteeship' and 'partnership'; but it is quite certain that the deep problems affecting every facet of the Africans' lives will only begin to be tackled when the settlers start to translate their shibboleths into action by conceding in practice full economic, political and social equality to the indigenous peoples of the countries in which they seek to make permanent homes.

In the development of their long-neglected continent the Africans will need the aid and advice of men of all races—white, brown, yellow—and of all creeds, who are ready to work with them in true partnership and equality,

not as masters and slaves. Africans are sick and weary of having high-sounding lofty declarations flung at them while the colour bar and other racial disabilities are ever-present realities restricting their development and progress and stifling their human dignity. They are frustrated. They have lost faith. They ask not for words and empty promises, but for concrete deeds of friendship and goodwill. Britain is today squandering her last imperial assets—the trust and loyalty of her coloured citizens.

For too long have Africans slept. But now they are awakening—and rapidly—to the realization of their inferior status, to a consciousness of their rights in the world of men and nations. And having awakened, they will not again fall back to sleep. They will fight—and by every means, as recent events have only too well demonstrated—to secure their rightful heritage as free people in a free world.

In this struggle the political advance of the Gold Coast has been a source of hope and inspiration. Today, the Gold Coast is one of the few healthy political spots for black men in tropical Africa. Its denial of self-government at this advanced stage by a British Government—Conservative or Socialist—would deal one further blow to the hope of peaceful constitutional progress in the African Continent. It devolves, therefore, upon the Gold Coast people to press forward united on the last stages to self-government. It is equally the responsibility of the British Parliament and people to meet these demands with goodwill and sincerity, so that they may, in some small measure, help to restore faith in unfulfilled British promises to prepare Africans for 'Dominion status within the Commonwealth'.

I

EUROPEAN SETTLEMENTS, IN THE GOLD COAST

ALTHOUGH THE COLONIAL problem in Africa has been a lively one ever since the European powers embarked upon the scramble for the division of the so-called Dark Continent in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, public opinion in Britain has never been so much concerned with events in Africa as since the end of the Second World War.

Today, imperialism has come home to roost! Throughout the African continent, especially in the Gold Coast, the indigenous peoples, inspired by the newly won independence of India, Pakistan, Ceylon and Burma, are challenging the *status quo*.

In the southern, central, and eastern territories, the policy of *Apartheid* and other *Herrenvolk* doctrines of racial segregation and colour bar are arousing bitter resentment among the Africans, giving rise to demands for racial equality, democratic rights and self-government. This post-war agitation for social equality and human rights has now become part and parcel of the national liberation movements.

‘The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the colour line’, and there can be no true partnership, no genuine co-operation, except on a basis of absolute racial equality. This in turn can only be realized by abolishing the inequality of nations and peoples under the centuries-old and discredited system of colonialism

and imperialism. In the same way as the United States by the time of the Civil War could not continue to exist half-free and half-slave, so today the world cannot exist partly self-governing and partly colonial. It is sheer political dishonesty and humbug for the Western democratic powers to denounce Soviet imperialism while they themselves maintain any vestige of colonialism and continue to practise their own forms of imperialism, however disguised. Perhaps because the peoples of Eastern Europe are white while those over whom the Western powers (Britain, Belgium, Portugal, France and South Africa) exercise dominion are Africans and Asians, they feel justified in continuing to bear 'the white man's burden'. All nations and races must be absolutely free if lasting peace, security and prosperity are ever to be attained. Until this fact is realized and acted upon, Britain cannot truly lay claim to that moral leadership which her statesmen boast is hers. 'Most men in the world are coloured. A belief in humanity means a belief in coloured man. . . . For the future world will in all reasonable possibility be what the coloured men make it.'¹ In a world torn between conflicting and irreconcilable ideologies, Africa may yet be a deciding factor in international affairs.

How did the Colonial problem in Africa arise? This can best be answered by reviewing briefly the first relationships between Europeans and Africans. While the conquest and partitioning of Africa was only carried out during the latter part of the nineteenth century—the heyday of modern imperialism—Europeans have been exploiting Africans ever since the fifteenth century, when they first made contact with the Gold Coast and other parts of West Africa as slave traders.

¹ *The Century of the Colour Line* by Dr W. E. B. DuBois. Pittsburgh Courier pamphlet.

THE SLAVE TRADE

Although certain historians claim that French navigators were the first Europeans to visit the Gold Coast in the fourteenth century, the Portuguese were in fact the first white people to establish a permanent foothold on the West African coast. Inspired by Prince Henry, surnamed 'The Navigator', these Portuguese seamen sailed along the western coast of Africa and reached the mouth of the Senegal river in 1444. From there they moved gradually south until they reached the Gold Coast in 1471. There they established a permanent settlement at Elmina in 1482, which they called Fort San Jorge. Similar settlements were made by the Portuguese all along the Guinea coast from Nigeria to Angola in their voyages round the Cape of Good Hope on their way to the Far East.

As the Portuguese consolidated their positions along the Guinea coast, they started to carry on legitimate trade with the natives in gold, ivory, native cloths, pepper, spices and other tropical condiments then in great demand in western Europe. In exchange, the European traders supplied the African chiefs with guns and gunpowder, gin, beads, knives and other manufactured commodities. At first there was no attempt to annex territory or to enslave the blacks. Trade and commerce in goods was the predominant basis of the relationship between the two races. Apart from a few hundred Negroes taken by sea captains to Europe to work as domestic servants and labourers on the estates of Spanish and Portuguese aristocratic families, the need for chattel slaves on a commercial scale had not then arisen, since feudalism prevailed still throughout the Iberian peninsula.

Trade and commerce in human beings only replaced legitimate trade and commerce in goods following the discovery of the Americas and West Indies. Then, and only then, did West Africa become commercially important

to the New World. The slave trade soon became the main cause of commercial rivalry and war between the maritime powers of western Europe, especially England, France and Holland, from the seventeenth to the early nineteenth century. It was precisely to avoid such quarrels between Spain and Portugal, the two leading Catholic powers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, that Pope Alexander VI issued a Papal Bull in 1493 dividing up the territories discovered by Catholic navigators between the rulers of these countries to the exclusion of all others. For example, Spain got exclusive rights in the New World and Portugal in Africa and the East. Therefore, when the need of labour in the Spanish American and West Indian colonies arose, following the extermination of the indigenous Carib and Arawak Indian populations by the early European settlers, the King of Spain had to make an agreement with the King of Portugal to supply his New World colonies with Negroes to replace the Indians. This agreement was the celebrated 'Asiento'. The Portuguese enjoyed this trade monopoly until they were expelled from the Gold Coast by the Dutch, who captured Fort San Jorge at Elmina in 1637 and Fort St Anthony at Axim in 1642. Having secured the 'Asiento' contract, the Dutch West India Company, founded in 1621, gradually established new settlements all along the Gold Coast. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries keen competition existed between the Dutch, British, Danes, Swedes and Brandenburgers—all of whom were engaged in the slave trade, then the most lucrative form of European colonial commerce.

After the Danes had driven out the Swedes, who had built Christiansborg Castle¹ near Accra in 1661, their influence expanded rapidly along the eastern coastal areas, from Accra to Ada and Keta. The Danes exercised

¹ The castle was first used as a depot for slaves, then as a lunatic asylum, and now as the official residence of the Governor.

a virtual protectorate over the Akwapim and Volta river area, from which parts of the Gold Coast they supplied slaves to the Danish West Indian colonies. The Danes sold their interests in the Gold Coast to the British in 1850 and finally withdrew from West Africa.

The British connection with the Gold Coast goes back to the period of the first Queen Elizabeth, when Sir John Hawkins sailed to West Africa in the good ship *Jesus* in 1562 and brought the first Africans back to England for sale. From the sixteenth century the British, operating through the Company of Royal Adventurers of England Trading to Africa and the Royal African Company, fought tooth and nail to secure the 'Asiento', the much-prized contract for the supply of slaves to the Spanish colonies in South America and the West Indies. This was secured under the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. The terms of this settlement of the War of the Spanish Succession gave the English the exclusive right to supply the bulk of Negroes to the West Indian plantations until the trade was abolished in 1807. Those obtained from the Gold Coast were known as Koromantis, after the first British fort built at Koromanti in 1631.

In fairness to the white men, it must be said that they did not go slave hunting themselves. This part of the operations they left to their black purveyors, who kept the various depots or forts scattered along the coast supplied with human merchandise. While the black man cannot escape responsibility for helping to enslave his brother Africans, the major blame must rest squarely on the shoulders of the civilized Christian white man. He encouraged the slave trading and organized the transatlantic trade. His is the responsibility for the disruption of settled agricultural life over vast areas of the African Continent, which has been a factor in retarding the social development of African society for centuries, and also for the untold misery brought to millions of black people sold into slavery. The slave trade constitutes the historical link

between the Gold Coast and the West Indies. The despoliation of the former contributed to the economic development of the latter. The labour of the Negroes provided much of the primitive accumulation of capital that went into the financing of the English Industrial Revolution. Thanks to the industrial wealth and maritime prosperity derived from the profits of the African slave trade and West Indian slavery, Britain got a lead on her continental rivals that she would not otherwise have gained. Referring to this vital contribution to the early commercial and financial foundation of Britain, Mr Winston Churchill, addressing a banquet of West Indian sugar planters in London on July 20, 1939, reminded them that

‘the West Indies two hundred years ago bulked very largely in the minds of all people who were making Britain and making the British Empire. Our possession of the West Indies, like that of India—the colonial plantations and development, as they were then called—gave us the strength, the support, but especially the capital, the wealth, at a time when no other European nation possessed such a reserve, which enabled us to come through the great struggle of the Napoleonic Wars, the keen competition of the commerce of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and enabled her not only to acquire this world-wide appendage of possessions which we have, but also to lay the foundation of that commercial and financial leadership which, when the world was young, when everything outside Europe was undeveloped, enabled us to make our great position in the world.’⁵

State and Church, capitalists and bankers, shipowners and merchants, colonial planters, and even statesmen, benefited directly from slavery and the slave trade. It was the slave trade and sugar which made Bristol the second city of England for the first three-quarters of the eighteenth century. ‘There is not’, wrote a local annalist, ‘a brick in the city but what is cemented with the blood

of a slave. Sumptuous mansions, luxurious living, liveried menials, were the produce of the wealth made from the sufferings and groans of the slaves bought and sold by the Bristol merchants!¹ This is equally true of London, Liverpool and Glasgow.

Missionary work among the blacks was also subsidized out of slavery. For example:

‘The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel as trustees for the sugar estates in Barbados which formed part of the endowment of Codrington College in that island, were slave owners and did not emancipate their slaves until 1834.’²

‘Christopher Codrington was Governor of Barbados during the seventeenth century and his plantations in Barbados and Bermuda were worth £100,000 in modern money. He founded a college there which still bears his name, and on his death left £10,000, most of it for a library, and his valuable collection of books worth £6,000 to All Souls College, Oxford, where they formed the nucleus of the famous Codrington College.’³

THE IMPERIALIST PERIOD

As long as Britain enjoyed a virtual commercial monopoly and was able to sell her goods in all the world’s markets and obtain raw materials and cheap food from abroad at most favourable terms, her political leaders remained attached to the Manchester School of Free Trade, and stubbornly resisted any suggestion to annex even the Gold Coast settlements which British merchants had taken over from the slave dealers after the abolition of the trade in 1807. So strong was the sentiment against colonial expansion that even as late as 1865 a committee of the House of Commons recommended the Liberal Government of Lord John Russell to abandon all British holdings on the West African coast, except Sierra Leone,

¹ *Capitalism and Slavery* by Eric Williams, University of North Carolina Press, p. 61.

² *Colour Prejudice* by Sir Alan Burns, Allen & Unwin, p. 22.

³ *Capitalism and Slavery* by Eric Williams, p. 90.

and to abstain from further annexations in the region. Even Disraeli, who later became the arch imperialist, described colonies at the time as 'a millstone around our necks'.

During the period when British industrialists and statesmen were still disinterested in the acquisition of colonies in Africa, explorers like David Livingstone, Richard Burton and J. H. Speke, Denham, Clapperton and Macgregor Laird, were active in penetrating into the interior. By the latter part of the nineteenth century, when British foreign policy changed and the great European powers began the scramble for colonies, the interior of Africa was not entirely unknown. This change from anti-colonialism to aggressive imperialism was brought about by economic needs arising from the keen commercial rivalry between the manufacturing nations which began in the middle of the nineteenth century. By then, not only Britain but other European countries, especially Germany and France, were becoming more and more industrialized and their capitalists needed overseas markets for the disposal of their surplus consumer goods and securement of certain foodstuffs and raw materials, while bankers and financiers were seeking fields for the investment of surplus capital.

In order to regulate the partition of Africa and avoid armed conflict between the white nations interested in seeking 'a place in the African sun', Bismarck, then the leading European statesman, convened a conference in Berlin in 1885. The international situation at that time favoured such a conference. Since the end of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1, Berlin had become the centre of European diplomacy. But this alone would not have enabled Bismarck to take the initiative of convening the conference unless he had the diplomatic support of England. Fortunately, Anglo-German relations were passing through a honeymoon period during the years which marked the fall of Jules Ferry in France and the return of the *revanche* policy under Clemenceau on the

one hand, and the downfall of Gladstone in England and the accession of the more congenial Conservative, the Marquis of Salisbury, on the other.

Taking advantage of these changes in the political climate in Paris and London, the German Chancellor sent his son, Herbert Bismarck, to England early in 1885 to explain Germany's colonial aims, which found sympathetic support among the Tories. Even Gladstone, hearing of young Bismarck's mission, declared that 'if Germany is to become a colonizing power, all I can say is God speed her: she becomes an ally and partner in the execution of a great purpose of providence for the advancement of mankind'.¹

The diplomatic stage having been well set for 'the rape of Africa', the Berlin Conference recognized the right of King Leopold of the Belgians over the Congo, and approved the various claims of Britain, France and Germany in East, West and South Africa. To consolidate their positions, they adopted a policy of neo-mercantilism operated through chartered companies. These monopoly concerns—the British and German East African Companies, the Niger Company, the South African Company, etc.—were the trading organizations which opened up the interior of Africa and laid the bases of government in those territories which were later taken over officially by the governments and declared to be colonies and protectorates.

Through this method of advancing their trade and commerce, Germany, although a late-comer, acquired Tanganyika in East Africa, Togoland and Cameroons on the west coast, and South-west Africa,² a total of 925,000

¹ Speech in the House of Commons, March 12, 1885, quoted in *Africa and World Peace* by G. Padmore, pp. 167-8.

² These territories were annexed after the First World War and divided among the victorious Allied Powers as League of Nations Mandates. Britain and France shared Togo and the Cameroons. Britain also got Tanganyika, and South Africa was handed South-west Africa.

square miles. Britain, who had acquired well-recognized interests along the west coast, legacies of the slave period, secured Gambia, Sierra Leone, Gold Coast and Nigeria; on the east she secured part of Somaliland, Kenya and Uganda. In Central Africa she secured Nyasaland, Northern and Southern Rhodesia, Cape Province and Natal in South Africa, later obtaining protectorate rights in Bechuanaland, Swaziland and Basutoland. The British Empire in Africa covered an area of 2,300,000 square miles.

France took the lion's share of 3,300,000 square miles. Even before the big share-out she was already in North Africa with Algeria in 1830 and Tunis in 1881, to which Morocco was added in the early part of the present century. On the west coast, where she held a slave port in Senegal, France secured all the inland territories of west and equatorial Africa forming the hinterland of the British coastal settlements.

To consolidate her power in the Gold Coast, Britain had to fight a series of wars against the Ashantis. Although the coastal area was created a Crown Colony in 1874, it was not until 1901 that Ashanti and the Northern Territories were brought under effective British control and proclaimed protectorates.

In 1896, British troops under Sir Francis Scott invaded Kumasi, arrested the Asantehene, King Prempeh I, and imposed an English Resident on the capital. The King, the Queen Mother and other members of the royal family were later deported to the Seychelles islands. Fighting was renewed in 1900 on the occasion of the state visit to Kumasi of the then Governor, Sir Frederick Hodgson. The Ashantis resented the Governor's demand to surrender the Golden Stool, their most sacred symbol, containing the 'soul' of their nation for him to sit upon. The British garrison at Kumasi was besieged for several months and had to be relieved by an expeditionary force dispatched from the coast under

Colonel afterwards General Sir John Willcocks. After the uprising was subdued, Ashanti was annexed and placed under the direct administration of the Governor of the Gold Coast.

GOLD COAST TRIBES

The Ashantis are a branch of the Akans, the principal tribe inhabiting the territories comprising the Gold Coast. These Akans are supposed to have formed part of the Ghana Empire before migrating into the Gold Coast from the north-west in several waves which occurred between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries. Constituting about one-sixth of the population, the Ashantis were the first among the Gold Coast tribes to lay the foundation of integrated nationhood in the form of a military confederacy. There is no doubt that had they not come into conflict with the superior military power of the British, they would in due course have established their supremacy over the entire coastal regions. Indeed, it was the British who became the paramount power, first over the coast and later over the hinterland. To consolidate their power, the British abolished the confederacy by encouraging the various chiefs to assert their independence of the King of Ashanti.

After breaking up the unity of the Ashanti nation, the British permitted the exiled King to return in 1924 as Paramount Chief of Kumasi; but his subjects still recognized him as their Asantehene. After the King's death in 1931, his nephew, Otumfuo Sir Agyeman Prempeh II, was installed as Omanhene of Kumasi, and in 1935 the Confederacy was restored as the Asanteman Council under the supervision of the British Chief Commissioner with the Kumasihene officially recognized as Asantehene.

The Ashantis are only one branch of the Akan-speaking people. South of the territory they now occupy live the Akwapims, Guans, Fantis and other kindred tribes.

The Guans were the first to enter the Gold Coast from

the north. They came down the Volta valley and probably as early as 1200 were in possession of the crescent of land stretching from Bole through Salaga, Kroachi, Anum and Accra, as far west as Winneba.

The second group of invaders were the ancestors of the Fantis, who probably came down the Ofin and Pica, reaching the coast about 1300 and spreading eastward through Cape Coast until they came in contact with the Guans. Then came the ancestors of the Ashantis, moving down between the earlier settlers, filling up Ashanti and Akim. Their spearhead, the Akwamus, probably came in contact with the coast people about 1600.

Behind the Ashantis came the non-Akan, Moshi-Dagomba-speaking groups who, partly by conquest and partly by peaceful penetration, obtained supremacy over the indigenous inhabitants of the Northern Territories. The newcomers established the Mamprusi and Dagomba kingdoms under the rule of sons and other relatives of their leaders. These people once belonged to the Sudanic Melle Empire, but after settling in their new home, the ruling families shared political power with a class of indigenous priests called Tandanas. As representatives of the 'Earth God', the Tandanas are still regarded as the official custodians of tribal lands in many parts of the Northern Territories, but the actual administration and right of 'disposal' is being transferred to the newly formed local councils.

Very little is known of the aboriginal inhabitants whom the Akans displaced along the coastal sections. The symbol of chieftain authority among the Akans is the Stool, which they consider sacred. All lands other than family holdings derive from the Stool and belong to the Stool. The chiefs who are the occupants of the Stool have no personal rights as chiefs in land or in anything apart from the Stool. According to tradition and customary law, succession to the Stool is through the female line. When a Paramount Chief or Omanhene dies

or is destooled, the successor is elected from among the sons of the chief's sisters, or occasionally from among the sons of a sister of some previous Omanhene, but never from among the chief's sons. The Paramount Chief is considered a constitutional ruler and his powers are strictly regulated by native law and custom. Though invested with executive and judicial authority, the chief must always seek the advice of his Council of Elders and Counsellors to whom he owes his election, and who can destool him for breaches of customary law.

His every act is closely watched. There are not only the Council of Elders and sub-chiefs to be reckoned with, but the Omanhene must have the support of the powerful companies of so-called 'young men', known as Asafo warriors, as well as the women, headed by the Queen Mother, always the power behind the Stool. It is she who nominates the candidates to be elected chief in conformity with the matrilineal line of succession.

The Queen Mother, however; is not necessarily the real mother of the chief. She may be his sister or other female member of the royal family. She, too, is selected for her high office and invested with her own rights and dignities. Like the Paramount Chief, the Queen Mother enjoys the regal title of 'Nana'.

Not only women of the royal families, but all Gold Coast women generally enjoy absolute equality with men. They play an important part in the economic life of the country, and often exercise a decisive role in tribal affairs.

Among the non-Akan tribes inhabiting the eastern coastal province of the Colony area are the Gas. According to tradition, they originally formed part of the Yoruba kingdom in Nigeria and migrated into the Gold Coast from the east and settled on the Accra plains around the beginning of the sixteenth century.

Their social and political institutions differ from those of the Akans, but their religious beliefs and practices

seem to have undergone certain changes through cultural contact with the Guans and other tribes with whom they came into early association while consolidating their hegemony over the territory lying between the Akwapim hills and the sea. Originally, the Gas seem to have lived under Elders, but in times of war and other tribal crises, fetish priests known as Mantse established a theocracy to the extent that the Elders themselves became members of the priesthood in order to safeguard their secular authority from the fetish men.

Unlike the Akans, the Gas never developed a centralized political state. They always lived in small communities called Towns, which were subdivided into Quarters under headmen, also fetish priests. However, during tribal wars, the Towns formed temporary alliances for mutual defence against invaders, but more often than not they fought one another for supremacy. Although the early British administrations in the Gold Coast recognized the Ga Mantse as the Paramount Chief of Accra, the legacy of disunity still exists among the Ga chiefs; each is monarch of all he surveys within his little Town, of which there are about seven in Accra!

Another non-Akan tribe which also migrated from Nigeria about the seventeenth century are the Ewes. Their political form of government consists in Divisions and sub-Divisions under secular rulers called Fias. These chiefs, unlike those among the Gas, always enjoyed traditional sanction and are selected by the Councils of Elders from among certain 'Stool families' by patrilineal descent. Each Fia administers his Division with the aid of a Council of Elders, among whom the Stool Father occupies a status similar to that of the Queen Mother among the Akans. The Elders represent the Asafo or warrior bands and exercise considerable influence over the Fias. This was especially the case in times of crises, when the Councils of the various Divisions would form alliances. In this respect, the Ewe political system more closely

corresponds to that of the Gas than to the highly centralized states among the Akans.

All these tribes—Fantis, Ashantis, Gas, Ewes and others—numbered 4,333,000 in 1951 and occupy an area of 91,843 square miles. Thanks to the Convention People's Party policy of 'one country, one people, one destiny', they are becoming more and more integrated into a common Gold Coast citizenship.

II

EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF GOLD COAST NATIONALISM

GOLD COAST NATIONALISM has a long history. Its antecedents go back to the latter part of the seventeenth century, when the Akan tribes inhabiting the river valleys of Ashanti established a military confederacy under their famous Kumasi King, Osei Tutu.

According to Ashanti legend, a celebrated fetish priest named Komfu Anotchi (or Anokye) informed the King that

‘he was commissioned by Onyame, the God of the Sky, to make Ashanti a great and powerful nation. In the presence of the King and a great multitude he drew down from heaven a black cloud from which issued the rumblings of thunder and a wooden Stool. The Stool sank slowly through the air till it rested upon the King’s knees without touching the earth. Except for the gold which partially covered it, the Stool was such as Africans commonly use. Anotchi proclaimed that it contained the Sun-Sum (the soul) of the Ashanti people, that with it was bound up their honour, their welfare, and that if ever it were captured or destroyed the nation would perish.

Therefore, the Stool was cherished as the most sacred possession of the tribe. It was never allowed to touch the ground. On the rare occasions when it was brought out, it was placed on an elephant skin spread upon the ground and was covered with a cloth of a special kind. Not even the King ever sat upon it. Whenever on great occasions its power was evoked, the King would pretend three

times to sit upon it and would seat himself upon his own stool and rest his arm upon the Golden Stool. Once a year it was carried in solemn procession, under its own umbrella and accompanied by its own attendants who in pomp and numbers exceeded the attendants of the King who walked behind it.

When, sometime after the appearance of the Stool, the King of Denkyira, who claimed the overlordship of Ashanti, sent to collect the customary tribute, consisting of a brass pan filled with gold dust, together with the favourite wife and favourite son of every chief, the Ashanti people emboldened by possession of the Golden Stool, resisted his demands. In the battle which followed, the King of Denkyira and his Queen were captured and beheaded and the golden fetters they had worn were taken to embellish the Golden Stool. Later on, the chief of a neighbouring territory arrogantly made himself a replica of the sacred emblem. The King of Ashanti led an army against him, cut off his head, and melted the gold that adorned the rival stool. The gold was cast into two masks representing the face of the impious chief and these were hung as trophies upon the Golden Stool.

As time went on the power of the King of Ashanti increased enormously and every victorious advance added to the prestige of the Golden Stool. The extension of their domains brought the Ashantis in the early years of the last century to the sea coast, where English forts had been built.¹

By this time their military organization had become highly developed. The structure of the army corresponded to the divisions of the Akan State. The chiefs were commanders and their titles designated their military rank. For example, the commander of the right wing of the army was known as *Nifahene*; he of the left wing the *Benkumhene*; the advanced guard the *Adontenhene*, the bodyguard the *Gayasahene* and the rearguard the *Kyidomhene*. The Commander-in-Chief was the King or *Asantehene*, and his Council of War consisted of the *Amanhene* or

¹ *The Golden Stool* by E. W. Smith, S.P.G., pp. 1-2-3.

Paramount Chiefs of each state comprising the military confederacy.

Before they came into serious collision with the British during their seaward advance, the Ashantis fought several wars against the Fantis and other tribes which settled along the coastal regions. The Fantis were the first Africans with whom the Europeans had established contact during the early slave period, and since the European settlements had been acquired by mutual agreement, the Fantis, unlike the Ashantis, who were finally defeated by the British and their country annexed as a protectorate in 1901, have never considered themselves a conquered people but 'friends and allies' of the British.

After the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 the importance of the forts built by the slave dealers declined and the African Company of Merchants, which had administered the forts since 1750, was gradually dissolved. Following the withdrawal of the Company in 1821, its possessions and interests, originally acquired from the chiefs, were placed under the administration of the Governor of the West African Settlements, Sir Charles McCarthy, the local representative of the Imperial Government. His headquarters were in the neighbouring colony of Sierra Leone. Three years after the Imperial Government had assumed responsibility for the Gold Coast forts, Sir Charles McCarthy had to come to the aid of the Fanti tribes, who were being attacked by the Ashantis. The defence forces, consisting mainly of Fanti levies, were defeated, and the Governor was killed at Insamankow on January 1, 1824. However, the war ended in a victory for the British forces at Dodowa in 1826, and peace was formally concluded in 1831 by a treaty between the British and their Fanti allies on the one hand and the Ashantis on the other.

After this encounter, the Imperial Government, disgusted at the expenditure of men and treasure in defending forts which were of no particular value to them since

the cessation of the slave trade, decided to retire from the Gold Coast and leave the Fantis to their fate. But the British traders on the coast protested and appealed to the home Government to transfer the forts to a committee of London merchants interested in promoting legitimate trade among the Africans. The committee appointed a professional soldier and able administrator, Captain George Maclean, to be their local representative. Governor Maclean soon became very popular among the chiefs, and it was he who laid the foundation for the extension of British influence over a wide area of the coastal regions outside the jurisdiction of the early settlements. A man of great moral courage and high purpose, he succeeded in getting the chiefs to give up many barbarous customs, such as human sacrifice, and to recognize the application of British law to certain serious crimes, such as murder, robbery, etc. Up to Maclean's time, there had been no attempt to turn the Gold Coast into a British colony by annexation. A Select Committee of the House of Commons had in 1842 defined the relationship between the chiefs and the British Government as follows:

'Their relation to the English Crown should be, not the allegiance of subjects to which we have no right to pretend, and which it would entail an inconvenient responsibility to possess, but the deference of weaker powers to a stronger and more enlightened neighbour whose protection and counsel they seek, and to whom they are bound by certain definite obligations.'

In the following year things began to change for the worse. The British naval authorities engaged in patrolling the Gulf of Guinea against illegal slave trading accused Maclean of conniving with the captains of certain vessels. The Governor was cleared but demoted and made a Judicial Assessor. This crisis led the Imperial Government to resume direct control over the British forts once more. To facilitate the new arrangement, the British

imperial representative, Commander H. W. Hill, R.N., signed new treaties (popularly known as the Bond of 1844) with several Fanti chiefs, defining the relationship of the Africans with the British in terms of 'partnership'.

The Bond gave *de jure* recognition to the *status quo* and marked the beginning of a new chapter in Anglo-Gold Coast relations. Similar treaties of 'friendship and protection' were made with other non-Fanti chiefs along the eastern littoral, from Accra to Keta. Hitherto the castles and trading forts built by the various European nations and used as depots for slaves and merchandise were intermixed, no limits having been set to their individual influence. The first thing which the British did was to try and straighten out the administrative confusion, particularly as the collection of customs was rendered almost impossible by a state of affairs where, for example, within a few miles of a fort where one foreign power imposed duty, a rival nation might hold a fort where goods entered free.

These administrative reforms were carried out by the very first Legislative Council, established in 1850, following the separation of the Gold Coast from Sierra Leone. It was about that time that the British Government acquired possession of the Danish forts in Accra and spheres of influence along the eastern coast of the country. But within fifteen years the British halted their policy of expanding their sphere of influence. This was followed by a period of indecision which reflected the anti-colonialist philosophy then prevailing among the British capitalist class, especially the manufacturers and industrialists and their Liberal supporters. In and out of Parliament men like Bright, Cobden and other Free Traders were denouncing colonial expansion. Why be burdened with bits and pieces of the Dark Continent as long as the natives could be persuaded to exchange their raw materials for Lancashire textiles and Birmingham products? 'Get out of Africa', cried the Free Traders,

'leave the natives to the missionaries.' In 1865, the Liberal Government headed by Lord John Russell recommended the termination of British rule in the Gold Coast.

Prior to their departure the authorities made arrangements to hand over certain forts to the Dutch, but the Fanti chiefs refused these arrangements. Alarmed at the action of the British 'friends and allies' who had guaranteed their protection against the Ashantis and European powers, the Fanti chiefs who had signed the Bond of 1844 convened a conference in 1868 at which they attempted to form a confederacy for mutual protection against their common enemy, the Ashantis. Nothing concrete materialized, and three years later a second conference was called at Mankesim. This gave birth to the famous Fanti Confederation—the first nationalist movement among the chiefs and people of the Colony. But it came too late, for between the first and second conferences British foreign policy had undergone a decisive change.

The Imperial Government had decided not only to remain but to annex the Gold Coast. What was responsible for this sudden change from anti-colonialism to aggressive imperial expansion? In a word: competitive capitalism.

'For twenty years Britain had enjoyed a period of high prosperity. Trade had expanded beyond all dreams, British railways and steamships were knitting together the four corners of the earth. Britain had become the world's forge, the world's workshop, the world's ship-builder, the world's carrier, the world's banker, and the world's *entrepôt*. Prices were rising but wages were rising even more. Capital was accumulating. Prosperity at home and commerce abroad made the possession of colonies seem unimportant and irrelevant. The whole of the world was Britain's economic domain. . . . After 1873 the exports of British capital showed a smaller increase than before—there was a piling up of surplus capital seeking new outlets, and powerful trading companies were

formed to undertake both political control and economic exploitation in the colonies. It was surely not surprising that all these circumstances should combine in giving birth to a new imperialism, and in leading the way to the scramble for Africa.¹

The flag thus came to follow trade. And determined not to be left behind in the scramble, the British Government, notwithstanding the Bond of 1844, unilaterally declared the Gold Coast a Crown Colony in 1874. In these circumstances the Fanti Confederation was considered a menace standing in the way of the new imperialism and had to be strangled at birth.

THE FANTI CONFEDERATION OF 1871

The genius behind the Confederation, which for a short time brought together many rival and hostile Fanti states, was the famous African King Ghartey IV of Winneba, a man inspired with the zeal of a reformer. The Confederation had agreed upon an elaborate constitution uniting the coastal states into a powerful league for mutual defence. All the leaders, among them Kodwo Kwegyir, the Omankyiame of Anambu State Council and father of the famous African philosopher Dr J. E. Kwegyir Aggrey, aspired to integrated nationhood.

It is remarkable that about the same time the Japanese, another coloured race emerging from feudalism, were also reforming themselves. In the Gold Coast, the kings and tribal chiefs elected Ghartey IV a sort of 'President King' of the Fanti Confederation and declared that:

'He should govern the country with the aid of a Ministry of five officials, representing the chiefs and educated natives. . . . To assist the King and Council, a representative Legislative Assembly was to be established, composed of two representatives from each district, appointed by the King, one being an educated native and the other a chief. This Assembly would be responsible to the King

¹ *Empire and After* by Rita Hinden, Essential Books Ltd., pp. 65-7.

and the chiefs of the Confederation, who should hold an annual meeting. At this meeting the King-President would sanction all laws passed by the Representative Assembly, so far as they are compatible with the interests of the country.'

The Fanti constitution elaborated in great detail the various functions of government—legislative, executive and judicial. A detailed programme of economic and social reconstruction was provided for. Here are a few of the main points:

Section 3. To make good and substantial roads throughout the interior districts included in the Confederation.

Section 4. To erect schoolhouses and establish schools for the education of all children within the Confederation, and to obtain the services of efficient schoolmasters.

Section 5. To promote agricultural and industrial pursuits and to endeavour to introduce such new plants as may hereafter become sources of profitable commerce to the country.

Section 6. To develop and facilitate the working of the mineral and other resources of the country.

Article 26. That main roads be made, connecting various provinces or districts with one another and with the sea coast, etc.

Article 37. That in each province or district provincial courts be established, to be presided over by the provincial assessors.

Citizens were also to have the right of appeal to the King-President and his Privy or Executive Council, and eventually to British courts, a provision stipulated in the Anglo-Fanti Bond of 1844. To carry out the reforms the Constitution gave the Representative Assembly the right to impose and collect taxes in territories under the jurisdiction of the Confederation.

These aspirations of Gold Coast Africans to construct an independent, modern civilized state came just at the

time when the imperialist powers were conspiring to carve up Africa and consolidate spheres of influence. Accordingly, the British Lieutenant-Governor at Cape Coast, Mr Charles Spencer Salmon, immediately set about to destroy the Confederation. He ordered the arrest on the charge of conspiracy of four of the educated leaders of the Confederacy Council—James Hutton Brew, James F. Amissah, George Kuntu Blankson, and the Rev Joseph Hayford, father of J. Casely Hayford, the founder of the West African National Congress.

‘This dangerous conspiracy must now be destroyed for good, or the country will become altogether unmanageable’, wrote the Governor in a dispatch to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Although the arrested men were subsequently released on the orders of the home Government, the Confederation was declared illegal. The British authorities in the Gold Coast threatened to ‘prosecute any person or persons committing any overt acts on the part of the Confederation, especially the levying of taxes, assumption of judicial power, and molestation of peaceful inhabitants following their lawful calling’.

Ever since the arrest of the Confederation leaders—the very first Gold Coast patriots to suffer in the cause of freedom—the guiding policy of all British administrators in the Gold Coast has been to prevent the Fanti states from cementing political unity between themselves and the Ashantis. Progressive and far-sighted Fanti leaders and patriots, however, never gave up the hope of achieving unity by peaceful means with the Ashantis and other ethnic groups inhabiting the Gold Coast.

‘The Ashanti and the people of the Gold Coast are cousins,’ [declared *The Gold Coast Leader* as far back as 1926] ‘and they are destined in the order of Providence to become welded together in one national unity and entity. It ought to be a proud thing for Great Britain to help to rear a nation in the Gold Coast—an Ashanti which will form a nucleus of a yet greater nation to be,

namely, that of British West Africa, with a parliament of its own, in the way of self-government at some distant date up to Dominion status.¹

When the Gold Coast Africans demand self-government today they are, in consequence, merely asserting the birthright which they never really surrendered to the British who, disregarding their treaty obligations under the Bond of 1844, gradually usurped full sovereignty over the country.

¹ *Gold Coast Leader*, November 7, 1926, p. 6.

III

ABORIGINES' SOCIETY AND NATIONAL CONGRESS

TWENTY-SIX YEARS AFTER the abortive Mankesim Conference, certain educated Africans tried to revive the spirit of the Confederation at a time when the lands and other fundamental rights of the aborigines were being threatened by the local British rulers. But the dangers facing the chiefs and people in 1896 called for new forms of organization and tactics. For many political and other changes had taken place during the quarter of a century dividing the demise of the Fanti Confederation and the birth of the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society.

Although an African, the merchant John Sarbah, had been appointed to the Legislative Council in 1888 to represent 'native interests', the chiefs and people still lacked an effective organization through which they could present their views on public policy to the local government and the Colonial Office. To fill this need, the chiefs and their educated subjects, many of whom were closely related to the traditional 'stools' or chieftainships, organized the Society at Cape Coast in 1897.

Unlike the Fanti Confederation, which had been conceived chiefly as a military alliance against the Ashantis on the one hand and a union of coastal states for mutual economic and social development independent of Dutch control on the other, the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society was a purely *ad hoc* body of chiefs and educated

Africans whose purpose was to serve as a link between the traditional rulers and British Government. It was never conceived as an organization to advocate complete severance from the British imperial connection, but as its constitution states:

(a) To protect the rights of the aborigines of the Gold Coast at all times by constitutional means and methods.

(b) To promote and effect unity of purpose and of action among all aborigines of the Gold Coast.

(c) To inculcate upon the members the importance of continued loyalty to the British Crown, and to educate them to a proper and correct understanding of the relations which have existed for above four hundred years between Great Britain and this country.

(d) To foster in the rising generation a knowledge of their historical past, and to encourage the study of the laws, customs and institutions of their country, to promote a sound national educational policy with particular attention to agriculture, scientific and industrial training, and generally to facilitate the spread of industry and thrift in the whole country.

(e) To be the medium of communication and right understanding between the Government and the people.

(f) Generally to promote the interests and advancement of the aborigines of the Gold Coast in any lawful manner whatsoever.

Conceived in the spirit of co-operation with the British authorities in securing reforms by 'constitutional means and methods', it has remained up to this day fundamentally traditionalist and conservative. Yet its founders were some of the most outstanding men the Gold Coast has yet produced, numbering among them John Mensah Sarbah, C.M.G., son of the first African to serve as a nominated member of the Legislative Council, a barrister and authority on Fanti laws and customs, with John Peter Brown, Jacob Wilson Sey, and J. W. de Graft Johnson.

The immediate purpose of the formation of the Society was to oppose certain legislation proposed by the then Governor, Sir William Maxwell, which sought to convert Stool lands vested in the chiefs-in-council as trustees of the tribes into Crown lands under the sole 'protection' of the Governor. If passed into law, the proposal would have struck at the very foundations of the economic and socio-religious structure of Akan society and would have led sooner or later to the political disintegration of the Fanti states. No legislation introduced by the British authorities so alarmed the chiefs as this proposal, and as a result they immediately rallied behind the educated men who founded the Society and gave them full moral and financial support in opposing the obnoxious Maxwell Land Bills.

A delegation comprising the President of the Society, Mr Jacob W. Sey, and two other members of the Executive, Mr George Hughes and Mr T. F. Jones, was dispatched to London to put the grievances of the chiefs before the Imperial Government. The mission was received by the Secretary of State for Colonies, Mr Joseph Chamberlain, who instructed the Governor to withdraw the proposed measures. Chamberlain undoubtedly had more sense than Maxwell. Imperialist that he was, he realized that the climate in West Africa, then known as the 'white man's grave', was not conducive to permanent white colonization, as in Cape Colony and the highlands of Kenya. Furthermore, Britain had enough trouble on her hands at that time with the Boers in South Africa, and Chamberlain himself was being attacked for his support of Cecil Rhodes in connection with the Jameson raid and did not want to get involved in trouble in West Africa. The mosquitoes saved the West Africans, not the eloquence of the intellectuals!

This early victory of the Society guaranteed its organizational success. Since it had the backing of all the Paramount Chiefs, who were still recognized by the

British Government in the Gold Coast as sovereign rulers of their respective states (the system of Indirect Rule or Native Authority had not yet become the fashion), the Governor was forced to consult the executive committee of the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society on all matters appertaining to native affairs. The prestige of the Society never stood higher. It enjoyed official status as the 'Parliament of the Africans', *de facto* if not *de jure*. When a later Governor, J. J. Thornton, tried to introduce a Forest Bill, the Africans suspected another attempt to alienate Stool lands. The Society, ever vigilant, again rallied the chiefs against the proposed legislation and dispatched another delegation to London in 1912. Mr Lewis Harcourt, then Secretary of State for Colonies, after hearing the views of the delegation, appointed Sir H. Conway Belfield to investigate and report upon the land problems of the Gold Coast.

While the Commissioner's report did not agree with the assertion of the Society's spokesman that 'this Forest Bill, if it becomes law, would have the effect of breaking up the native institutions absolutely', Harcourt, like his predecessor Chamberlain, advised caution, and the proposed Bill was withdrawn. Apprehensive at the tremendous political influence which the educated Africans—especially the lawyer class—were wielding upon the chiefs through their control of the Society, Sir Gordon Guggisberg, who became Governor in 1919, set about to destroy its influence in the same way as Governor Charles Spencer Salmon had destroyed the Fanti Confederation.

As a politician Guggisberg was cleverer than Salmon. He did not make the mistake of turning the intellectuals into martyrs by arresting the Society's leaders on some trumped-up charge of sedition, but went about undermining their influence in a more subtle way. He led them to believe that the Government would continue to respect their views as previous Governors had done, while planning to alienate the chiefs from the Society. Sir Gordon

held office from 1919 to 1927, and during the latter part of his administration a head-on conflict occurred between a section of the chiefs and the Cape Coast educated African leaders of the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society, who, until 1926, were officially recognized by the Governor as the advisers of the natural rulers. Sir Gordon's stratagem of grouping the Fanti and other native states into administrative units based upon Eastern, Central and Western Provincial Councils drove a wedge between the chiefs and the lawyer class associated with the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society, as it was intended to do.

Sir Gordon Guggisberg had previously served as a civil servant in Nigeria and had become enamoured of the system of Indirect Rule first started in that dependency by Lord Lugard. In carrying out his manoeuvre to introduce the Native Administration system into the Gold Coast, he found an able lieutenant in Nana Sir Ofori Atta I, the ambitious Paramount Chief of Akim Abuakwa, the biggest of the Akim states. The various provincial councils were later amalgamated to form the Joint Provincial Council of the Paramount Chiefs of the Colony area. As soon as the Joint Provincial Council came into being the Governor withdrew recognition from the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society and transferred it to the Council dominated by Sir Ofori Atta. Deserted by the chiefs, the authority and prestige of the Society dwindled. Without the financial support of the chiefs, the lawyers and other middle-class leaders of the Society, culturally alienated from the common people, were left with the rump of a once powerful and influential organization. For according to Sir H. C. Belfield, 'funds were subscribed by chiefs alone; the lawyers, however, contribute their service gratis'.

As the chiefs now took advice from the British political officers—the Chief Commissioner for the Colony and his district assistants—some of the intellectuals themselves

began to desert the Aborigines' Society and make their peace with the British, whom they had formerly opposed on matters affecting native interests. Others withdrew their opposition to the constitutional reforms introduced under the Guggisberg Constitution of 1925 and scrambled for seats in the Legislative Council. As for the chiefs, they became real puppets of the British officials; for the Governor was given authority under the Native Administration Ordinance to bestow legislative, executive and judicial powers upon them and to withdraw these powers if the chiefs became *persona non grata* with the District Commissioners. The chiefs were delighted with their new status. They had never enjoyed such autocratic powers before the coming of the white man. On the other hand, Guggisberg's action was strongly criticized by the educated urbanized Africans, who saw in the Governor's policy an attempt to flout traditional native laws and customs. The intellectuals became more royalist than the kings! The chiefs rallied round the new fleshpot and supported the British officials who flatteringly started to address them as their 'good friends'.

Realizing the mischief which the Governor and Sir Ofori Atta had done, the intransigent leaders of the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society refused to compromise. They continued to make appeals to the chiefs not to betray the organization which had so far safeguarded the Africans' land rights.

'We cannot too often remind our people that the Gold Coast Aborigines' Rights Protection Society took up the work just where the Fanti Confederation left it; and, whereas in the Confederation days the Assembly at Mankesim was the national assembly of the people, so is the assembly today of the Aborigines' Society at Cape Coast the national assembly of the people,' [wrote *The Gold Coast Leader* of July 10, 1926].

But it was of no avail. The plums of office under the new political set-up were too attractive; the exercise of

unlimited power was too intoxicating for the illiterate chiefs to pay heed to the appeals of their educated subjects. Some of them, not satisfied with the autocratic powers they exercised under the Native Authority Ordinance, broke all tradition and had themselves elected to the Legislative Council. This was 'revolutionary action' on their part, for under Akan laws and customs the African rulers are prohibited from legislating for the people behind their backs and without consulting the Council of Elders and other state officers. The chiefs are not even allowed to speak officially except through special interpreters known as *linguists*. Nevertheless, they discarded all this when they started scrambling for seats in the white man's legislature. In this respect the chiefs proved themselves to be less traditionalist than many of the educated leaders of the Society, who even today violently oppose many necessary social and local government reforms recommended by the predominantly African Coussey Constitution Committee.

The views of these intellectuals were expressed by Mr W. E. G. Sekyi, the President of the Society, when he said that

'the development of the people of this country and their inherited institutions were seriously interfered with when educated chiefs began to degrade themselves by accepting seats in the Legislative Council. The position is worse now that some of our educated chiefs are in the Executive Council. The ruin of the prospects of the people of this country will be accelerated if we allow our chiefs to become Ministers, especially under the new constitution.'

Mr Sekyi, who is a distinguished Cape Coast lawyer and 'Elder Statesman', helped to draft the Coussey constitutional report, which undermines the very traditional institutions and customs he seeks to preserve.

Despite the desertion of the large majority of chiefs following the establishment of Native Administration, the Aborigines' Society refused to liquidate itself. With

a few diehard adherents, the Society continued to maintain a working committee with headquarters at Cape Coast. It even sent a two-man delegation, Messrs George E. Moore and Samuel R. Wood, to London in 1934 to demand a reform of the Guggisberg Constitution and protest against the obnoxious Sedition and Waterworks Bills which the then Governor, Sir Shenton Thomas, using his official majority, steam-rolled through the Legislative Council in the teeth of African opposition. Even Sir Ofori Atta, who had always worked hand in glove with the British officials, supported this opposition. But the legacy of distrust and hatred between the educated Cape Coast Africans and this chief was still too strong to bring about a reconciliation. Consequently, Sir Ofori Atta and others who had broken with the Society formed their own *ad hoc* committee with the backing of certain Accra politicians and the Asanteman Council of Chiefs to register separate protests against the policies of Sir Shenton Thomas.

They, too, sent a delegation to London. Thus two missions arrived in England in the summer of 1934 for the same purpose. As the missions were not on speaking terms, it was very easy for the imperial authorities to play one off against the other. For example, the then Conservative Secretary of State for Colonies, Lord Swinton, refused to receive the representatives of the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society on the ground that they had no official status with the Gold Coast Government. On the other hand, the Colonial Secretary received Sir Ofori Atta and his colleagues, two of whom were then members of the Legislative Council, Dr F. V. Nanka Bruce of Accra and Mr Kobina A. Korsah of Cape Coast (now a puisne judge), as well as Mr Akilagpa Sawyer, Mr James Mercer and Dr J. B. Danquah, representing the Colony intellectuals, and Messrs I. K. Agyemoan and E. O. Asafu-Adjaye, representing the Asanteman Council. Both missions failed. Lord Swinton, having slammed the door

in the face of the Society's representatives, sarcastically told Sir Ofori and his friends that the sedition law was intended to protect the chiefs from 'educated agitators', and refused to use his veto powers to rescind the Governor's action. Similarly, he refused to consider any changes in the constitution. The Ofori Atta delegation had asked for 'the elimination of the official majority in the Legislative Council, for permanent African representation on the Governor's Executive Council, and for the eligibility of non-chiefs as provincial members of the Legislative Council'. The reforms, however, were conceded in 1946 by Sir Alan Burns, with the approval of the first post-war Labour Government Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr George (now Viscount) Hall.

Encouraged by the dissensions among the African political leaders and the endorsement his policies received by the refusal of the Colonial Office to restrain him, Sir Shenton Thomas set about riding roughshod over any form of opposition in the country. The press was terrorized and the politicians trembled before the sedition law, which made it a criminal offence for an African to be found in possession of any kind of literature deemed to be seditious by the Governor. According to the ordinance, 'whenever the Governor-in-Council is of opinion that any newspaper, book or document, or any part thereof contains any seditious words or writing, he may, if he thinks fit, by order-in-council, prohibit the importation into the colony of such newspaper, book or document which is published periodically, may by the same or a subsequent order-in-council, prohibit the importation of any past or future issue thereof.'

The law further provided that

'any person who, being found in possession of any newspaper, book or document or any part thereof or extract therefrom which has been declared by the Governor by order-in-council to be prohibited to be imported into the colony does not prove to the satisfaction of the court that

it came into his possession without his knowledge or privity shall be liable to imprisonment.

Sir Shenton Thomas was one of those autocratic pro-consuls who

'believed that what the Gold Coast needed was strong government and he was determined not to be thwarted by the childish and interested opposition that had obstructed essential measures in the past' [records Mr Martin Wight, the British authority on colonial constitutions]. 'He presided over only two sessions of the Council, and handled it in a firm manner which could suggest impatience. It was in his view a platform of publishing government measures rather than an incipient parliament, and he tried to discover public opinion through other channels as well.'¹

The Governor's dictatorial methods proved too much even for a lackey like Sir Ofori Atta, and hopes were aroused in certain quarters that he and other Paramount Chiefs in the Legislative Council would make accommodation with educated municipal members of the Council to bring about national unity. These hopes, however, unfortunately never materialized. Many politically minded Africans blame Dr J. B. Danquah, brother of Sir Ofori Atta and his legal adviser, for the failure. This view was strongly held among the leaders of the Aborigines' Society.

Sir Shenton's term of office expired in the autumn of 1934 and he was succeeded by Sir Arnold Hodson, who immediately set about keeping the chiefs in line with official policy by a mixture of cocktail parties and judicious flattery. His technique soon had Sir Ofori Atta and other disgruntled chiefs dancing to official tune.

'Sir Arnold Hodson' [says Mr Wight], 'had something of the personal touch that was Guggisberg's strength and charm; his informality gained him the name of "sunshine Governor"'. He became associated in the public mind

¹ *The Gold Coast Legislative Council* by Martin Wight, Faber, p. 61.

with football competitions, wireless rediffusion at a cheap rate, with loud-speakers in the markets, and the Accra Town Hall with its sprung dance floor and fully equipped modern stage. Wherever possible he avoided political controversies, and when the cocoa hold-up involved him in the greatest political controversy in Gold Coast history, his tact and impartiality were recognized by African unofficial members.¹

Having succeeded in placating the chiefs and those middle-class Africans who had been in opposition to his predecessor's policies, Governor Hodson was able to use the Sedition and Deportation Ordinance to suppress whatever little radical nationalism existed in the Gold Coast at that time. Two well-known West African journalists, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria and Mr Wallace Johnson of Sierra Leone, who were then living in Accra, were prosecuted for criticizing the British Government. They were both convicted by the Gold Coast court, but later acquitted on appeal to the West African Court of Appeal. Both of these men, who were the pioneers of 'Pan-Africanism' and 'Home Rule for Africans', had to leave the Gold Coast because of the repressive conditions then prevailing in the Colony.

By the time Governor Hodson retired, he had so completely won over the chiefs and re-established cordial relations between them and the British political officers that Sir Ofori Atta was able to assure him that 'you have shown sympathy with the people in your dealings so far. Any Governor who comes to administer the affairs of this country without sympathy cannot succeed. He may have the power to rule without sympathy, I am afraid he is bound to fail—and we are satisfied that you have shown sympathy.'

Since the death of this bombastic self-seeking chief in 1943, efforts have been made to bridge the differences between the Joint Provincial Council of Chiefs—which

¹ *The Gold Coast Legislative Council* by Martin Wight, Faber, p. 62.

was largely under his influence—and the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society by trying to get the Fanti rulers to return to the fold. But they have not responded; for as long as the Joint Provincial Council' continues to enjoy official recognition as the channel of communication between the Central Government and traditional authority, the chiefs naturally see no reason to surrender their independence of action and return to the Aborigines' Society, despite the great services which that society undoubtedly rendered them in the past, especially in preserving the Stool lands, the material basis of their traditional power and prestige.

WEST AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

The West African National Congress was established in March 1920, largely through the inspiration of a distinguished African lawyer and scholar, the late Joseph Casely Hayford, M.B.E. Although an ardent Gold Coast patriot and supporter of the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society, Mr Hayford had a clearer social vision and wider conception of Pan-African nationalism than most of his political contemporaries. He formed the Congress in order to provide a medium through which the economic, political and social aspirations of the rising urban middle classes not only in the Gold Coast but also in the other British West African colonies could find united expression.

Unlike the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society, which was formed for the specific purpose of opposing the Crown Lands Ordinance of 1896 and to act as the guardian of Fanti customary rights and institutions, the West African National Congress was definitely the first inter-territorial political movement to arise in British West Africa. Because of its middle-class outlook, it did not have to depend upon the chiefs for support to the same degree as the Aborigines' Society.

Addressing the inaugural meeting of the Congress at Accra on March 11, 1920, Mr Casely Hayford declared

that 'this conference has been brought about by the intelligentsia of British West Africa by the necessity of bringing before the Government the wants and aspirations of the people so that they may be attended to as best they may'. Stressing the need for concerted action in agitating for constitutional reforms of the Crown Colony system, Mr Hayford added:

'We are not dealing with individual governments, or with individual governors or with individual officials. We are all the slaves of a system, and in West Africa we have what is known as the Crown Colony system of administration. It is an archaic and anachronistic system. I tell you, ladies and gentlemen, that sometimes it may be found difficult for even the various members of the system to work it. It is my sincere hope that in the enlightened year of 1920, it will be found possible to do away with this archaic system.'

The Accra conference adopted a number of resolutions which were subsequently incorporated into a memorandum setting forth the following demands:

1. Self-government be implemented so that peoples of African descent should participate in the government of their own country.
2. Elective franchise be granted.
3. The system of nomination to the Legislative Council be abrogated because it is not democratic.
4. Africans should have financial control in the Legislative Councils of their own country.
5. The judiciary should be separated from the executive in order to administer justice without fear or favour.
6. A West African Court of Appeal be established.
7. There should be guaranteed to the subject trial by jury for all capital offences.
8. The Native Courts be reorganized to enable counsel to plead before them and to facilitate appeal therefrom to a higher court.

9. Chiefs be appointed and deposed by their own people, without interference by the Governor.

10. Racial discrimination be abolished in the civil service.

11. West African natives be engaged to serve in the West African Medical Service.

12. Municipal government and administration be introduced into West Africa.

13. The West African system of land tenure be respected and not modified to the disadvantage of the natives.

14. The Public Lands Acquisition Ordinance be modified to the advantage of the natives.

15. The immigration of Syrians and other non-Africans into West Africa be regulated.

16. A university be established for West Africa.

17. The following ordinances be repealed: Unsettled District; Collective Fines; Assessors; Criminal Code; and Provincial Courts.

18. The partition of Togoland can be done with due regard to the wishes of the people of Togoland.

In October the same year, the executive committee of Congress appointed a delegation consisting of the most outstanding political personalities in the four British territories to proceed to London to present the memorandum to the Secretary of State for Colonies. The mission, which was headed by Mr Casely Hayford, was composed of the following gentlemen: Hon. J. Hutton Mills, member of the Legislative Council for Accra; Mr Henry Vanheim, a former president of the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society and member of the Legislative Council, representing Gold Coast; Chief Ormodu Tijani Oluwa and Mr. J. Egerton-Shyngle, barrister-at-law, representing Nigeria; Dr H. C. Bankole Bright, member of the Legislative Council, and Mr Fred W. Dove, merchant, representing Sierra Leone; Mr Edward F. Small, member of the Legislative Council, and Mr Henry M. Jones, representing the colony of Gambia.

Even before the delegation arrived in England, every attempt was made to discredit Mr Hayford and his associates. Some of the West African Governors sent cables to Lord Milner, who was then Secretary of State for Colonies, branding the delegates as irresponsible agitators and asserted that 'the Congress was in no way representative of the native communities on whose behalf it purports to speak'. Despite the mischief the British officials tried to create, the mission was able to establish its claims to be a responsible delegation representing the views of educated middle-class Africans seeking to secure reforms along constitutional lines. With the support of the League of Nations Union, the delegation was received by Lord Milner, who discussed their constitutional demands but decided 'that the time had not yet come either for the principle of election or of official majorities on the West African Legislative Councils'.

Although the mission failed in its immediate purpose, it created much interest in British parliamentary circles and press, and served to bring the grievances of the educated and progressive sections of the West African communities before the British public. They succeeded so far that within four years after embarking upon their agitation, Lord Milner's successor, the Rt. Hon. Leopold Amery, reversed the decision of his predecessor and granted the Africans the right to unofficial elected members—six to represent the Provincial Councils and three the municipalities of Accra, Cape Coast and Sekondi-Takoradi. The same principle of election was conceded to Nigeria and Sierra Leone. Since then many of the economic, social and educational reforms set out in the Congress memorandum of 1920 have been adopted by all the West African governments.

Having won a great constitutional victory, the right of Africans inhabiting the coastal towns to elect their own members, the politicians started fighting amongst themselves for seats in the Legislative Council and for other

favours. This sordid squabble also involved the chiefs and the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society. The Society, anticipating the possibility of chiefs departing from tradition, decided in March 1926 that 'no Paramount Chief shall attend any of the Provincial Councils or accept nomination to the Legislative Council, since the presence of any Paramount Chief at any of these councils would involve a breach of the native constitution'.

The Society's resolution also enjoined that the members of the executive committee shall not accept nomination to the Legislative Council. A leading Gold Coast newspaper wrote at the time:

'The issue is one of life and death with us. For if you perpetuate the possibility of the return of dummies to the legislature, our national independence is gone for ever. Probably that is what has been aimed at all the time, so to gag the people that while they have a machinery ostensibly of an advanced type, yet to be truly and really voiceless in the affairs of their own country.'¹

So effective was the boycott that no candidate came forward to contest the three municipal seats provided under the new constitution, and the Governor finally had to nominate Mr Kojo Thompson, a barrister, to fill temporarily the seat for Accra, and Mr George Grant, a merchant, that for Sekondi. And even so, no one could be found to accept nomination for Cape Coast, the headquarters of the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society.

So much for the conduct of the educated Africans. As regards the chiefs, those of the Eastern and Central Provinces defected, while most of the Western Province remained loyal to the Society's decisions of March 1926, and refused to select any among them to sit on the Legislative Council during the period of non-co-operation.

This was the political state of affairs when the new Legislative Council met in September 1926, and matters

¹ *The Gold Coast Leader*, May 22, 1926.

were not improved among the educated classes when Mr Casely Hayford, who had formerly served in the old Legislative Council as a government nominee from 1916 to 1925, stood for election as the member for Sekondi-Takoradi in 1927 on the expiration of the temporary term of one year served by Mr George Grant. This action on the part of Mr Hayford while the chiefs of the Western Province were still boycotting the Legislative Council, brought him into disfavour with some of his Cape Coast intellectual supporters and adherents of the Aborigines' Society and threw a shadow of distrust and unpopularity over his declining years. He, however, continued to hold the Vice-Presidency of the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society up to the time of his death in July 1930.

In many respects Mr Casely Hayford was a sort of John the Baptist, preparing the way for younger nationalist leaders like Kwame Nkrumah, about whom more later. Judged in terms of his social background and the period in which he lived and worked, Casely Hayford was undoubtedly the greatest national political leader and social reformer West Africa had yet produced. His political faults were the common failings of his class. Born in 1866 and educated under Nonconformist middle-class influences, he reflected all the virtues and political limitations of mid-Victorian liberalism. Honest, sincere, unselfish, he loved his race and his country, and desired to see the child of his dreams—the West African National Congress, inspired by the National Congress of India—come to be the spearhead of a new African nationhood. But unlike men of the type of Gandhi and Nehru and Kwame Nkrumah, he failed to realize that without the active support of the plebeian masses, especially the peasantry, who form the bulk of the population, the middle-class intellectuals, small in number and disunited among themselves, were ineffective. In consequence, while the Congress in its heyday was able to attract many of the ablest men in the British West African territories into its ranks

as leaders, it lacked popular support and found itself completely isolated from the common people when faced with active opposition from the British political officers and the hostility of the chiefs, who were made to believe that the educated African lawyer-politicians were all selfish and ambitious men out to undermine their influence and traditional authority and supplant them as the political rulers of the Gold Coast.

IV

UNITED GOLD COAST CONVENTION

THE RAPID DISINTEGRATION of the West African National Congress which followed shortly upon the death of Mr J. Casely Hayford created a vacuum in the body politic of the Gold Coast. The Aborigines' Rights Protection Society continued nevertheless to function as a kind of permanent opposition to the Provincial Councils of Chiefs, while the cleavage between the educated Africans represented by the municipal members in the Legislative Council and the British Government grew wider and wider over the years.

Sir Gordon Guggisberg, whose term of office (1919 to 1927) was marked by great constitutional and economic reforms, as he inherited a healthy financial situation, saw the price of cocoa, the Colony's main industry, go as high as £120 per ton during the boom years of the twenties. This enabled the Governor to obtain loans in the City of London to inaugurate a large-scale programme of public works, tele-communication facilities and educational measures. Despite the fluctuations of the cocoa market and a debt of £11,000,000 in 1927, the financial position of the Colony was sound, thanks to the fiscal measures which the Governor had introduced.

The achievements of Sir Gordon's administration were greater than in any previous period of the Colony's history. He was responsible for the construction of Takoradi Harbour and the Korle Bu Hospital, the first of its kind in British tropical Africa, while several smaller ones are

also due to his initiative. The completion of the railway between Accra and Kumasi, a network of main and local branch roads for the opening up of new cocoa and timber areas, and last but not least, Achimota College, are all monuments to Sir Gordon Guggisberg's enterprise.

In the field of political reforms, we have already discussed his 1925 constitution and the setting up of Provincial Councils of Chiefs, which provoked strong opposition from the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society.

Guggisberg's successors had not only the prestige of their predecessor to contend with, but also the onset of the economic crisis. Between 1928 and 1932, the value of the cacao harvests declined and the revenue shrank to almost one half; and economic distress brought about political discontents. This was the background of Sir Ransford Slater's régime, who was governor from 1927 to 1932. It was Slater's policy to amend the Native Administration Ordinance so as to introduce a full system of indirect rule, and he brought in an income-tax Bill in 1931, but both schemes had an indirect result in the first Joint Conference of the Provincial Councils. Sir Shenton Thomas succeeded him as Governor from 1932 to 1934. His administration was notable for the political controversies over the Sedition Bill and the Water Works Bill; and was responsible for the restoration of the Ashanti Confederacy which occurred the year after he left the Gold Coast.

When Sir Arnold Hodson became Governor in 1934 the economic situation was already improving. There were two outstanding political events during his régime. In 1935, in accordance with the wishes of the Ashanti people, the Government proclaimed the restoration of the Ashanti Confederacy. Prempeh did not live to see the completion of the process that had begun with his return from exile, but his nephew and successor, Agyeman Prempeh II, was now recognized under the ancient title of Asantehene, and the Golden Stool was given official recognition. The second event was the great cocoa hold-up and boycott of 1937-8, when the farmers of the Colony and Ashanti, acting in opposition to the

monopolistic buying agreements of the European firms, brought the economic life of the country to a standstill, and had their grievances substantially endorsed by the Nowell Commission. The hold-up was a sweeping mass-emotional upheaval, remarkable for its spontaneity and discipline over a wide area and protracted period, and significant for the future as the first instance of unanimous popular action throughout the Colony and Ashanti together. In the last two years of Sir Arnold Hodson's governorship the Second World War brought a new phase of rapid change and of closer economic integration with the rest of British West Africa. He was succeeded as Governor in 1941 by Sir Alan Burns, whom character and circumstances have made the most actively progressive Governor since Guggisberg. Under him these new developments have come to a head in every department of Gold Coast life, but especially so in the political and constitutional, with the reorganization of native administration and municipal government, the framing of a new constitution for the Legislative Council and the Union of Ashanti Protectorate with the Colony.¹

In between Guggisberg's departure and the arrival of Burns, a great intellectual ferment was taking place among the youth. Brought face to face with the realities of colonial rule, accentuated by the years of depression in the thirties, they were beginning to think seriously about the economic and political problems facing their country. Their dreams and aspirations were articulated in a series of newspaper articles written by Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, the militant Nigerian nationalist, who was then editing the *African Morning Post* in Accra. Dr Azikiwe's writings, later published in book form under the title of *Renascent Africa*, soon became 'the Bible of West African Youth'.² Added to this, the platform agitation of Mr Wallace Johnson, a native of Sierra Leone and the

¹ *The Gold Coast Legislative Council* by Martin Wight, Faber, pp. 30-2.

² *Without Bitterness* by A. A. Nwafor Orizu, Creative Age Press, New York, p. 294.

organizer of the West African Youth League, stirred the Gold Coast youth into active political life.

Encouraged by the agitation of these two 'foreign born' Africans, some radicals began to dream about complete self-government. The Government became alarmed and decided to silence them and crush the nascent political ferment among the young educated class. Dr Azikiwe and Mr Wallace Johnson were charged with sedition, the former for publishing a newspaper article written by his friend Johnson, entitled 'Has the African a God?' They were both convicted and fined £50 or three months' imprisonment. The fine was paid after an appeal to the West African Court of Appeal had been dismissed. Subsequently, both men left the Gold Coast. Dr Azikiwe returned to Nigeria, and Mr Johnson to Sierra Leone. But agitation continued along constitutional lines under the conservative leadership of Dr Danquah and other middle-class intellectuals, who, as early as 1930, had convened a youth conference composed of delegates from various clubs and societies. Since the Youth Conference was orientated towards the Joint Provincial Council of Chiefs rather than the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society, the conference enjoyed the patronage of Sir Ofori Atta and other educated tribal rulers.

Like the Discussion Group sponsored by Achimota College, the Youth Conference was not a political party nor a nationalist movement as such, but merely a gathering of educated citizens to exchange ideas on economic and social problems facing the country.

The credo of these intellectuals was 'expounded' by Dr J. B. Danquah, the doyen of Gold Coast politicians, in what he called 'the Seven Postulates of Gold Coast Races Nationalist Movement'.

1. All races in the Gold Coast are homogeneous in quality and embody completely the discipline of a natural nationalist idea.

2. No act is greater than any action which disciplines the races to realize this idea, and there can be no greater duty than the duty to realize the idea and make the word flesh.

3. The conception of a self-dependent Gold Coast nation is compatible with membership of an international or world empire of self-dependent states as in the British Commonwealth. It ensures added security.

4. The State represents the national State in so far as there is a progressive identification of State interests with the interests of the Gold Coast races. And not otherwise.

5. The national State shall be completely realized in a homogeneous government of Gold Coast races only. And not otherwise.

6. The inner sense of the national reality is eternal or nature-given and unalterable in time and space. The racial nation is as natural as the sexual family, and as necessary if individuality is to survive in the catholic individual.

7. The Gold Coast Races Nationalist Movement, inspired with this idea, is disciplined by it and is tolerant only of forces not destructive of it and competent to create conditions for its articulate development and dominance.¹

Despite the confusion of ideas of the Akan philosopher-politician, Gold Coast public opinion was being prepared by the pioneering efforts of the intellectual vanguard for the next phase of political development, which came immediately after the war.

Scenting the mood of the country, Sir Alan Burns, who had made a close study of the problems facing the Gold Coast, set about introducing urgently needed reforms. Himself a West Indian by birth, he understood the psychology of colonial people better than most English-born proconsuls. Anticipating events rather than letting them get ahead of him, the Governor appointed two Africans

¹ *Liberty of the Subject* by J. B. Danquah, Boakie Pub. Co., Gold Coast.

to the Executive Council. They were Nana Sir Ofori Atta, the old favourite of the British officials, and Mr Kobina Anku Korsah, a representative of the Westernized intellectual class and a former secretary of the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society, who had broken with that sterile body and got himself elected to the Legislative Council in 1928 as the representative for Cape Coast.

The Governor's gesture met with popular approval; for African politicians had long been clamouring for representation in the Executive Council, until then composed exclusively of European officials. But it did not appease the appetite of all the educated Africans; it merely whetted it, and soon the chiefs and people of Ashanti were clamouring for direct representation in the Legislative Council. This demand of the Asanteman Council gave added impetus to the renewed agitation for a reform of the Legislative Council, which engaged official attention during the visit to the Colony of the Conservative Secretary of State for Colonies in 1943. Mr Oliver Stanley was presented with a cut-and-dried constitution drafted by Dr Danquah and other intellectuals and endorsed by the Joint Provincial Council of Chiefs in the Colony and the Asanteman Council. Among the suggested features of the draft constitution was the creation of a Minister for Home Affairs who would be responsible for 'native affairs'. Commenting on this suggestion, the Governor said: 'It was fairly generally believed that the signatories to the Memorandum were not unanimously in favour of this proposal, which emanated from the brain of a certain politician who hoped that he would himself be elected Minister for Home Affairs.'¹

Needless to say, the constitutional memorandum was not accepted, but by October 1944, Sir Alan Burns was able to announce to the Legislative Council that the

¹ *Colonial Civil Servant* by Sir Alan Burns, Allen & Unwin, p. 284.

Colonial Office had approved a new constitution which he had prepared in consultation with the chiefs and other unofficial African members of the existing Legislative Council. Two years later these political reforms were implemented.

Although the Burns Constitution was hailed by the majority of educated Africans and the British press as the most democratic in tropical Africa and a big step towards self-government, the politically-minded sections soon became disillusioned and set about denouncing it. Chief among them was Dr Danquah, 'a man of very great intelligence but suffers from that desire not unknown to politicians throughout the ages and recognized under the generic name of expediency'.¹ For example, in 1946 he had welcomed the Burns Constitution and even allowed himself to be appointed by the Joint Provincial Council of Chiefs as their representative in the Legislative Council. But a year later, he and other intellectual members of the Council joined forces in launching the United Gold Coast Convention (U.G.C.C.) at Saltpond, 'to ensure that by all legitimate and constitutional means the direction and control of government should pass into the hands of the people and their chiefs in the shortest possible time'. Mr George Grant, a prominent African capitalist and one time member of the Legislative Council, was elected chairman.

The executive of the new nationalist movement consisted of many old-school conservative lawyers, among them Dr J. W. de Graft Johnson, Mr Francis Awoonor Williams, and Mr R. S. Blay, an ex-member of the Legislative Council. With them were associated a few of the younger and more progressive middle-class intellectuals like Mr William Ofori Atta, a son of the late chief, Nana Sir Ofori Atta and nephew of Dr Danquah, and the lawyers E. O. Obetsebi Lamptey, Akufo Addo, Kobina Kessie, and Ako Adjei, ambitious young men

¹ Aiken Watson Commission Report, Colonial No. 231, p. 17.

out to make a political career under the banner of nationalism.

Although these men were hungry for power, they lacked the organizing abilities for translating their ambitions into reality. First they turned to the chiefs for support, but were rebuffed. 'The chiefs, led or misled by certain ambitious collaborators with the imperial power, neither could make up their minds whether to swim with the people or sink with imperialism', declared Mr Grant. Rejected by the chiefs and lacking confidence in the people, these intellectuals spent their time issuing flamboyant manifestoes couched in vague generalizations. The U.G.C.C. remained a paper organization until the lawyer-politicians decided to invite Dr Nkrumah, then a post-graduate student in London, to return to the Gold Coast to take over the secretaryship of the organization.

From the internal evidence of the minute book of the Working Committee, the Convention did not really get down to business until the arrival of Dr Kwame Nkrumah on December 16, 1947, and his assumption of the post of Secretary. Dr Nkrumah was better equipped than the other members of the Working Committee for the task the U.G.C.C. had set itself.

During his twelve years' stay abroad, he had made an intensive study of the history of political and national liberation movements and had helped in formulating the tactics and strategy of the Pan-African Congress held in Manchester in October 1945, under the direction of Dr W. E. Burghardt DuBois, the foremost Afro-American scholar and champion of Negro liberation, and one of the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured Peoples. This was an historic conference. Over 200 delegates assembled from all over the world. After hearing reports on conditions in the colonies, the conference rejected both capitalist and communist solutions to the African problem. The delegates endorsed the doctrine of Pan-African socialism,

based upon the Ghandian tactics of non-violent non-co-operation. The conference also endorsed the principles enunciated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and advised Africans and peoples of African descent to organize themselves into political parties, trade unions, co-operative societies and farmers' associations, in support of their struggle for political freedom and economic betterment.

Dr Nkrumah's genius lies in the fact that he has been able to translate these injunctions into practice within such a short time. Commenting upon his activities in the Gold Coast during his secretaryship of the U.G.C.C., the Watson Commissioners who investigated the disturbances of 1948, say: 'Soon after Mr Nkrumah's arrival the Convention began a drive in earnest for members. They held meetings in the towns at which, according to the local press, Mr Nkrumah became the star attraction. . . .'

During this period Dr Nkrumah gave not only organizational guidance but political direction to the U.G.C.C., as extracts from his recommendations to the Working Committee revealed.¹ Thanks to his enthusiasm, the U.G.C.C. 'endeavoured to enlist under their banner everyone who had a public or private grievance against the Government and to seize upon every complaint, great or small, which might inflame a population avid for excitement'. This found full scope during the riots and looting which occurred in Accra and other parts of the country on February 28, 1948. However, what happened in Accra on that date was not initiated by the U.G.C.C. The leaders merely fished in troubled waters and exploited the situation to advance their political objective in the hope of securing 'self-government for the chiefs and people in the quickest possible time'.

While the U.G.C.C. leaders were engaged in agitating for constitutional reforms, a well-known Accra chief, Nii

¹ See Appendix 12, Colonial No. 231 of the Watson Report.

Kwabena Bonne III, organized a country-wide boycott of European and Syrian merchants in order to force the foreign shopkeepers to reduce the exorbitant prices they were charging for essential commodities used by the Africans. This anti-inflationary movement was well supported not only by the common people but had the moral backing of the Paramount Chiefs and the nationalist politicians.

The boycott lasted for about a month and was conducted peacefully. The day when it was called off, February 28, coincided with a peaceful demonstration of unarmed ex-servicemen. The contingent attempted to march from Accra to Christiansborg Castle, the suburban residence of the Governor, where they planned to present a petition to the British representative, asking him to redress their grievances. As the procession approached the junction of three roads, one of which led to the Governor's residence, the marchers were directed to halt. This led to a clash between the ex-soldiers and the European officer commanding the police, named Imray. He ordered his men to fire on the demonstrators and two Africans were killed and five wounded.

When the news of the shooting of these unarmed ex-servicemen reached the business centre of Accra, where thousands of Africans were out shopping for the first time after the lifting of the boycott, it further inflamed the people. Already some of them were assaulting the European and Syrian shopkeepers for failing to reduce their prices as they had announced as part of the terms for the calling off of the boycott. The rioting and looting went on for days and spread to other towns—Nsawam, Koforidua, Akuse and Kumasi. By the time 'law and order' was restored, about twenty-nine people had been killed and 237 injured.

Faced with the breakdown of 'law and order', the Governor, Sir Gerald Creasy, acted with great haste, and ordered the arrest and deportation of six of the leaders

of the U.G.C.C. to the Northern Territories. These were Dr Nkrumah, Dr Danquah and Messrs W. Ofori Atta, Akufo Addo, Ako Adjei and E. O. Lamptey. Undue prominence was thereby given to the U.G.C.C., which was neither responsible for the boycott movement nor the ex-servicemen's demonstration, the events which directly contributed to the riots. On the contrary, the U.G.C.C. leaders, who were in Accra at the time, did everything to help restore order and even indulged in a piece of comic-opera politics by sending a telegram to Mr A. Creech Jones, the then Labour Colonial Secretary, offering their services to take over the Government!

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These politicians naïvely believed that British imperialism, then under a socialist government, could be liquidated by an ultimatum in the form of a telegram to a Colonial Minister. However, by making martyrs of Dr Danquah and his colleagues, they became popular 'national' heroes overnight and the U.G.C.C. came to be temporarily identified in the minds of the common people as a real Jacobin organization whose leaders were sincerely making personal sacrifices to secure justice, freedom and equality for them, which was certainly not so. As later events were to prove, all of them, with the exception of Nkrumah, revealed themselves to be typical bourgeois gentlemen who, while desiring political power for themselves and the upper-class Africans, had nothing in common with the workers, farmers, market women, petty traders and other under-privileged sections of the common people. They were the last men to have voluntarily risked imprisonment or exile in pursuit of their ideas. When called upon to support 'Positive Action' in

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As was to be expected, the committee was selected by the Governor and packed with chiefs and other representatives of traditional interests, conservative politicians and members of the professional and middle class. The radical nationalist elements were excluded. Similarly, the most important sections of the population—the farmers, the industrial workers, petty traders, the women and youth—were unrepresented. Although Dr Nkrumah was the General Secretary of the U.G.C.C. and a political figure already to be reckoned with, he too was excluded. Instead, the Governor nominated his more conservative colleagues, Dr Danquah, Mr George Grant, Mr Obetsebi Lamptey, Mr Kobina Kessie and Mr Akufo Addo. It was the last blunder of Sir Gerald Creasy before he left the Colony for Malta.

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V

CONVENTION PEOPLE'S PARTY

THE SPLIT in the United Gold Coast Convention (U.G.C.C.) marked a decisive stage in Gold Coast nationalism and brought to the forefront of leadership social forces which had hitherto been ignored. Until the emergence of the Convention People's Party, commonly referred to as the C.P.P., the leadership of all popular movements of protest, such as the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society (A.R.P.S.), the West African National Congress (W.A.N.C.), and the U.G.C.C., was exclusively in the hands of lawyers and wealthy business men. From now on it is the plebeian masses, the urban workers, artisans, petty traders, market women and fishermen, the clerks, the junior teachers, and the vast farming communities of the rural areas who are the makers of Gold Coast history.

Before the regrouping of forces crystallized along class and social lines, a series of conflicts took place within the U.G.C.C. on matters of tactics and organization between Dr Nkrumah, representing the radical section of the movement, and Dr Danquah, representing the conservative Executive Working Committee composed of wealthy men and lawyers. These prosperous middle-class nationalists objected to the establishment of the first Ghana National College in Cape Coast, which Dr Nkrumah had taken the initiative in founding in July 1948 to enable the students who had been expelled from St Augustine's Roman Catholic College for demonstrating solidarity

with the U.G.C.C. when the leaders were arrested during the February–March 1948 disturbances, to continue their studies.¹

The conservative members also objected to Dr Nkrumah's part in helping to organize these students and other youth supporters into a juvenile section of the nationalist movement, called the Committee of Youth Organizations (C.Y.O.). They were distrustful of the young radicals who were already voicing criticism of the President, one of the richest African capitalists, and other upper-class members of the Executive then serving on the Coussey Constitutional Committee for following a temporizing policy instead of pressing for the country's demand for 'immediate self-government'.

In order to curb the activities of these young men, Mr Grant and his friends decided to remove Dr Nkrumah from the secretaryship of the U.G.C.C. They proposed to make him treasurer, and instructed him to disband the youth organizations. This brought the supporters of the C.Y.O. into open conflict with the reactionary leaders of the U.G.C.C. Until Dr Nkrumah had become secretary, these old men dominated Gold Coast politics, and together with the politically minded lawyers and middle-class traders, exercised unchallenged control over every political movement. They had conceived the U.G.C.C. simply as a loosely organized heterogeneous body supported by all classes, and therefore reflecting conflicting social interests, to be led exclusively by prosperous Africans. They were most strongly opposed to the creation of any new political body within the U.G.C.C. through which the less privileged sections, especially the radical youth, could voice their particular economic and social aspirations and exert pressure upon the official leaders.

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Faced with this challenge, Mr Grant and his right-wing colleagues on the executive of the U.G.C.C. adopted a conciliatory attitude towards the youth. They invited three prominent and highly respected Africans, the lawyer Mr Gwirah of Sekondi, the Rev. J. F. Bart-Addison of the Methodist Mission, and the Rev. Ntedu Kyinebua of the A.M.E. Zion Mission to arbitrate on the differences between themselves and Dr Nkrumah, who, in the meanwhile, had established the *Accra Evening News*, to explain to the people the ideological differences between the U.G.C.C. and the C.P.P., and the necessity for agitating for 'Self-Government Now'.

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working for self-government under the direction of the national executive of the U.G.C.C. To this Dr Nkrumah agreed. However, Dr Danquah and other conservative members of the executive objected and the entire executive resigned *en bloc*. Their behaviour only stiffened opposition among the radicals, and served to confirm the suspicions of the youth that they did not want the common people to exercise any form of control over the right-wing leaders.

Deserted by his friends, who had started a campaign to discredit Dr Nkrumah as 'the man who stabbed the country in the back', Mr Grant convened a special delegate conference of the U.G.C.C. at Saltpond on July 30, 1949. The delegates endorsed the recommendations of the Sekondi arbitrators and called for the election of a new executive to fill the vacancies caused by the resignation of Dr Danquah and the other conservatives. This was opposed by the retiring officers, who, realizing that their political careers were at stake, withdrew their resignations and tried to take control of the conference. To break the deadlock, Mr Grant, who still remained the National President, appointed two new arbitrators to find a solution. They were the well-known Fanti chief, Nana Aboadzi, and the Ashanti ruler, Nana Tachimane. They endorsed the recommendations of the other arbitrators that Dr Nkrumah should be reinstated as General Secretary, but favoured the liquidation of the C.P.P. The conflicting judgment on this issue, instead of solving the deadlock, deepened the split between the radical and conservative leaders at the conference. In a further endeavour to resolve the difficulty, Dr Nkrumah, who was being vilified by the reactionaries and their chieftain supporters as the man responsible for splitting the U.G.C.C., agreed to accept the decision of the two chiefs, providing the delegates were allowed to elect a new executive committee to work with him in implementing the policy resolutions adopted by the conference.

At that stage Dr Danquah and his friends again objected. They realized that the delegates had lost confidence in them, and that if a free election of officers was allowed their resignations would be confirmed and a more progressive executive elected to take their places. Denied the democratic right of electing their leaders, the rank and file passed a resolution of 'no confidence' in the National President, Mr Grant, to whom Dr Nkrumah tendered his resignation, declaring: 'I am fully aware of the dangers to which my action may expose me, but firm in the conviction that my country's cause comes first, I take that step and chance any consequences. I am prepared if need be to shed my blood and die that Ghana might have "Self-Government Now"'. Long live Ghana, the land of our birth.'

The last session of the conference, on August 1, 1949, marked the final parting of the ways between the Right and Left of Gold Coast nationalism. Immediately after the Saltpond Conference the U.G.C.C. began to disintegrate. The branches, most of which were under the influence of the youth, disaffiliated and joined the C.P.P. Encouraged by this support, Dr Nkrumah, aided by a team of enthusiastic lieutenants, among them Mr Kobla Gbedemah, now Minister for Commerce and Industry; Mr Kojo Botsio, Minister for Education and Social Welfare; Mr Kwesi Plange, Under-Secretary for Local Government; Mr Kobo Edusei, Chief Government Whip and Under-Secretary for Justice; Mr N. A. Welbeck, National Propaganda Secretary; Mr Boi Duku, Assistant Propaganda Secretary; Mr Kofi Baako, Director of Information Bureau; Mr Atta Mensah, Assembly man for Ashanti Mampong; and Mrs Hannah Cudjoe, Propaganda Secretary of the Women's Department of the C.P.P., embarked upon a country-wide propaganda tour to popularize the party's five-point programme:

1. To fight relentlessly by all constitutional means for the achievement of full '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.

By the time the Coussey Committee, on which the C.P.P. was unrepresented, issued its report on October 26, 1949, the new party was well established with a network of branches throughout the Colony area and Ashanti. It later penetrated into the Northern Territories through the activities of Mr R. S. Iddrusu and Mr Ebenezer Adam, Chairman and Secretary respectively of the Tamale branch.

As the most representative organization in the country through which mass opinion could find expression, the C.P.P., in association with the Trades Union Congress, took the initiative in calling the Ghana Representative Assembly on November 20, 1949, at Accra. This Constituent Assembly, the first of its kind ever convened in the Gold Coast, was attended by over 80,000 people representing over fifty organizations, including trades unions, co-operatives, farmers' organizations, educational, cultural, women's and youth bodies. The only sections of the country unrepresented were the chieftain councils, the U.G.C.C., and the A.R.P.S., which had ceased to play any active part in political affairs since it was let down by the chiefs in the thirties.

The Representative Assembly resolved that 'the Coussey Report and His Majesty's Government's statement thereon are unacceptable to the country as a whole', and declared 'that the people of the Gold Coast be granted immediate self-government, that is, full Dominion Status within the Commonwealth of Nations based on the Statute of Westminster'. The Assembly also drew up a memorandum outlining the structure of central and local government they desired to see incorporated in the new constitution, as follows:

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

The Legislature shall consist of two Houses, namely, a Senate for Chiefs and Elders, and a House of Assembly.

The Executive Council (Cabinet) shall consist of at least a Prime Minister and twelve other Ministers.

The Judiciary shall consist of Local Courts, High Courts, Appeal Courts and Privy Council.

THE SENATE

There shall be thirty-six members, nine elected by each of the four regions, not less than one-third being non-chiefs elected by the Territorial Councils.

The minimum age shall be twenty-five years, and the disqualification is the same as that for the Assembly or where a member chief is destooled.

One-third of the Senators of each region is to retire every three years, but they can stand for re-election.

The Senate shall elect its own President.

The Prime Minister shall elect at least two Senators to serve on the Executive Council (Cabinet).

Decisions shall pass by a majority vote.

All Senators shall take the Oath of Allegiance as may be stipulated in the laws of the Gold Coast.

THE ASSEMBLY

There shall be seventy-five members distributed as follows: nineteen from the Colony, nineteen from Ashanti,

nineteen from the Northern Territories and eighteen from Trans-Volta. There shall be no *ex-officio* members except the Minister for Defence, who shall be appointed by the Secretary of State with the advice and consent of the Executive Council (Cabinet).

The minimum age of a member shall be twenty-one and he must be a registered voter. There shall be no property qualification.

There shall be direct elections by ballot. The deposit per candidate shall be £25, which will be forfeited if the candidate fails to get one-sixth of the total votes polled. There shall be no residential qualification.

The Governor shall set up a Delimitation Commission to determine the boundaries of the various constituencies.

The life of the House shall be five years.

The Governor shall call upon the member of the Assembly who commands majority votes in the House to form the Government.

The Speaker and Deputy Speaker shall be elected by the House.

A quorum shall not be less than twenty-five members.

There shall be at least one session in the year.

The Government shall be dissolved when (1) it suffers defeat in a vote of 'no confidence' or (2) at the end of its normal life of five years.

General elections shall be held within three months after every dissolution.

Any persons convicted of treason, or who have within the previous five years been convicted of felony or any offence involving dishonesty, or (2) any person who is a lunatic, shall be disqualified from voting.

The Governor shall make laws with the advice and consent of the Senate and Assembly.

Any member of the Senate or Assembly can introduce Bills, etc., subject to the provisions of the Standing Orders of the Senate and the Assembly, provided that (a) no

Money Bills, Motions, etc., can be introduced without the prior consent of the Executive Council (Cabinet) and (b) Money Bills shall be introduced in the Assembly by the Speaker on the advice of the Minister of Justice.

The Senate shall have power to suspend Bills for one year, but no power to reject, amend or delay Money Bills beyond one month. Any Bill passed by the Senate and rejected by the Assembly is deemed lost.

All questions in the House shall be determined by a majority of votes of members present.

The remuneration of members of the House shall be fixed by Ordinance.

Members of the Assembly shall take the Oath of Allegiance as may be stipulated in the laws of the Gold Coast.

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (CABINET)

The Governor shall call upon the member of the Assembly who commands the majority votes in the House to form the Government.

The Prime Minister shall appoint the members of the Executive Council (Cabinet) and other members of the Government:

The Cabinet shall consist of:

The Prime Minister.

The Minister for External Affairs.

The Minister for Internal Affairs and Justice.

The Minister for Finance.

The Minister for Education.

The Minister for Labour.

The Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries.

The Minister for Public Works, Transport and Communications.

The Minister for Commerce and Industry.

The Minister for Health.

The Minister without Portfolio from the Senate.

The Minister for Defence.

The Minister for Defence shall be appointed by the Secretary of State upon the advice and consent of the Executive Council (Cabinet) of the Gold Coast, and he shall be responsible to both the King and the Assembly.

Ministers shall be collectively responsible to the Assembly.

The Executive Council (Cabinet) shall resign from office on an adverse vote of 'no confidence' and also when the Assembly is dissolved.

The Prime Minister, in consultation with other Ministers, shall appoint Under-Secretaries from the Assembly to various Ministries.

The Civil Service Commission shall appoint Permanent Under-Secretaries from the Civil Service.

The remuneration of Ministers and Ministerial Under-Secretaries shall be fixed by Ordinance.

THE GOVERNOR

The Governor shall be the King's representative and shall be appointed by him upon the advice and consent of the Executive Council (Cabinet) of the Gold Coast.

The power of Certification and Veto shall be exercised by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Executive Council (Cabinet) of the Gold Coast.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The term Native Authorities shall henceforth be known as Local Authorities.

Local Authorities shall be grouped in three types, according to their functions, viz.:

Class A: District and Municipal Councils.

Class B: Urban Area and Rural Area Councils.

Class C: Village Area Councils.

- (a) One-third of the members shall be elected by the Territorial Councils, and
- (b) two-thirds by popular election.

To be qualified as a voter, the person must have resided in that locality for at least six months and must have registered as a voter and paid local tax. There shall be no property qualification.

All local government Councils shall be changed every two years.

(a) In the case of the non-Municipal Councils, the Chair shall be taken by the chief of the place as President of the Council.

(b) Each Council shall also elect a leader from the members of the Council who shall serve as Deputy President. He shall preside at all business meetings of the Council, and shoulder the administrative responsibilities for the President.

(c) A chief (President of the Council) may also be elected the Chairman of the Council in lieu of a Chairman from among the members, in which case the Council shall elect a Deputy Chairman, who will also act as Deputy President.

Two or more Local Authorities can combine to discharge certain delegated functions, e.g., water supply. The formation of such committees shall be dictated by consideration of finance, geography or convenience.

Local Authorities shall discharge such functions as health, education, water and electric supply, roads, transport, market, lorry parks, etc. Details to be worked out.

(a) Councillors shall not be paid but their transport expenses while on duty shall be paid.

(b) A Local Government Appointments Board shall be established and it shall be responsible for conditions of service of the employees of local government.

(c) The office of District Commissioner shall cease to exist.

Local finance shall be derived from the following:

- (a) Tax on property.
- (b) Profits of municipal enterprises, e.g., electricity supply.
- (c) Stool lands (part of).
- (d) Grants from the Central Government.

A minority rider proposed by the representatives of the Ghana Patriots Club, signed by Mr Kofi Baako and Mr Saki Scheck, called for the immediate withdrawal of the three *ex-officio* members from the Executive, as recommended in the Coussey Report. On this issue the position of the U.G.C.C. approximated to that of the Ghana Patriots Club's delegates, for their representatives on the Coussey Committee had also included a rider in the official report objecting to the inclusion of any British officials in the Executive Council. They also objected to the Governor's retention of the veto power. Nevertheless, the U.G.C.C. leaders did not press their objections and advised the acceptance of the official recommendations. This was quite consistent with Dr Danquah's well-known inconsistencies!

The amendments to the Coussey Report adopted by the Ghana Representative Assembly were presented to the Governor, Sir Charles Arden-Clarke, for transmission to the Labour Secretary of State, Mr A. Creech Jones. Copies were also submitted to the chiefs asking for their support. They not only refused, but summoned Dr Nkrumah and other leading personalities of the C.P.P. to a meeting at Dodowa, where they were publicly abused by men like Nana Ofori Atta II and Nana Sir Tsibu Darku IX, who Dr Nkrumah saved some years later from the vengeance of his own people.

Despite all forms of intimidation, the 'Young Turks' of the C.P.P. refused to sell out. They continued to press the Government to give consideration to the people's demand to convene a Constituent Assembly. They were up against a formidable opposition—the Government and chiefs. Unlike the U.G.C.C. leaders, generals without

an army, the chiefs still enjoyed much support from the masses. With their traditional authority still intact and buttressed by a few intellectual sycophants and yes-men of imperialism, such as the nominated African members of the Legislative Council, the Governor could well afford to ignore the views of the people expressed through the C.P.P. leaders of the Ghana Representative Assembly. Sir Charles Arden-Clarke was badly served by his African confidants.¹

After repeated requests for a round table conference with the British officials, Dr Nkrumah, acting on the authority of the Executive of the C.P.P., informed the Governor on December 15, 1949, that if the British Government in the Gold Coast continued to ignore the legitimate aspirations of the people embodied in the form of the amendments to the Coussey Constitution, the C.P.P. would embark upon a campaign of 'Positive Action', based upon Gandhi's philosophy of non-violent non-co-operation, and would continue with it until such time as the British Government conceded the right of the Gold Coast people to convene their Constituent Assembly.

At this stage both sides prepared for a showdown. The Government took the offensive by instituting a series of prosecutions against C.P.P. editors in order to suppress criticisms of their intransigent policy. Between the calling of the Representative Assembly and the launching of 'Positive Action' on January 8, 1950, Mr C. A. Duncan, secretary of the ex-Servicemen's Union, and three C.P.P. journalists, Mr K. A. Gbedemah, Mr Kwame Afriyea and Mr J. K. Amedbe, were sent to prison on charges of

¹ *Sir Charles Arden-Clarke* arrived in the Gold Coast in 1949 as successor to Sir Gerald Creasy. The son of a Church of England parson, he was born in 1898 and educated at Rossall School and Emmanuel College, Cambridge. After military service in the First World War, he entered the Colonial Service as an Administrative Officer in Nigeria in 1920; Assistant Resident Commissioner in Bechuanaland in 1936 and Resident Commissioner in Basutoland in 1942. Four years later, Sir Charles was appointed to his first proconsulship as Governor of Sarawak.

writing seditious articles and Dr Nkrumah was fined £300 for contempt of court. Hardly a month passed without C.P.P. leaders being dragged before the courts on all sorts of trumped-up charges.

When the Government realized that the C.P.P. leaders were tough men who meant to stand firm behind their slogan of 'Self-Government Now', an attempt was made to break the political deadlock. On January 5, 1950, the Colonial Secretary, Mr R. H. Saloway, C.I.E., O.B.E.,¹ now Minister for Defence and External Affairs in the present Government, invited Dr Nkrumah and other 'rebel' leaders to discuss the situation with him. This was a moral victory for the C.P.P., which until then was denounced day in and day out by the Government-subsidized *Gold Coast Bulletin* and radio as a subversive organization without any real support from the people. Negotiations dragged out while the Government played for time to complete their police and military preparations, until finally Dr Nkrumah decided to break the deadlock by proclaiming 'Positive Action' as from midnight on January 8, 1950.

The political campaign of non-violent non-co-operation was merged with the industrial unrest caused by a strike of Government meteorological workers which had started some months before and had the backing of the Trades Union Congress. Confronted with this formidable array of organized power of the people, the Governor answered the 'Positive Action' challenge to imperialist rule by declaring a state of emergency. This state of affairs lasted from January 11 to March 6, 1950, during which period a veritable reign of terror prevailed.

¹ *Mr Saloway* was born in 1900 and educated at Exeter School and St John's College, Cambridge. He entered the Indian Civil Service in 1927 as revenue and financial member, Rampur State; director of resettlement, United Province and director general of resettlement, Government of India in 1946. He was transferred to the Gold Coast in 1947 as secretary of rural development and three years later promoted Chief Secretary.

Public meetings were forbidden, letters were opened and censored and freedom of movement rigidly restricted. The C.P.P. offices were raided and their property confiscated. Syrian traders and European civilians were enrolled as auxiliary police and armed with clubs and revolvers. These 'storm troopers' went about terrorizing defenceless Africans, beating up peaceful citizens—men, women and children. Many people were shot at sight. It was a period of legalized mob rule. To the credit of most of the Indian merchants, they and their Asian staffs refused to join in the anti-African pogrom.

The pro-C.P.P. press was completely muzzled. Mr J. G. Markham, the editor of the *Accra Evening News*, and Mr Kofi Baako, editor of the *Cape Coast Daily Mail*, were imprisoned for defending the civil liberties of the people. Dr Nkrumah and other leaders of the C.P.P. were hunted down and sentenced to periods of imprisonment ranging from six months to two years.

As the terror spread throughout the length and breadth of the country, striking down all suspected of sympathy with the cause of 'Self-Government Now', jubilation prevailed in the camp of the African reactionaries. Their joy was expressed in the columns of the anti-C.P.P. newspapers, which were encouraged by the British authorities to slander the C.P.P. leaders as 'communists', 'hooligans', and 'veranda boys'. Day after day they taunted the people. 'We told you so', was their cowardly refrain. What they could not themselves achieve—the destruction of the C.P.P.—they hoped their imperialist masters would do for them. But they were soon to get a rude shock. For despite the incarceration of the C.P.P. leaders, the militant spirit of the rank and file remained unbroken. The people's heads were bloody but unbowed. Their organization survived the onslaught of the British Government.

As soon as the emergency was lifted, those leaders of

the C.P.P. who had escaped the clutches of the imperialists—like Mr A. Y. K. Djin, the then chairman of the Accra branch, and others like Mr K. A. Gbedemah, the acting National chairman, and Mr Kwame Afriyeyea who had served their sentences of imprisonment and had been released—set about rallying the supporters of the C.P.P. and regrouping the ranks of the party. In this task the pro-C.P.P. press (especially the *Accra Evening News*) and other sympathetic newspapers such as the *Ghana Express* which were still pursuing an independent yet progressive anti-imperialist policy, did yeoman service to the cause of self-government during the period while the nationalist militants working in the field were regrouping the people around the banner of the C.P.P.

The extent to which the masses had recovered their fighting spirit was demonstrated on March 27, less than two weeks after the lifting of the emergency regulations, when the party organized its first public rally at the Arena in Accra to open its campaign for the municipal elections to the Accra Town Council. Over 50,000 people crowded into the park and pledged their support to Dr Nkrumah and the C.P.P. On April 1, 1950, the citizens went to the polls and voted the C.P.P. into the Council. The party candidates won all seven seats, defeating by overwhelming majorities the opposition candidates of the U.G.C.C., the Mambii Party and the Ratepayers' Association, later to merge into the National Democratic Party. The two latter organizations had formerly controlled the Town Council. This victory spread alarm in the camp of the reactionaries and showed the British authorities the direction in which popular sentiment was blowing in the capital. But this was only the beginning of the political landslide which was soon to shake the country in favour of the C.P.P.

A month after the Accra elections the C.P.P. successfully contested a by-election for two vacant seats in the Cape Coast Municipal Council. This victory was even

more significant than that at Accra, because Cape Coast until then was considered the most conservative town in the Gold Coast, having always elected moderates. On this occasion the successful C.P.P. candidates were Mr Kwesi Plange, a brilliant twenty-four-year-old schoolmaster, and Mr J. E. Hagan, the energetic chairman of the local C.P.P. organization.

Two weeks later Mr Plange again won another by-election, this time as a member of the Legislative Council to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Mr George E. Moore, an executive committee member of the conservative Aborigines' Rights Protection Society. On this occasion the defeated Independent Party candidate was Mr Henry Hagan, an uncle of Mr Plange, who had the support of all the conservative voters. Mr Plange got 1,246 votes as against his opponent's 506.

Encouraged by these election victories in the two principal coastal towns in the Colony area, the hitherto untried leaders who were directing the C.P.P. while the veterans were still in prison, mobilized all their forces in preparing for the approaching general election under the new constitution. This had been fixed for February 1951, but before the great event the C.P.P. contested another municipal election, this time in Ashanti, where they won all the seats in the Kumasi Town Council in November 1950.

Assured of popular support in the urban areas of both the Colony and Protectorate, the party faced the new year with a spirit of confidence. To make sure of obtaining a working majority in the new Legislative Assembly much propaganda work still remained to be done in the rural areas, where most of the constituencies were distributed.

While the party organizers were carrying on propaganda in the villages and rural constituencies, Mr Kwesi Plange, who entered the Legislative Council during the

last term of the 'outmoded' constitution, achieved an important tactical victory for his party. He got the Council, on which the chiefs and other representatives of traditional authority had the majority, to reduce the voting age from twenty-five to twenty-one years, which had been recommended by the Coussey Constitution Committee. It is significant to note that at the time Mr Plange introduced his motion before the Legislative Council, he himself was under twenty-five, the youngest member in the history of the Council. Consequently, he was able to argue that while the Coussey Constitution was supposed to be more advanced than the Burns Constitution, he would be excluded from voting under it, much less become a member of the new Legislative Assembly, if the electoral law remained as proposed in respect of the voting age. Despite the logic of his case, the chiefs and other old men who had helped draw up the constitution and had purposely inserted the twenty-five-year age limit 'to keep the youth out of politics', refused to budge. However, when Mr Plange reminded the chiefs of the democratic principle of 'no taxation without representation'—that the youths would refuse to pay the tribal levy until they had attained the age of twenty-five—the chiefs became alarmed and agreed to reduce the voting age to twenty-one. The 'baby' of the Council having thus secured the enfranchisement of thousands of young men and women who otherwise would have been shorn of their civic rights, new recruits flocked into the ranks of the C.P.P.

This phenomenal growth and prestige of the C.P.P. alarmed the scheming leaders of the U.G.C.C. Deserted by the common people, they turned to the chiefs for support, as they were being attacked in the radical sections of the press for letting the country down. Dr Danquah and other old men, with the endorsement of the Provincial Councils of Chiefs, headed by their uncrowned king, Nana Sir Tsibu Darku, Kt., O.B.E.,

evolved a plan to bring the radical youth once more under their control.

On the pretext of forming a united front to contest the approaching elections for the new Legislative Assembly, Dr Danquah got the chiefs to invite all existing political and nationalist organizations to send delegates to a special conference at Kumasi on December 19, 1950. These political schemers proposed the liquidation of all parties and the formation of a new movement to be called the Gold Coast National Congress, headed by the Asantehene, whom the lawyer-politicians intended to use as a figure-head to further their ambitions. The so-called National Congress was to have the exclusive right to select candidates for the general election. Anyone who opposed the official lists would be branded a national traitor and communist. The conference broke up when delegates of the Ashanti Youth Association demanded the right of freely electing the members of the Executive Committee of the proposed National Congress. The convenors rejected this democratic procedure, and that was the end of the manoeuvre. In other words, the very men who are today denouncing Dr Nkrumah as a 'black dictator' for having introduced the party system into the Gold Coast as a feature of parliamentary democracy, were trying to impose their own brand of tribal totalitarianism upon the country by denying the voters the opportunity of freely electing their representatives to the Assembly.

Their plot exposed, the 'National Congress' misleaders returned to their respective vines and fig-trees, and when the general election took place two months later, Nana Sir Tsibu Darku IX, the most influential chief in the Colony and the principal intriguer behind the abortive 'National Congress', was defeated in his own state by the C.P.P. candidate, Mr Alfred Pobee Biney, an ex-engine driver. He was later on destooled and driven from public office by his subjects for abuse of power!

After the failure of the U.G.C.C. leaders and the chiefs to pull off the Kumasi *coup d'état*, the 'Young Turks' took the offensive. It was a hard and difficult task ahead of them. Dr Nkrumah and many other well-known leaders were still in jail. But what they lacked in political experience they made up for in enthusiasm. Day after day, the youth carried the propaganda of the C.P.P. into the remotest villages and hamlets, and by the time the general election took place on February 8, 1951, the ideological influence of the party was as strong in the rural constituencies as in the urban areas.

VI

CONSTITUTIONAL EVOLUTION 1850-1950

CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN the Gold Coast has been an extremely slow and gradual process. It was only after the Second World War that there emerged a popular nationalist movement able to draw to itself the broad masses of the urban workers, the farmers and the lower middle classes—and to get their active participation in the political affairs of the country. It was only then that the common people gave their support to the agitation initiated by the educated minority for constitutional reforms and self-government.

Here we shall trace briefly the evolution of constitutional growth from the time the Gold Coast was declared a Crown Colony and Protectorate. The area officially designated the 'Colony' was proclaimed as such in 1874. It comprises the southernmost part of the country bordering the Gulf of Guinea. The hinterland, comprising Ashanti and the Northern Territories, constitutes the 'Protectorate', the boundaries of which were defined in 1901. Until the reformed constitution of 1946, popularly known as the Burns Constitution after the then Governor, Sir Alan Burns, the two areas—'Colony' and 'Protectorate'—were administered separately.

The 1946 constitution established a certain degree of unification by providing Ashanti with limited representation in the Central Legislative Council of the Gold Coast, until then composed only of Colony members. The Northern Territories and British Togoland (part of

the former German colony which became a British mandate under the League of Nations in 1922, and after the Second World War a Trust Territory under the United Nations) were only given direct representation in the Central Government of the Gold Coast with the adoption of the present Coussey Constitution in 1950.

For one hundred years the Gold Coast was administered as a typical Crown Colony, notwithstanding such constitutional concessions as were made during the period as a result of agitation from certain organizations and progressive intellectuals. Until the 1950 constitutional changes, all legislative and executive power remained firmly in the hands of the Governor and his nominees. This was guaranteed not only by the Governor's powers of veto and certification, but by the very structure and composition of the Legislative and Executive Councils.

Although the first Council was established in 1850, it was not until thirty-eight years later that the first African, Mr John Sarbah, a Cape Coast merchant, was appointed to the Legislative Council. Two years after the first Legislative Council, composed of four Europeans—two Government officials and two merchants—was set up, the British attempted to make use of the Fanti chiefs to collect taxes to meet the costs of administration.

These traditional rulers were organized into a so-called Legislative Assembly and authorized by the Governor, Major Stephen John Hill, to impose a poll tax of one shilling upon their subjects. The people refused to pay, and riots broke out when the British agents tried to collect the tax. This was the first attempt to institute a form of Indirect Rule or Native Authority, which later became the popular system of administration in the tribal areas. Commenting upon the abortive All-African Legislative Assembly, Lord Grey, Secretary for Colonies at the time, described it as a 'rude Negro Parliament', and declared his belief that 'it has converted a number of

barbarous tribes, possessing nothing which serves the name of a government, into a nation, with a regularly organized authority and institutions simple and unpretending, but suited to the actual state of society, and containing within themselves all that is necessary for their future development, so that they may meet the growing wants of an advancing civilization'.

Having failed to serve the purpose of British imperialism, the bogus Legislative Assembly was quietly buried.

CLIFFORD CONSTITUTION OF 1916

It was not until the First World War that the 1850 constitution underwent any marked change. Until then only slight modifications had been made in the composition of the original Legislative Council by increasing the number of unofficials to four in 1901. In 1916 the Governor, Sir Hugh Clifford, appointed three chiefs to represent each of the three provinces into which the Colony area had been divided for administrative purposes. Three other Africans representing the educated Westernized urban communities and three Europeans were also nominated, making a total of nine unofficials in a council of nineteen. The principle of elected representation had to wait until the next round of reform, which came in 1925. This marked the most radical change in the political history of the country and was in large measure due to the agitation of the West African National Congress, under the able leadership of Mr J. Casely Hayford and his colleague Mr T. Hutton Mills, both prominent African barristers.

The Congress was the first inter-territorial expression of political solidarity between West African middle-class nationalists and progressive intellectuals, and its foundation resolution was made the basis of the demand for popular representative government in all the British West African colonies. In 1920 the Congress sent a delegation to London to put its views before the Colonial

Office. Lord Milner, then Secretary of State for Colonies, refused them an audience, on the excuse that the delegation had not been mandated by all the chiefs. Actually, an attempt was made by Sir Hugh Clifford, who had been transferred to Nigeria, to get the chiefs of that colony to denounce the leaders of the Congress as intellectuals who represented only a small minority of de-tribalized Negroes. A similar campaign was being carried on by the Governor of the Gold Coast, Sir Gordon Guggisberg, who succeeded in getting the leading chief, Nana Sir Ofori Atta, to repudiate Mr Casely Hayford and his Congress delegation.

Despite the hostility of the colonial officials and the opposition of chiefs like Nana Sir Ofori Atta, the Congress was able to arouse a considerable amount of popular support, especially among the educated and politically conscious urban sections throughout West Africa. Recognizing that the Congress could not be entirely disposed of, Sir Gordon Guggisberg evolved a plan to counter the Congress agitation by giving the Africans a larger voice in the Central Government. He side-tracked Congress agitation by increasing the representation of the Colony chiefs in the Legislative Council. By making them salaried Native Authorities of the British Government, subject to official discipline under the District Commissioners, they could be depended upon to support official policies and rebut criticism from the educated Africans associated with the Congress and the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society, then under the influence of a group of Cape Coast intellectuals.

All this was achieved through the Native Authorities Ordinance and the Provincial Councils of Chiefs, which gave the chiefs the right to nominate themselves on to the Central Legislative Council. They were allowed twice the number of members granted to the educated Westernized Africans inhabiting the principal coastal towns. It was a clever move, which served the aims of the

imperialists by divorcing the chiefs from the intelligentsia and driving a wedge between the educated urban and illiterate rural communities. This manoeuvre of Sir Gordon Guggisberg blunted the political agitation of the West African National Congress for radical constitutional changes, and had the effect of arresting for many years the onward march towards self-government.

STRUCTURE OF GUGGISBERG CONSTITUTION OF 1925

The Guggisberg Constitutional reforms came into operation in 1925. They provided for twenty-nine members, apart from the Governor, who was President of the Council. There were fifteen official members and fourteen unofficials. Of the latter, six were Paramount Chiefs selected by the Joint Provincial Council—three from the Eastern Province, two from the Central Province, and one from the Western Province. Five Europeans represented foreign banking, shipping, mercantile and mining interests.

The African ratepayers living in the capital, Accra, and the two other coastal municipalities of Cape Coast and Sekondi-Takoradi, were given the right to elect one representative from each town. Thus the urbanized communities, the most politically advanced sections of the country, were not even as well represented on the Legislative Council as the foreign capitalists, not to speak of the Native Authorities symbolized by Gazetted chiefs.

The European unofficial members, being mostly business men and agents of British capitalist interests, took very little part in the work of the Council. As the watchdogs of their London and Liverpool principals their main concern was to oppose legislation affecting their companies. In local matters relating to the general economic and social welfare of the Africans, they invariably supported the British officials, who, in turn, supported them whenever radical Africans among the elected municipal

members attempted to interfere with the special economic privileges enjoyed by the companies. They were always particularly zealous in opposing any attempt to increase taxation on the mining companies and defending the policies of the trading firms of the Association of West African merchants.

By actively engaging the Paramount Chiefs in the work of the Central Government and giving them larger representation in the Legislative Council than the urbanized educated Africans, the system of Indirect Rule operated through the Native Authorities was firmly grafted on to the traditional Crown Colony system of administration.

It was largely this transformation in the status of the chiefs, from elected servants of the people into paid agents of British imperialism, which brought about the cleavage between them and the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society. The alliance between the chiefs and British political officers continued from the inception of the system of Native Authorities in 1927 down to the time when the Coussey Constitution came into being in 1950.

During this quarter of a century Gold Coast politics passed through a series of crises before it freed itself from the frustrations of the Guggisberg regime. The significant feature of the 1925 constitution, however, is that it 'gave recognition for the first time in the history of British tropical Africa of the elective principle, as far as officers are concerned'. This constituted a great victory for the leaders of the West African National Congress, who had put forward the demand for elected members as distinct from self-appointed chiefs, at the time of their interview with Lord Milner in 1920; but the suggestion was rejected by the Secretary of State for Colonies.

'Notwithstanding the recognition of the elective principle, the educated Africans vigorously attacked the new

Constitution on the ground that it gave undue representation to the chiefs in comparison with the educated classes in the towns, and that in establishing these Provincial Councils and providing for the representation of chiefs on the Legislative Council, the Government had ignored native custom.

'The establishment of these Provincial Councils will, according to native leaders, tend to create a division between the chiefs and the educated class in the Gold Coast. In the good old days, they assert, the Gold Coast chiefs could do nothing without the consent of their councils. Yet through the Provincial Councils, they will exercise large powers which these elders cannot control as they should according to native law. According to custom, a chief may only speak in public through his official interpreter or linguist and in the vernacular. Yet he is obliged to take a personal part in the debates of the Legislative Council. On the other hand, only one or two chiefs in the Colony know English, and it is urged that the others, being illiterate, would be under the thumb of the administration. Native leaders assert that the elections of the Provincial Councils are already under such control.'¹

Despite the protest of the Western educated politicians, especially those associated with the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society (A.R.P.S.), which was the officially recognized organization through which the Fanti chiefs made representation to the British officials in the Gold Coast and the Colonial Office in London until Governor Guggisberg established the Provincial Council of Chiefs, the British political officers set about finally destroying the A.R.P.S. and split the chiefs away from the educated lawyer class. To do so, they proceeded to reinforce the powers of the former. This was completed in 1944, when Governor Sir Alan Burns introduced into the Legislative Council an amended version of the 1927 Native Authority Ordinance. Once again Sir Ofori Atta, the sworn

¹ *The Native Problems in Africa* by R. L. Buell, Macmillan, vol. 1, p. 741.

enemy of the educated Cape Coast lawyers in control of the A.R.P.S. and some of the Accra municipal members of the Council, was given the task of piloting the new Bill through the Legislature. During the course of the debate Mr George Moore, then the Cape Coast representative in the Council and a leading member of the A.R.P.S., warned the Governor that his action was *ultra vires*. 'Sovereignty is not in the chiefs but in the people, and the people have exercised that sovereignty from time immemorial in electing, installing and deposing chiefs according to native custom and law', asserted Mr Moore. 'If this Bill [the Native Authority Colony Ordinance] is passed, that inherent right, that power, that sovereignty of the people, goes to the Governor.'

Commenting upon the stormy passage which the Ordinance experienced before it became law, Sir Alan Burns records that 'it was supported by the chiefs and opposed only by the municipal members of the Legislative Council and a handful of rather ineffective politicians outside the Council'. He added: 'It is a great pity that Sir Ofori Atta did not live to see the new Ordinance become law; he contributed a great deal to its drafting, agreeing, with a generosity that only great men are capable of, that the older law of which he was the real father, was not suitable for modern conditions.'¹

While retaining the traditional Akan laws and customs as regards chief-making, the Governor admitted that power of recognition was now vested in him.

'Under the new law the election of the chiefs is left to the people, as it always has been, and always must be for so long as the chiefs remain responsible for *priestly* as well as civil functions. But the chief is not necessarily the Native Authority recognized by the Governor, although as a rule the Governor willingly recognizes the chief and his state council as the Native Authority. When the people themselves cannot agree as to the election of a chief, or

¹ *Colonial Civil Servant* by Sir Alan Burns, Allen & Unwin, p. 203.

where the chief and his council prove incompetent to perform the functions of Native Authority, the Governor has power, under the law, to appoint other persons as the Native Authority.¹

This is precisely what happened. The British political officers were free to dabble in tribal palaver, intrigue between the chiefs and their councillors, and make themselves 'king-makers'. With the result that, instead of promoting unity between the chiefs and their subjects, especially the educated 'Asafo young men', who had less and less voice in the affairs of their states, the prestige of the chieftainship fell lower and lower. So much so, that the Watson Investigation Commission which visited the Gold Coast in 1948 came to the conclusion that the entire system of Indirect Rule should be scrapped and replaced by a democratic form of local government, a recommendation later endorsed by the Coussey Constitutional Reform Committee in 1949 and implemented in 1952, as part of the new administrative system.

THE BURNS CONSTITUTION OF 1946

The precedent of permitting the chiefs to nominate themselves as members of the Legislative Council having been established as far back as the administration of Governor Guggisberg in the twenties, the practice was carried a stage further in the forties by Sir Alan Burns. Two years after he had tightened control over the Native Authorities by the amended Ordinance of 1944, he decided to reform the Central Government by increasing the representation of the chiefs and associating Ashanti with the Colony in the Legislative Council.

Even prior to the introduction of these constitutional reforms, the Governor appointed two Africans, Nana Sir Ofori Atta—who had been knighted in 1928 for his services to the British—and a distinguished lawyer and elder statesman, Mr Kobina A. Korsah, as members of

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

his Executive Council in 1942. Four years later a third African, Nana Sir Tsibu Darku IX, was co-opted on to the Executive.

An administrator without any illusions about Crown Colony Government, Sir Alan Burns later explained his reason for including these unofficial African members in his advisory body at the time. He writes:

'I am no believer in the Executive Council as an instrument of government, and would like to see it replaced by other organizations, but so long as Executive Councils continue to be part of the colonial system, I consider that they should include unofficial members. I have always found such members extremely useful in Executive Councils, and they generally know more about local conditions and the feelings of the people than the "imported" official can ever know; moreover, the people feel that their interests are represented on the body which is commonly believed, though not always with justification, to be responsible for the government of the colony. In any case, there had long been a feeling in British West Africa that Africans should have a larger share in the government of their country, and, although there was no immediate demand in the Gold Coast for African membership of the Executive Council, I felt it was better to anticipate this demand.'¹

To implement his policy of always keeping a step ahead of the intellectuals in their demands for constitutional advance, the Governor, after consultation with the Paramount Chiefs, announced in March 1945 the changes which he proposed to make in the composition of the Legislature.

In a Council of thirty-one members, including the Governor as President, the Africans now had a total of eighteen, thirteen of whom were drawn from the Native Authorities or Chieftain Councils in the Colony area and Ashanti, and the other five directly elected by the

¹ *Colonial Civil Servant* by Sir Alan Burns, Allen & Unwin, p. 195.

inhabitants of the principal towns—Accra, Cape Coast, Sekondi-Takoradi and Kumasi—on a restricted franchise. Apart from these eighteen Africans, the Governor nominated six other unofficial members, bringing the total of unofficial members up to twenty-four. The *ex-officio* members totalled six. Although it was the first time in British colonial administration in tropical Africa that the natives formed a majority in a Legislative Council, it did not materially affect the balance of political power, since the African chiefs in the Council were completely under the influence of the British political officers and as such invariably supported the policies laid down by the powers-that-be. Apart from the pro-British attitude of the chiefs, who by the very nature of the constitutional structure of Central Government and Native Authorities were absolutely dependent upon their British masters in the exercise of the wide powers bestowed upon them under the Native Authorities Ordinance of 1944, the Burns Constitution only served to widen the gulf between the traditional rulers and the intelligentsia. The educated classes were inclined to blame the chiefs for betraying the united national front which existed in the early days of the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society's agitation. On the other hand, British socialist apologists for imperialism, conveniently ignoring the fact that the officials had by their own administrative methods created the basis of the conflict between the Africans, were able to proclaim to the world that the Gold Coast in 1946 had the most advanced constitution in tropical Africa, since the African members—chiefs and commoners combined—formed a black majority in the Legislative Council.

Having 'dished' the intellectual agitators, Governor Burns makes the significant observations that:

'Too often in our colonial history we have waited too long in making those concessions, waited in fact until

they were practically forced from us, and given with a reluctance which robbed them of any political value. Too often, also, we have decided in our wisdom that people are not yet fit for responsibility, and that the risk of giving them responsibility is too great. In my view the greater danger lies in excessive caution, and the fear of making mistakes often causes the greatest mistake of all, the mistake of being too late. No people can become fit for responsibility until they have experienced it, and no people can learn political wisdom from text-books. They can only learn from their own experience and from their own mistakes.¹

But the Governor's manoeuvre failed to achieve the purpose which prompted his actions—'anticipating the intellectuals'. For the reforms did, in truth, come too late to placate the younger generation of 'agitators' and hold back the wave of post-war nationalism which was soon to sweep the 1946 constitution away. However, the Governor was not altogether at fault. He meant well. He was badly advised by the very chiefs whom he had taken into his confidence and made his confidants in the Executive and other councils of Government. After all, they were there, as he himself made clear, because they were supposed 'to know more about local conditions and the feelings of the people than the imported official could possibly know'. Unfortunately for the Governor, they too were completely divorced from the common people, who had absolutely no confidence in these lackeys, whom they considered the yes-men of the Government. When, therefore, the crisis came in 1948, the chiefs themselves were taken by surprise. So, also, must have been the Colonial Office; for the Secretary of State was obviously so impressed with the Governor's achievements in 'appeasing' Gold Coast nationalists that he recommended Sir Alan Burns to King George VI for the G.C.M.G. (Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished

¹ *Colonial Civil Servant* by Sir Alan Burns, Allen & Unwin, p. 195.

Order of St Michael and St George), the highest honour conferred upon Colonial proconsuls. Fortunately for him, Sir Alan Burns retired from the Gold Coast just in time to avoid witnessing his well-conceived constitutional plan come tumbling to the ground. The wreckage was left to be salvaged by his successors, Sir Gerald Creasy and Sir Charles Arden-Clarke, who had to face the critical post-war period and the challenge of the new nationalist forces under the militant leadership of the Convention People's Party.

THE COUSSEY CONSTITUTION OF 1950

There is a certain amount of truth in the assertion of Sir Alan Burns that at the time he decided to promulgate his constitution in 1946, there was no immediate demand from the intelligentsia for political reforms. On the other hand, there was considerable economic distress and social discontent among all sections of the African population, especially among the civil servants and labouring classes, and it is precisely because his government tended to ignore these economic and social undercurrents of unrest that his successors were caught unprepared to meet the political crisis when it occurred in the early months of 1948.

The political explosion, as we have pointed out in Chapter IV, was preceded by a nation-wide boycott of foreign goods as a protest against the high cost of living. This, however, was not the first time that Africans had had occasion to resort to this form of non-violent 'Positive Action' to draw the attention of the Government to their grievances against the mercantile community. As already indicated, in 1937 the cocoa farmers staged a successful boycott by refusing to sell their cocoa beans to the European traders, who were paying them very low prices for their crops and selling them imported commodities and foodstuffs at maximum prices.

However, what distinguished the 1948 boycott from the earlier one was its political character. Although it started independently of the nationalist movement as a purely economic protest, it soon became merged with the struggle for self-government, since the British monopoly companies against whom the anger of the people was primarily directed, were considered by the Africans to be foreign exploiters enjoying the special protection of the British Government in the Gold Coast.

The peaceful character of the boycott was transformed when unarmed ex-servicemen were shot down by the police at the Christiansborg cross-roads on the very day the boycott was called off. This incident in turn led to riots and looting and called forth counter-measures on the part of the Government. Subsequently, a Parliamentary Commission under the chairmanship of the English barrister, Mr Aiken Watson, K.C., was sent out by the United Kingdom to inquire into the state of affairs in the Gold Coast. Arising out of the Commission's report, the Governor appointed an All-African committee under Sir J. Henley Coussey to draft the present constitution.¹ The Coussey Committee issued its draft constitution in August 1949, which was accepted with certain modifications by Mr A. Creech Jones, the Secretary of State for Colonies at the time.

The main features of the Coussey constitutional recommendations were a radical reform of the Central Government and the establishment of democratically based local government to replace the autocratic system of Indirect Rule or Native Authorities. As regards the structure of the Central Government, the 1946 Burns Legislative Council was completely scrapped and a new Council called the Legislative Assembly established. This body consists of a Speaker, elected by the Assembly from

¹ This Committee cost the Gold Coast taxpayers £40,000. Each member received an average of £1,000 for expenses! The Watson Commission cost about £28,000.

among its members or from outside, and eighty-four members, who are elected in the following manner:

(a) Five from the municipalities—two for Accra and one each for Cape Coast, Sekondi-Takoradi and Kumasi, the principal town in Ashanti. In this connection, the Coussey Constitution represents no advance on the Burns Constitution, which had already given direct representation in the Central Government in 1946. Election of the municipal members is by the single-stage method of direct voting based on universal adult suffrage.

(b) Thirty-three rural members are elected in two stages: first by direct primary voting, and secondly through electoral colleges in the Colony and Ashanti.

(c) Nineteen members represent the inhabitants of the Northern Territories—the most economically and socially backward area of the Gold Coast. These members are elected through specially constituted electoral colleges.

(d) Eighteen representatives designated Territorial Members are elected by the Chieftainship Councils of the Colony, Ashanti and southern Togoland. They may be either traditional rulers or commoners selected by the chiefs.

(e) Six representatives known as Special Members are elected in equal proportion by the Chambers of Commerce and Chambers of Mines. They are the watchdogs of foreign capitalist interests, but only two are allowed to vote on motions before the Assembly.

(f) Three senior British civil servants called *ex-officio* Members are nominated by the Governor as the special representatives of the Imperial Government. They are the Colonial Secretary, the Financial Secretary and the Attorney-General, and they hold the key ministerial portfolios of Defence and External Affairs, Finance, and Justice respectively.

Although the number of directly elected representatives in the principal towns remains unchanged, the

Northern Territories have been given direct representation for the first time in the Central Government since this part of the Gold Coast was declared a British Protectorate in 1901.

The Coussey Committee also recommended a radical reform of the Executive Council as a purely advisory body to the Governor, who until then was under no legal obligation to accept the Council's advice. Under the new constitution, the composition of the Executive Council has not only undergone a drastic change but has been made responsible for government policy, the direction of the administration. Formerly the Executive consisted of eight senior British civil servants and three unofficial Africans, two of whom were appointed for the first time in 1942 by Sir Alan Burns. These Africans served at the Governor's pleasure. Under the reformed constitution, the position is just the reverse. Today there are eight Africans in the Executive Council, renamed the Cabinet in 1952, and only three British civil servants, excluding the Governor as chairman. The members of the Cabinet are all designated Ministers and hold portfolios as the responsible heads of the various departments of the civil administration.

The African Ministers are appointed by the Governor in consultation with the leader of the majority party from among the members of the Legislative Assembly, which in turn is required to give its approval by vote. The Ministers are accountable to the Assembly, which has the right to remove them from office by resolution, supported by two-thirds majority. This control, however, does not apply to the three *ex-officio* members, who, as British civil servants, can only be removed by the Governor. The constitution also makes provision for the appointment of junior ministers known as under-secretaries. They are, however, appointed by the majority party leader (now the Prime Minister) without the endorsement of the Assembly.

Although the Cabinet is the instrument of government, the constitution gives the Governor reserved powers of veto and certification. In this respect there has been no advance over the Burns Constitution. Under these reserved powers the Governor can give effect of law to a Bill that has been rejected by the Ministers and the Assembly if in his opinion such law is essential to 'public order, good faith or good government'. The Governor can also refuse his assent to any Bill enacted by the Legislative Assembly which he considers is inconsistent with the constitution or affects the privileges and powers of the Assembly or its members. But this residue of power, to which strong objection was registered by the United Gold Coast Convention members of the Coussey Committee, cannot be used arbitrarily. Except in cases of absolute urgency, the Governor must always seek the approval of the Cabinet or, failing that, get the consent of the Secretary of State for Colonies.

The *élite* of British officials styled Permanent Secretaries constitutes an even more important reserve of imperial authority.¹ Although they are supposed, 'subject to the general direction and control of the Minister, to exercise supervision over the department or departments in charge of the Minister', they are not responsible to the Cabinet. Under the constitution, Permanent Secretaries, like other expatriates, are 'appointed by the Governor acting in his discretion', and their positions have been entrenched by the Secretary of State for Colonies. Not until these alien officials become part and parcel of the Gold Coast Civil Service will the Government become the real masters of their own house. This is no reflection upon the loyalty and integrity of these officers, but no self-respecting people aspiring to full sovereignty can tolerate their senior public servants being responsible

¹ Apart from the economic importance of colonies, 'the British Empire', declared John Bright, 'is a gigantic system of outdoor relief for the British middle classes'.

VII

FIRST GENERAL ELECTION

BY THE END of 1950 the necessary imperial instruments giving legality to the new constitution were completed and the Ewart Select Committee on Electoral Methods, a body appointed by the 'outmoded' Burns Legislature in July that year, had issued its report. Meanwhile, the Governor had reorganized the administrative structure of the civil service into ministries under Permanent Secretaries drawn from the senior British staff.

Parallel with these administrative adjustments, the technical preparations were put into operation for the holding of the first general election on the basis of the Ewart Committee recommendations. Hence on February 8, 1951, the Gold Coast was able to embark upon a new stage in its constitutional advance.

The task of organizing the experiment of popular elections based upon universal adult suffrage was tremendous, but it was carried out with great efficiency; and all credit must be given to the European District Commissioners, now called Government Agents, and the officials of the Public Relations Department, upon whose shoulders fell most of the preliminary work of educating the voters and supervising the elections.

Although the use of the secret ballot was not new to Africans living in the urban areas, where it had been in operation since 1925 for municipal and Legislative Council elections, it was an innovation in the rural

districts of the Colony and Ashanti. The British authorities considered it so far beyond the comprehension of the people inhabiting the Northern Territories that a special form of election had to be devised for the nineteen deputies to the Legislative Assembly from the Northern Territories Council.

'Operation Elections' was conducted in two stages. First, the Public Relations Department undertook the training of a team of African instructors who were later dispatched to various parts of the country to explain the know-how of registering and voting to the people in the rural constituencies. These African instructors were equipped with loud-speaker vans, films, gramophone records and illustrated literature for distribution among the literates. Over 70,000 copies of an illustrated pamphlet entitled 'How to Register as an Elector' and 200,000 copies of a leaflet entitled 'All About the Elections', printed in English and the principal Gold Coast languages (Fanti, Twi, Ga, Ewe, Hausa and Nzima) were distributed throughout the areas where these vernaculars are widely understood. This information was supplemented by many special editions of the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, the Government weekly newspaper, which contained explanatory information on electoral procedure. All this was distributed free of charge to the electors. The privately owned African newspapers also devoted much space to the campaign of enlightenment during the weeks preceding the elections.

Wherever the instructors set up camp, their first job was to collect an audience in some open place. This they did by playing records of popular Gold Coast songs known as 'High Life'. When the audience assembled, the instructors then proceeded to show a film explaining by visual methods the electoral procedure. Diagrams showed how the electoral districts were arranged into sub-districts from which the delegates to the Electoral Colleges were to be selected by the registered voters. They also explained

the qualifications necessary for voting and the symbols that were to be used by the various party candidates for the benefit of those electors who were unable to read.

This work was considerably assisted by the C.P.P., which sent its own propagandists into the voting districts and sub-districts, appealing to the people to co-operate with the Government instructors. This part of the campaign was carried out so successfully that within six weeks after it was started, 419,794 voters were registered in the Colony and 243,275 in Ashanti, constituting 40 per cent of the eligible population.

The second stage of the election campaign was devoted to preparing the registers and setting up the booths and other essential machinery in the two thousand-odd electoral sub-districts into which the rural constituencies were divided on a basis of one thousand per head of the population. This part of the campaign was supervised by the European District Commissioners, a number of senior officers acting as supervisors, assisted by teams of assistant registration officers, especially recruited from the junior African civil servants, the Native Administration staffs, and the Christian missions, amounting to nearly 2,000 people.

These functionaries toured the villages and hamlets, checking up the names of those eligible to vote and seeing that the people fully understood the procedure to be followed on election day. It was a most difficult assignment, for many Gold Coast Africans bear identical names. Then again, the registration period coincided with the cocoa season, and many African farmers were more concerned with harvesting their crops than taking time off to go and register, especially if the registration centre was any distance away from their cocoa farms. Others were reluctant to register, as they suspected it was a trap devised by the cunning white men to get them to pay taxes, which the Gold Coast African, more than any other, has always resisted.

To overcome these difficulties, the registration officers had to use unusual tact and patience. Their efforts were well rewarded, thanks to the active co-operation and assistance given the authorities by the leaders of all the political parties and other responsible citizens, in particular the village teachers and rural clergy, who persuaded villagers to register and pay their tribal levy, without which no adult could vote.

The preliminaries having been completed, elections in the rural areas took place on February 5 and 6, 1951. These proceeded in two stages by indirect method. On these dates inhabitants of the small towns and villages voted for one candidate to represent them in the Electoral Colleges. On February 8 the Electoral Colleges met and elected the thirty-three members to represent the rural constituencies in the Legislative Assembly. In many cases the candidates were returned unopposed in the first stage of the election. The voters, having met before the official polling day, would decide upon a popular candidate, who would be formally nominated, and in the absence of a rival, declared the person eligible to express the will of the constituency in the second ballot in the Electoral College. There were eighty-nine candidates contesting the thirty-three rural seats, and official statistics show that with very few exceptions the Electoral Colleges were up to full voting strength.

The municipal elections took place on February 8, coinciding with the final stage of voting in the rural constituencies. Here the procedure was direct, the Africans of the main towns, as already pointed out, being familiar with Western democratic voting procedure. Even so, it entailed much work, as certain technical difficulties had to be overcome. For instance, in Accra, which, although inhabited largely by Ga-speaking Africans, is the most cosmopolitan community in the Colony, the population is 135,976, of which 133,192 are Africans of many tribes and 2,734

non-Africans, including English, Lebanese, Syrians, East Indians, Swiss, French, Dutch, Greeks and Americans.

The electorate numbered over 48,000, and sixty-nine polling stations staffed by 600 returning officers and supervisors had to be provided to cope with the situation during the heavy polling hours of 4 p.m., when the government offices and commercial firms closed, and 6 p.m., the closing hour of the polls. Apart from maintaining order and seeing that the procedure laid down was strictly observed, the election officers had the additional duty of marking the ballot papers for illiterates. This gave rise to a certain amount of criticism in the party press of the candidates who suffered defeat. But this apart, the municipal elections were conducted most successfully. Although polling was exceedingly heavy—over 80 per cent—the crowds were orderly and few cases of dishonesty were reported. To safeguard against impersonation, each voter—African and European—had his or her thumb stamped in indelible ink after handing in the ballot paper. Everywhere great enthusiasm was evinced. The political parties entered into keen but friendly rivalry in getting their supporters to the polls to vote for their respective candidates. Officially, the polls were opened from 7 a.m., but as early as 5 a.m. thousands had already taken up their places in the queues, patiently waiting to be among the first to cast their votes. These well-disciplined Africans, conscious of the adverse criticisms being made against them by certain white detractors, who asserted that they were unfit to administer their own affairs, seemed determined to demonstrate their capacity for shouldering the responsibilities which the new constitution had conferred upon them. How well they succeeded is testified by the many British and other foreign journalists who were sent to the Gold Coast to report and comment on the elections. 'Apart from Accra, where 23,122 voted, great enthusiasm was also shown by the electors in other municipalities of Cape Coast, Sekondi-Takoradi and

Kumasi, where the polls were 3,639, 6,912 and 9,123 respectively, an average of 48 per cent of the total registered electorate.¹ Thirteen candidates contested these five municipal seats.

THE PARTY SYSTEM

The most significant feature of the general elections was the fact that they were contested along party lines. This innovation was bitterly opposed by the chiefs and old-school politicians, who realized that they stood no chance of being elected as so-called independents or as candidates endorsed by reactionary and conservative groups and factions. In this connection, it is important to recall that in his dispatch to the Governor on constitutional reform, dated October 14, 1949, the Secretary of State for Colonies pointed out the necessity of introducing the party system at the elections, in the absence of which the British Government were not prepared to endorse that part of the Coussey Constitution Committee's recommendation dealing with the method of appointing the Leader of the House of Assembly, now designated the Prime Minister.

'The Committee' [wrote the Colonial Secretary] 'describes the procedure under which the Leader would be elected by a majority of the House of Assembly as a transitional arrangement until parties emerge sufficiently to enable the Governor to ask the member who commands the largest following to assume office as Leader. I have carefully considered these proposals, but I do not believe that the institution of a Leader of the House would work effectively in the absence of an established and well-tryed party system, by which I mean a system where through usage over a period of years parties have become generally accepted as necessary and integral parts of the constitutional machinery of the country.'²

¹ *The Times*, February 9, 1951.

² See Colonial Office Dispatch, No. 250, p. 9, para. 30.

Acting on the Colonial Secretary's observations, Dr Nkrumah, who was then in prison, from where he directed operations, instructed his supporters to contest the elections under their party banner rather than as so-called independents. 'The parliamentary system of government is essentially dependent for its success on combined as opposed to individual efforts, on the existence of parties whose representatives agree on a common policy, work together in support of their party's aims, are loyal to each other and to their party's decisions and preserve on all major issues a united front.'¹

Once the C.P.P. had decided to contest the election on a party basis, their opponents were forced to come out into the open and issue party manifestoes setting out their economic and social policies. By polling day the voters were for the first time made aware of the ideological differences between the radical C.P.P. and their conservative and liberal opponents on national issues.

The *Conservatives*, representing the adherents of the defunct Mambii Party and Ratepayers' Association of Accra, were grouped around the National Democratic Party (N.D.P.) led by the well-known lawyer-politician, Mr Nii Amaa Ollenu, a British-nominated member in the old Legislative Council. Mr Ollenu, who played a prominent part in framing the Coussey Constitution, was opposed to immediate self-government on the ground that the country was not ready to dispense with foreign tutelage before another fifteen years. Meanwhile, he asserted, it was the duty of the British to prepare Africans gradually to take over the administration. In the socio-economic field, the National Democratic Party looked to the British officials to develop the economy of the country and expand the social services as a prerequisite to the ultimate attainment of 'sure, safe, solid self-government'.

¹ Report of the Special Commission on the Ceylon constitution, by Lord Donoughmore.

This policy of gradualism was rejected by the electorate, and the N.D.P. was routed.

The *Moderates* represented the less prosperous African traders and professional classes. They fared slightly better than the conservatives. The U.G.C.C. won two of the thirty-three popularly contested seats. By very narrow majorities Dr J. B. Danquah and his nephew, Mr William Ofori Atta, son of the former Paramount Chief, were returned as the rural members for the state of Akim Abuakwa. Mr Ofori Atta belongs to the younger generation of Gold Coast nationalists, and during his undergraduate days at Cambridge was considered quite a radical. His uncle, however, 'is no radical, barely indeed, a liberal! Dr Danquah is a conservative, conservative almost to the point of reaction. True, he believes in democracy, but democracy guided and led by the chiefs.'¹

Compared with the National Democratic Party, the U.G.C.C. policy was more in harmony with the awakened nationalist mood of the middle class, since it supported the agitation for 'self-government as soon as possible'. It also had a more enlightened ten-point economic programme, which aimed 'to ensure that the optimum diffusion of private enterprise and ownership of property should be developed alongside the maximum attainment of personal liberty, within the framework of the welfare state'. To implement this programme, the party manifesto appealed to the electorate to 'elect to the new Assembly the best men for the job, the best men in the true sense, irrespective of party, tribe, religion and class'. By 'best men' they naturally meant the merchants, lawyers and other professional men who control the Executive of the U.G.C.C. and consider themselves the intellectual aristocrats of the country.

A third opposition group—the People's Democratic Party—with the backing of a tribal society known as the *Asante Kotoko*, contested the elections in Ashanti on a

¹ See 'Profile', in *West Africa*, January 1, 1949.

purely communal appeal of 'Ashanti for Ashantis'. They, too, were completely repudiated. The Ashanti plebs voted for a Fanti barrister, Mr Archie Casely Hayford, the official C.P.P. candidate, to represent their capital of Kumasi in the Assembly. Mr Hayford, the son of the great patriot and founder of the West African National Congress, later entered the Government as Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

In spite of the fact that Dr Nkrumah and many other radical leaders were in prison at the time of the general election, the C.P.P.'s victories at the municipal elections in 1950 inspired confidence in their candidates. The party leaders had already demonstrated their willingness to sacrifice themselves for their principles by long terms of imprisonment. Under the slogan of 'Self-Government Now', the C.P.P. set the pace and maintained the offensive throughout the election campaign. Rooted deep among the common people, its election manifesto stated in simple, concrete terms the political, economic and social needs of the masses and called upon the electorate to give a mandate to the party to carry out its programme. Without trying to hide from the people the limitations and shortcomings of the constitution, which Dr Nkrumah described as 'bogus and fraudulent', the party manifesto boldly stated that

'our entry into the Assembly in full strength will open up better opportunities to struggle for immediate self-government. Whilst that struggle is proceeding the C.P.P. will do all in its power to better the condition of the people of this country; it must be pointed out, however, that the implementation of this development programme can only be possible when self-government has been attained, and we are in full control of our own affairs.'

These radicals had no illusions that by merely winning the popularly contested seats in a pseudo-democratic

parliament packed with representatives of foreign vested interests and traditional tribal rulers and other agents of British imperial power, they could immediately translate all their aspirations into reality. Nevertheless, by carrying on their agitation inside as well as outside the Legislative Assembly, the C.P.P. could accelerate the pace of attaining complete self-government. No stone was left unturned to convince the people of the correctness of the C.P.P. policy and tactics. Here special credit must be given to the women who constitute the backbone of the C.P.P. Working shoulder to shoulder with the men, they have produced some outstanding political propagandists, among them, Mrs Hannah Cudjoe of Tarkwa, Mrs Alice Appia of Senchi; Mrs Essie Mensah of Kumasi; Mrs Margaret Thompson; Mrs Letita Quaye and Miss Lilly Appiah of Accra.

Throughout the entire pre-election period the service of every active member of the party was utilized in explaining the C.P.P. manifesto to the people, especially the illiterates in the rural areas. Commenting upon the effectiveness of the party's electioneering campaign, which included the skilful use of nationalist songs, party flags, posters and banners, *The Times* special correspondent described how

'the red, white and green colours of the well organized C.P.P. fluttered in flags from many cars and the roofs of countless buildings. They gleamed in thousands of posters on hoardings and walls of homes and shops. . . and were sported in little rosettes on dresses or togas. The party's loud-speaker vans in party colours were hauled through the streets blaring party slogans and . . . especially [the popular song] "There is Victory for us in the struggle of the C.P.P." set to a revivalist hymn tune.'¹

Thanks to its superior organization and high-powered propaganda methods and the fact that its opponents were ideologically and socially divorced from the social

¹ *The Times*, February 9, 1951.

classes which make up the bulk of the voters—the farmers and fishermen, the market women and petty traders, the junior clerks in government and commercial service, the teachers and artisans, women and youth—these people gave their support to the ‘veranda boys’ and ‘riff-raff’, as the upper-class Africans designated Dr Nkrumah and his plebeian colleagues.

The C.P.P won thirty-four of the thirty-eight municipal and rural seats, two went to the U.G.C.C. and two to so-called independents, one of whom later joined the C.P.P. In the rural constituencies the C.P.P. secured 1,936 votes in the Electoral Colleges as against 788 for all the other parties and independents combined. The municipal election results showed a landslide in favour of the C.P.P., which got 58,858 votes against 5,574 by its opponents. Dr Nkrumah received the largest individual poll ever recorded in Gold Coast history—22,780 out of a total of 23,122 votes cast. The majority of the eighty-nine candidates forfeited their deposits.

Coinciding with the secondary rural and municipal elections, there was a meeting of the Northern Territories Electoral College at Tamale. This consisted of the regular members of the Territorial Council supplemented by special delegates nominated by District Councils on the basis of one delegate per thousand of the population. They selected nineteen members to represent the northern area. Two days later, on February 15, the Paramount Chiefs of the Colony and those of Ashanti assembled at the headquarters at Dodawa and Kumasi respectively and elected seventeen members—eleven to represent the Colony and six Ashanti. In addition, the southern Togoland Council which forms part of the Gold Coast administration, elected one representative from its area. Of the ninety candidates, thirty-eight were chiefs and other aristocrats, and fifty-two were commoners. Ten of the chiefs were elected, and the others were

commoners of more or less moderate outlook. The most sensational defeat suffered by the aristocracy was the victory in a straight fight in the rural constituency of Assin-Upper Denkyira of the proletarian C.P.P. candidate, Mr Pobee Biney, an ex-engine driver and trade union organizer, over the most prominent pro-British chief, Sir Tsibu Darku IX, leader of the Joint Provincial Council, senior African member of the former Legislative and Executive Councils, Knight of the Order of the British Empire, etc., etc. Mr Biney got fifty-one votes from the Electoral College against thirteen for the knightly chief, who was subsequently destooled by his people.

To complete the general election, the Chamber of Mines and the Chamber of Commerce elected six members, three from each body, to represent their interests in the Assembly. Only two—one from each camp—are allowed to vote, although all six may take part in debate.

With the general election out of the way, the attention of the outside world was to be focused on the new predominantly black Cabinet Government—the first of its kind in Colonial Africa.

VIII

THE GOVERNMENT AND THE OPPOSITION

THE SWEEPING VICTORY of the left-wing Convention People's Party caused consternation in British official circles and spread despondency and alarm among the African chiefs and right-wing parties. Despite the C.P.P.'s successes at the municipal elections in 1950, the imperialists and their reactionary African allies still hoped that the radicals would be returned as a minority group in the new Assembly. Their attitude was reflected in an eve-of-election forecast by *The Economist* special correspondent at Accra.

'There is no Gallup poll in the Gold Coast to guide election prophets,' [he wrote] 'and as in Africa the unexpected often happens, it may be rash to make forecasts, but the C.P.P. should win all the urban constituencies and a proportion of the rural seats. On the other hand, they are unlikely to achieve much success in the Territorial Councils and the Northern Territory will vote solidly against them. It may be assumed that they will command about a third of the Assembly and that about three of the Ministers will come from their ranks.'¹

The result, however, turned out otherwise. 'In Africa the unexpected often happens'! On this occasion the C.P.P. not only fulfilled *The Economist's* forecast of winning the five urban constituencies, as they had done the year before in the municipal elections, but captured thirty out of thirty-three rural seats. Furthermore,

¹ *The Economist*, London, February 3, 1951.

eight of the Territorial members who were elected by the Councils of Chiefs on a non-party basis decided to throw in their lot with the C.P.P., and by the time the first session of the Legislative Assembly was convened several Northern Territory representatives had jumped on the C.P.P. band-wagon, which gave the party an overwhelming majority of supporters in the Assembly. The others, dispirited and disunited among themselves, have not been able to form an effective parliamentary opposition.

The day after the general election results were announced, the Executive Committee of the C.P.P. asked the Governor to receive a delegation consisting of Mr K. A. Gbedemah, the acting chairman, Mr Kojo Botsio, the general secretary, Mr Dzenkle Dzewu, the treasurer, and Mr A. Y. Djin, party organizer, to discuss the release of their leader, Dr Nkrumah. As a result of these negotiations, the Governor two days later ordered the release of Dr Nkrumah and his colleagues—Chief Kobina Nketsia IV and Messrs Kofi Baako, A. S. T. Provencal, Jerron Quashie, Blankson Nartey and Bankole Renner—as an ‘act of grace’.

At one o'clock in the afternoon of February 12, 1951, the future Prime Minister walked out of James Fort Prison in Accra and was greeted with wild jubilation by more than 100,000 of his enthusiastic supporters. The capital had never before witnessed such a scene of public rejoicing. Dr Nkrumah was carried shoulder high by the frenzied crowds through the streets to the headquarters of the party, where he thanked his followers for the glorious victory which had made possible his release from prison. Throughout the whole country, men, women and children celebrated their first decisive victory in the struggle for complete self-government. English anti-imperialist friends and supporters of the colonial liberation movement also celebrated the C.P.P. victory. A congratulatory telegram signed by twelve socialist Members of the British Parliament—Sir Richard Acland and

Messrs Fenner Brockway, Harold Davies, Ian Mikardo, Emrys Hughes, Tom Driberg, James Johnson, Geoffrey Bing, Sydney Silverman, D. L. Donnelly, Leslie Hale, and Dr H. B. Morgan—was sent to Dr Nkrumah: 'May wisdom guide you in leading the people of the Gold Coast along the path of freedom, justice and democracy.'¹

Speaking on behalf of the Labour Government then in office, Mr James Griffiths, Secretary of State for Colonies, told a special delegates' conference at Manchester that:

'He hoped and believed Africans in the Gold Coast realized that all their interest in their affairs would not end now that the elections were over. It was only the first stage in the process of representative government which had been completed. The bigger test was still to come. The new government would be formed, the new Assembly would meet, and on the shoulders of the Africans themselves would fall a major share of the difficulties and complex task of government, of carrying on the day-to-day administration of the country, while at the same time planning for its future development and prosperity. It is no light burden' [the Colonial Secretary went on to tell the conference] 'the people of the Gold Coast are undertaking. The Governor and his officers are there to advise and guide them. . . . But it lies with the Africans themselves to prove their capacity for self-government and it is by their performance above everything else that the future course of advancement will be determined, not only in the Gold Coast but elsewhere in Africa.

'The new constitution had been drawn up in full consultation with them and our agreement to it has been spontaneous and willing. . . . He wished to send to the people of the Gold Coast a message of sincere goodwill and to tell them that our encouragement goes with them along the road they are to travel.'²

Although Mr Griffiths was the socialist Minister who had approved the Governor's strong-arm measures in

¹ *The Times*, February 13, 1951. ² *Ibid.*, February 12, 1951.

crushing the workers' strike in 1950, under an Ordinance similar to the Trades Disputes Act, the kind sentiments of this leading British trade unionist were reciprocated by Dr Nkrumah, who assured the Colonial Secretary that 'I came out of gaol and into the Assembly without the slightest feeling of bitterness to Britain.' Addressing his first press conference of African and foreign journalists at the C.P.P. headquarters on February 13, 1951, Dr Nkrumah let it be known that, 'I stand for no racialism, no discrimination against any race or individual, but I am unalterably opposed to imperialism in any form.'

Commenting upon the constitution, which he described as 'bogus and fraudulent', inasmuch as it failed to satisfy the political aspirations of the people, Dr Nkrumah declared that 'the real test was whether the Permanent Secretaries were prepared to co-operate and the attitude of the Governor in his use of the reserved powers'.¹ Nevertheless, he was prepared to try the experiment, since the people had given his party a mandate. 'They entered the Assembly not as enemies but as friends of the British people. They desired self-government within the Commonwealth.'

Since, in the nature of things, the government had to be an Anglo-African coalition, as the constitution provided for the inclusion of three British *ex-officio* members, it was well that Dr Nkrumah and the Governor put their cards on the table so that mutual trust could be immediately established. Once this friendly relation between the representatives of the imperial power and the C.P.P. had been settled, it was possible to proceed with implementing the legislative and executive features of the constitution.

On February 20, 1951, the Assembly met for the first time to allow members to take the oath of allegiance and elect a Speaker. On the nomination of Dr Nkrumah,

¹ *The Times*, February 14, 1951.

Mr (now Sir) Emmanuel Quist, a distinguished African barrister and elder statesman, was proposed. Sir Emmanuel Quist had been the President of the old Legislative Council for fifteen months, but had been defeated by a semi-literate chief as a Territorial candidate in the general election. Fortunately for the Gold Coast, the constitution provided for the election of a Speaker, either from within or without the Assembly. In moving his nomination, Dr Nkrumah told the Assembly that

‘the Gold Coast at the moment faces a very critical epoch in our history. Thus, when it comes to the question of finding somebody to occupy the chair for conducting the business of the Assembly, I think we must remember that we must try and find somebody who will actually be above party politics. Secondly, we must try to find somebody who will be impartial; and thirdly, we should try to find somebody whose integrity cannot be questioned.’

Sir Emmanuel was unanimously elected to the Speakership. Here again, Dr Nkrumah demonstrated his statesmanship in placing the interests of the country above party considerations. The Governor, Sir Charles Arden-Clarke, welcomed the new Assembly and wished them well. He admonished them on their responsibilities and assured them of ‘the loyalty and whole-hearted co-operation of every member of the civil service, whose duty it is to give effect to the policies of the government of the day’. Before he retired from the Chamber, the Governor indicated that in future he would conduct himself as a ‘constitutional ruler’—like the Sovereign in relation to the British Parliament. ‘I shall not address you again in the ordinary course, except on formal occasion, once a year, at the Budget meeting, in the terms which Ministers advise.’

These preliminaries out of the way, the Assembly adjourned until February 26, when the names of the

Executive Council—the real instrument of government—were submitted to the Legislature for ratification, as laid down in the constitution. As already indicated, the procedure which the Governor was expected to follow was to appoint Executive members from any part of the Assembly and assign them portfolios subject to approval by resolution of the Assembly. But since the general election had given the C.P.P. the overwhelming majority in the Assembly, Dr Nkrumah was in a position to demand the right to be consulted in the nomination of Ministers and the distribution of portfolios.

In consequence, the Governor, after agreement with the Leader of Government Business, submitted the names of the eight African members he selected to form the Representative Ministries of government. Without exception, the list was accepted by secret ballot of the Assembly. Dr Nkrumah's appointment was unanimous. Most people, including his own supporters, thought that he should have demanded the eight Ministries exclusively for C.P.P. members. But displaying his statesmanship once more, Dr Nkrumah agreed to two outsiders, Mr E. O. Asafu-Adjaye, an Ashanti Territorial member, and Mr J. A. Braimah (Kabachewura), a representative of the Northern Territories, joining the Council as Ministers of Local Government and Communications and Works respectively. The six remaining portfolios were distributed among C.P.P. members as follows:

Mr Kobla Agbeli Gbedemah, Health and Labour.

Mr Kojo Botsio, Education and Social Welfare.

Mr A. Casely Hayford, Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Mr T. Hutton Mills, Commerce, Industry and Mines.

Dr Ansah Koi, Housing, Town and Country Planning.¹

Dr Kwame Nkrumah, Leader of Government Business.

¹ Dr Ansah Koi, who proved to be the weakest member of the team, was removed from office in October 1952. See Appendix I, *Who's Who*, p. 247.

Commenting on the last-named clumsy title, *The Times* observed, 'there is no provision for a Prime Minister. That dignity exists only when the highest ministerial office is combined with the leadership of the predominant party in the Legislature.'¹ Events had run ahead of the British, for Dr Nkrumah not only headed the majority party in the Assembly but, according to *The Times* special correspondent in the Gold Coast, 'his personal prestige throughout most of the country is so great as to be comparable less to that of an ordinary party leader than to that of, say, Mr Churchill as a war leader'.² It therefore seems fitting that it was left to Mr Churchill's Government to confer the more appropriate and dignified title of Prime Minister upon Dr Nkrumah in 1952.

The African side of the Executive Council not only reflected geographical representation — the Colony, Ashanti, Northern Territories and Trans-Volta (the four principal administrative divisions)—but also brought into the Government a cross-section of the principal tribes. Among the Ministers were two Fantis, the largest ethnic community, and one each from the Ga, Ashanti, Twi, Gonja and Nzima speaking groups.

As regards the social and occupational composition of the Assembly, an analysis shows that it is the most representative government the country has ever had. In the old Legislative Council, the members, apart from the eight European officials or civil servants, were composed of six chiefs, six lawyers, five merchants, two doctors, one schoolteacher. In the new Assembly there were fifteen chiefs, five lawyers, twelve merchants and traders, one doctor, five pharmacists, twelve teachers, two journalists. The remainder came from more humble walks of life. For example, there was a carpenter, an engine-driver, four farmers, a letter-writer, a stenographer, house agent, postal clerk, several employees of the Native

¹ *The Times*, February 17, 1951. ² *Ibid.*, June 4, 1951.

Administration, and six trade unionists and party officials. Their average age was about forty, and many of them had no more than an elementary school education.

In the old days these people would have stood no chance of getting into the Legislative Council, much less of being given the opportunity of shouldering the responsibility of government. The leader of the opposition Ghana Congress Party, Dr K. A. Busia, is reported to have said that if ever his party came to power, commoners like Mr Krobo Edusei, a Ministerial Under-Secretary, would not even get a job as a messenger boy. A stupid statement, but typical of the reactionary educated minority.

THE OPPOSITION

The opposition leaders, who are drawn from the narrow circle of the so-called black aristocracy, naturally resented the emergence of these plebeian elements to a position of power. The feeling of these upper-class Africans has been expressed by one of the leading conservative lawyers of the U.G.C.C., Mr Francis Awoonor-Williams. In a statement to the Gold Coast press, lamenting the passing of the old order, this political ignoramus declared that 'true aristocracy, after true religion, is the greatest blessing a nation can enjoy'. He went on to assert that the men

'of the old school of politics were men of education and substance, and merchant princes working in the interests of the country. . . Apart from one or two members of the Convention People's Party, their leaders and supporters are the flotsam and jetsam and the popinjays of the country, men who had suddenly loomed large into men of substance. . . . It is, therefore, the bounden duty of every well informed citizen to unite to save the social and political order.'

Mr Awoonor-Williams attributes this shift in the political

balance of power in favour of the common people 'to the unfortunate adoption by the Coussey Committee of universal manhood suffrage at the threshold of parliamentary self-government in the country'.¹

The Times, in a more dignified way, also lamented the passing of power from the chiefs, 'the most prominent of whom is Nana Sir Tsibu Darku IX, who has since the elections been impeached and threatened with destoolment'. Making its observations on the elimination of the bourgeois conservative parties, *The Times* said:

'Of a moderate opposition in the liberal sense there is no sign in the chamber except for some individuals who can be trenchant on occasion. Mr Ollennu, who leads the National Democratic Party, failed to retain a seat at the elections, and his absence from the new chamber is certainly a loss to public business. A group such as that led by this energetic young lawyer suffers from the handicap that nearly all its active members are busy professional men competing against whole-time politicians.'²

This puts the weakness of the opposition in a nutshell. In the past, political leadership fell into the laps of the Gold Coast professional men, especially the lawyers, without any efforts on their part. Because they were spending their full time at their professions, they asked Dr Nkrumah to come back from England to act as secretary of the U.G.C.C., and since he organized the C.P.P. and brought the less favoured sections of the people into political participation, and then into prominence, the intellectuals have sulked back into their tents. They could have accepted the challenge, and by becoming whole-time politicians too, and going down to the common people, would have met the C.P.P. on its own ground. But none of them, it is clear, is prepared to make the financial and professional sacrifice which Dr Nkrumah made, and which the situation demands. Lip service

¹ *Ashanti Pioneer*, July 26, 1952.

² *The Times*, June 4, 1952.

to patriotism is not enough. The struggle against imperialism calls for hard and continuing work and sacrifice, if national freedom is to become a fact. It is a full-time struggle, not one which can be taken up between briefs and left meanwhile to run itself. Unless the opposition leaders realize this and act upon it, they can never hope to raise a party of any political worth, but must remain divorced from the people—a sterile, frustrated coterie of arm-chair politicians.

Since the C.P.P. broke the political monopoly which the chiefs and black bourgeois intellectuals long enjoyed, the African reactionaries inside and outside the Assembly have concentrated their attacks upon Dr Nkrumah and his ministerial colleagues in an attempt to discredit them as 'communists' before the outside world. In furtherance of this disruptive campaign, some have even formed an alliance with certain foreign vested interests in the Gold Coast.

In their campaign of vilification, the black reactionaries have been aided and abetted by certain British Tory newspapers, especially the *Daily Telegraph*, which has pursued a consistently hostile policy towards African nationalism since 1950. In an alarmist article entitled 'Red Shadow Over the Gold Coast', by Captain David Gammans, Conservative M.P., and Wing-Commander Cooper, a right-wing Labour M.P., these Members of Parliament tried to create the impression that a victory for the C.P.P. would be a victory for communism.¹ But after the 1951 general election, the paper's special correspondent in the Gold Coast was forced to admit

'the orderliness and the studied moderation of the first public statement of Kwame Nkrumah, the released leader of the victorious C.P.P., caused sighs of relief in government and business circles here. The C.P.P., it appeared, wished neither to leave the British Commonwealth nor force through a social revolution at break-neck speed. They would prefer that the next steps

¹ *Daily Telegraph*, October 17, 1950.

towards self-government should be taken by constitutional means rather than by direct action.¹

Since the Nkrumah Government introduced legislation increasing taxation upon the British mining companies, the *Daily Telegraph* has returned to the attack. In June 1952 another special correspondent, Eric Downton, was sent to the Gold Coast to rediscover not only communism but the emergence of 'black dictatorship' wallowing in bribery and corruption.

All this misrepresentation and vilification has only served to sharpen the cleavage between the Right and Left, the 'haves' and the 'have nots', and to bring into the open the social differentiation which is taking place within a traditional tribal society as a result of the extension of Western civilizing influences into the remotest parts of the Gold Coast and the economic development of the country.

Interpreting the social struggle in terms of political ideology, a well-informed English historian remarks that 'the spiritual ancestors of the C.P.P. are Rousseau and Tom Paine, the ancestors of the U.G.C.C. are Locke and Burke. The C.P.P. interprets democracy in its more traditional radical sense—the rule of the common people, the poor, the illiterate. The U.G.C.C. interprets democracy in its modern Tory sense, the rule of the enlightened and prosperous minority, in the supposed interests of the common people.

'What has in fact been happening in the Gold Coast national movement during the period since February 1948 has been a process of splitting along lines of economic and social interest. Every movement for national independence in a colonial country contains, of course, these two elements: the element of revolt against poverty and exploitation—the demand for political independence and the demand for improved economic standards and social justice. What is interesting about the Gold Coast is not that this cleavage should have occurred, but that the C.P.P.,

¹ *Daily Telegraph*, February 14, 1951.

representing the left wing of the National movement, should have emerged so quickly as the dominant force.¹

Even more significant than the emergence of the left wing as the dominant section of the nationalist movement is the clearly defined objective of the C.P.P. It not only aims at achieving national independence for the Gold Coast, but at 'removing all forms of oppression and for the establishment of a democratic socialist society'. In the sphere of internationalism, the party is committed 'to work with other nationalist, democratic and socialist movements in Africa and other continents, with a view to abolishing imperialism, colonialism, tribalism and all forms of national and racial oppression and economic inequality among nations, races and people, and to support all action for world peace'.²

In contrast to the progressive internal and external policies of the C.P.P., it seems that demagoguery and disruptive criticism are the only weapons now left in the armoury of the official opposition, which consists of six active members in the Legislative Assembly: Dr J. B. Danquah (the Leader) and Mr William Ofori Atta, of the U.G.C.C.; Dr K. A. Busia, a Territorial member for Ashanti; Mr Magnus Sampson, Territorial member for the Colony; Mr Kwesi Lamptey, Municipal member for Sekondi-Takoradi; and Mr N. B. Abubekr, Rural member for Adansi. Mr Lamptey and Mr Abubekr were elected on the C.P.P. ticket. Mr Lamptey was expelled for undisciplined behaviour, and Mr Abubekr resigned.

The other non-C.P.P. members of the Assembly, while describing themselves as 'independents', unlike the official opposition, usually support government policy, especially such measures as they consider contribute to the sound economic and social development of the country.

¹ *Freedom for the Gold Coast* by Thomas Hodgkin, p. 8. Published by the Union of Democratic Control.

² *Constitution of the C.P.P.—Aims and Objects*, 1951. See Appendix III, p. 254.

In order to win popularity for the U.G.C.C. and recover lost prestige, Dr Danquah, who has frequently announced his intention of retiring from politics,¹ tabled a motion at the first Legislative Assembly session on April 24, 1951, calling for the appointment of a Select Committee of the Assembly to examine various Commonwealth constitutions and to draft a new constitution to ensure that 'when the time comes for Dominion status, the Gold Coast will have one ready'. This move on the part of the doyen of Gold Coast politicians was not only irresponsible but comic. *The Economist* commented upon it as follows:

'Danquah now sits in relative isolation in the House of Assembly; his only possible method of recapturing popular support is by proving to be more revolutionary, more daring, more a man of the people, than is Mr Nkrumah himself. To this end, when the new Assembly was formally opened and an address of thanks to the King for the new constitution was loyally moved by the C.P.P. leaders, it was Danquah who refused to support the motion. He spoke bitterly of the inadequacies of the constitution, called for "immediate self-government" and taunted Mr Nkrumah for working a constitution which he publicly dubbed as "bogus".'²

The crude manœuvre to embarrass the Nkrumah government was overwhelmingly defeated. The Government spokesman, Mr Gbedemah, accused Dr Danquah of insincerity and inconsistency, and described the motion as 'a political stunt to court cheap popularity'. The Minister of Health and Labour then asked Dr Danquah: 'What would the world think of us if, without giving the new constitution a trial, we embark upon another one?' He reminded the opposition leader that he was one of the chief architects of the constitution, and that along with

¹ See *Manchester Guardian*, February 20, 1951.

² *The Economist*, London, May 19, 1951, p. 1178.

other opposition members, including the chiefs, he had advised the people to give it a trial.

In carrying out the experiment, the C.P.P. has no illusions. And that is why Dr Nkrumah issued an injunction to his Ministers and Assembly men regarding their duties and responsibilities to the people and the country. 'Going to the Assembly is not an end but a means whereby "Full Self-Government Now" can be fought for and won both from within and from without the Assembly.'

Explaining why he rejected the suggestion of the opposition parties to form a coalition government, the Prime Minister pointed out that

'of all parties in the country our party is the only one committed to Self-Government Now. As such, it will be impracticable to work with those who are committed to an unidentical view. Nothing should be done in the Assembly to jeopardize the possibility of attaining Full Self-Government Now, but rather to strengthen it.

'In a democratic country, if a political party is in a minority it forms the opposition; if it is in the majority it forms the government. There should be no compromise on this point. Coalitions with other political groups in this country, such as we know them, will be dangerous. . . . The point in trying to work the new constitution lies in knowing how to apply one's tactics in such a way as to raise and not lower the general ability to fight and conquer the forces of discredited imperialism. Colonial governments do not give self-government to their colonies until circumstances and mass pressure force them to do so. Only by determination, by singleness of purpose, and by effective and relentless agitation and organization, can we achieve our goal, regardless of victimizations, persecutions, and imprisonments.

'We know that the essential part of any proposal for a democratic government consists in the desire to create all the conditions—political, economic, social, and cultural—necessary for a decent and full life for a people. This should not be overlooked by members of the Assembly.'

Referring to some of the social evils in the body politic, the Prime Minister warned his followers that

‘there is a greater risk in accepting office under the new constitution which still makes us half-slave and half-free. The temptation there is that it is easy for one to identify oneself with such a constitution and thereby be swayed by considerations of personal temporary advantage instead of seeking the interest of the people. Hence we call for vigilance and moral courage to withstand the evil manoeuvring of imperialism. Now bribery and corruption, both moral and factual, have eaten into the whole fabric of our society and these must be stamped out if we are to achieve any progress.’¹

Dr Nkrumah also announced that until self-government is achieved, ‘there must be no fraternization between our party members in the Executive Council and in the Assembly and European officials except on purely, strictly official relations, for what imperialists failed to achieve by strong-arm methods, they will hope to bring off with cocktail parties. . . . And to show our sincerity and to prove that we were not led into the struggle for any personal aggrandisement, we have agreed that none of our party members in the Executive Council should live in palatial ministerial bungalows’, erected by the former Government at a cost of £10,000 each as part of the sweets of office. Dr Nkrumah also demanded that ‘all party members of the Assembly and Ministers should surrender their salaries to the party and in turn draw agreed remuneration from the party funds. This will prevent careerism and induce comrades in high office to live simply and thus be undivorced from the masses. Power corrupts and money can destroy angels.’

This warning was most pertinent. There are certain types of colonial politicians who, once having tasted the

¹ The C.P.P. has organized a country-wide Anti-Bribery and Anti-Corruption Committee under Mr Kofi Baako, chairman of the party Information Bureau.

sweets of office and come close to the traditional wielders of imperial power, acquire—sometimes imperceptibly, sometimes rapidly and overtly—a sense of self-importance. They begin to regard themselves as ‘superior’ simply by virtue of the official positions they hold. They even begin to regard themselves as perpetual holders of these ministerial positions, and they use every effort to make this a fact. This constitutes the essence of opportunism and careerism. And in a political situation like that of the Gold Coast, where the major objective of self-government has still to be attained and the nationalist party has been forced by the exigencies of circumstances to accept office before its attainment, these same office-holders are often disinclined for the momentum of struggle to be quickened. Their objective is rather for it to be slowed down, and they are more than willing to jeopardize the party’s principles in the interests of consolidating their own positions. Certain sections of the British press have openly expressed their hope of this happening in the Gold Coast.

As a means of safeguarding against this back-sliding in the ranks of the C.P.P. and to keep the link between his supporters in the Assembly and the party executive, Dr Nkrumah appointed the ubiquitous Mr Krobo Edusei, the Rural member for Kumasi north-west, and Mr J. E. Hagan, Rural member for Cape Coast, to be the Government’s Chief and Deputy Whips respectively.

As soon as the C.P.P. Assembly men had familiarized themselves with parliamentary procedure—none of them except one, Mr Kwesi Plange, Municipal member for Cape Coast, having previously had experience of legislative work—Dr Nkrumah took the offensive into the camp of the opposition in and outside the Assembly. Addressing a party rally at Kumasi on September 30, 1951, the C.P.P. leader issued a challenge to the United Gold Coast Convention, the National Democratic Party, the Asanteman Council, the Joint Provincial Council of

Chiefs, the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society, and all other opposition parties, factions, groups and causes to join forces with the C.P.P. 'to plan a nation-wide campaign of "Positive Action" if the British Government rejects a demand for "Self-Government Now".'

This appeal for a united front outside the Assembly placed Dr Danquah and his parliamentary colleagues in an embarrassing situation. Their sincerity and political integrity were challenged. Ever since the Assembly had rejected Dr Danquah's motion, the U.G.C.C. had been taunting the C.P.P. with abandoning the struggle for 'Self-Government Now'. There was no escape clause in the challenge to Dr Danquah and his friends which would permit them to save face. Dr Nkrumah had asserted that

'If they [the opposition parties and chiefs] accept our challenge, I propose that we issue an ultimatum the day after our signatures are appended to an instrument signifying complete agreement on a line of action for immediate and complete self-government to His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, on the condition that if this demand is rejected we shall launch, under our collective leadership, a nation-wide campaign of Positive Action.'

Dr Nkrumah went on to declare that

'in the event of our ultimatum for immediate and complete Dominion status being accepted, my party is prepared to accept any government which will be constituted as a provisional government of Ghana until such time as we shall convene a Constituent Assembly to draft a new and truly democratic constitution under which our nation shall be governed. . . .'

As the opposition leaders are not the kind of men who will voluntarily risk their freedom and security by promoting the liberation of their country, they all rejected Dr Nkrumah's united front invitation. Branded as

cowards and turncoats by the common people, the U.G.C.C. leaders in their turn issued a 'P Plan'—'P' for what? No one was ever told. However, this preposterous 'P Plan' turned out to be a rehash of the 1950 Gold Coast National Congress proposals. The new version called for the setting up of a National Emergency Council of twenty-five members distributed as follows: C.P.P. 5; U.G.C.C. 4; National Democratic Party (N.D.P.) 2; People's Democratic Party (P.D.P.) 1; Aborigines' Rights Protection Society 3; Joint Provincial Council of Chiefs 3; Asanteman Council 3; Northern Territorial Council 3; and British Togoland Council 1. Thus the C.P.P., the largest and most representative organization in the country and the majority party constituting the Government, was generously allotted five seats in the Council as against twenty to be controlled by the reactionary lawyer-politicians and chiefs. This time not even the chiefs would allow themselves to be used as pawns by a few discredited intellectuals to save their political reputation behind a screen of legalistic verbiage.

When asked what they intended to do if their 'P Plan' to win the final battle for self-government constitutionally was rejected by the British Government, the U.G.C.C. big shots had no alternative policy to offer. 'Positive Action' in the form of another Ghandian non-violent non-co-operation campaign as advocated by Dr Nkrumah was out of the question.

Rejected by the chiefs, many of whom had by now come over to the side of the C.P.P., the U.G.C.C. leaders decided to join forces with other opposition politicians and a few middle-class non-party independents in forming a unified opposition party. On May 4, 1952, the new combination, called the Ghana Congress Party, was inaugurated at a conference at Accra. The delegates represented the U.G.C.C. and the N.D.P., as well as a few dissident leaders of the C.P.P., among them Mr Ashie Nikoi, former deputy chairman; Mr Dzenkle

Dzewu, former chairman of the Ghana National College Educational Unit; Mr N. Mate Kole and Mr Henry Nyametie, ex-treasurer and secretary respectively.

Despite the conflicting ideologies and tactics which had formerly divided these C.P.P. dissidents from moderate and conservative politicians like Drs J. B. Danquah and R. E. G. Armattoe and Messrs Obetsebi Lamptey, Akufo Addo and W. Ofori Atta of the U.G.C.C., lawyers like Messrs N. A. Ollennu and K. A. Bossman of the N.D.P. and 'independents' like Dr K. A. Busia and Mr M. Dowuona, Registrar of the Gold Coast University College, the Ghana Congress Party agreed upon the following aims and objects:

1. To supply an effective opposition to the C.P.P. government; and to offer the country an alternative government.

2. To achieve full self-government and national self-determination.

3. To establish and maintain a modern progressive and democratic government based upon our traditional institutions and culture; and the knowledge of technology and skills available in our contemporary world.

4. To ensure a sound and progressive development of the human and material resources of our land.

5. To review the Development Plan of the present government and face the problem of determining priorities in the light of available manpower, materials and money.

6. To ensure that the highest standards are aimed at in all aspects of our national life.

The Chairman of the new party is Dr Busia, a lecturer in Sociological Studies at the University College and a former Assistant District Commissioner. His brother is the Paramount Chief of Wenchi, whose official conduct towards his subjects was investigated by the Nkrumah Government in 1952 and resulted in his being fined for

abuse of power. In a traditional society like the Gold Coast, individual politics are frequently influenced by family, caste and tribal considerations rather than by ideologies. Dr Busia is assisted by another conservative, Mr Ollennu, who acts as Vice-Chairman, and Mr Kwesi Lamptey, a former Hyde Park radical, as secretary.¹ Despite its formidable assortment of academic, legal and medical talent, the Congress Party ran into rough weather. Within four months of its formation, and even before it could recruit any substantial membership, the intellectuals started fighting for leadership. Resenting the emergence of their old rival, lawyer Ollennu of the N.D.P., to the forefront of the new party, some of the U.G.C.C. old-guard leaders refused to liquidate their organization and merge it into the Ghana Congress Party. This step had been decided upon at a special conference, when it was agreed that two foundation organizations—the United Gold Coast Convention and the National Democratic Party—should be disbanded and the loose federal structure of the Ghana Congress Party transformed into a united opposition party.

¹ Mr Lamptey was suspended from office by Dr Busia in February 1953, for supporting the C.P.P. demand for 'immediate self-government'.

IX

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORMS

UNLESS ONE VISITED the Gold Coast and travelled throughout the country, which I was fortunate in being able to do in the summer of 1951, it would have been difficult to appreciate the fundamental changes which had taken place since the first general election only six months before. Never has so much been achieved in a colonial dependency in so short a time. The country is undergoing a veritable *risorgimento*. A new awakening is sweeping the land. The watchword is Freedom!

Everywhere the long-forgotten common people are being caught up in the national rebirth which is already having a profound influence on the political, economic and social structure as well as on the traditional institutions and customs. But nowhere is the new spirit of political consciousness more dramatically demonstrated than in the sphere of local government.

Until the introduction of the new constitution, the Gold Coast, like other dependencies in tropical Africa, was administered largely through the system of Indirect Rule or Native Authorities. Under this form of government, the bulk of the population living in the rural areas was divorced from active participation in the day-to-day affairs of administration. They merely obeyed orders. But today the common people have lost their sense of fear: fear of the chief and of the white man—the District Commissioner, the police inspector, the commercial

manager, the British civil service official—even the fear of prison. For those who have suffered imprisonment for participation in the national struggle are among the political *élite*. With this pride of achievement, even the illiterate villagers are regaining confidence in themselves and reasserting their human dignity after a hundred years of alien domination.

As stated before, in 1927 the Governor, in whose hands all power was vested, enacted the Native Authority Ordinance, establishing the Councils of Chiefs. The Councils were subsequently combined in the Joint Provincial Council of the Colony and the Confederacy Council of Ashanti. These chiefs were given statutory powers to maintain law and order, collect taxes and dispense justice to their subjects under the supervision of British officials known as Provincial and District Commissioners. To carry out their duties, the chiefs were permitted to operate their own courts of law, maintain police forces and make regulations. Divorced from popular control, the chiefs were turned into subsidized servants of the British Crown and the agents through which official policy of the Governor-in-Council was implemented. Corruption, bribery and abuse of power were widespread among the chiefs.

Apart from five municipal members in the Central Legislature, the chiefs were the only people allowed to elect the members to the Legislative Council. All political power was shared between themselves and the British officials. This oligarchic rule was so entrenched that the Aiken Watson Commission declares that

‘we have found an intense suspicion that the chiefs are being used by the government as an instrument for the delay, if not the suppression, of the political aspirations of the people. The fact that destooling, once the absolute privilege of dissatisfied people, has been made the subject of a well defined code under the supervision of the government is itself the object of grave suspicion. The view

is advanced that so long as the chief accepts and supports the government policy he will receive government support, however much he has become the object of dislike to his people. That there is no evidence to support this view is beside the point. The suspicion exists.'

As regards the role of the chiefs as politicians, the Commissioners observed that

'in the same way, by reason of the fact that (the towns apart) election to Legislative Councils is by the chiefs, who naturally elect for the most part members of their own caste, the chiefs so elected have become the object of suspicion as mere tools of the government. Indeed, nothing impressed us so much as the volume of evidence we received, not alone from the more forward sections of the community, of the intense objection to chiefs being elected to and sitting in the Legislative Council. We were constantly reminded that the place of the chief was among his people.'¹

The Commissioners recommended the abolition of this undemocratic system of Indirect Rule in favour of some form of local government which 'will conform in some respects to the government now found in the United Kingdom'.

The All-African Coussey Committee not only endorsed this recommendation but formulated concrete proposals for the setting up of district, urban and local councils to assume the functions formerly vested in the chiefs and Native Authorities.

In December 1949 two Select Committees—one for the Colony and the other for Ashanti—were appointed to carry out a thorough examination of the proposals outlined as integral features of the Coussey Constitution. Eight months after coming to power, the Government enacted legislation in October 1951 bringing into being

¹ *Report of Commission on Disturbances in Gold Coast, 1948*. Colonial No. 231, p. 25.

the new system of local government based upon the reforms worked out by the Select Committees.

In this connection, it is significant to note that Central Government *preceded* local government. For without power firmly vested in the people's representatives in the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council, the forces of reaction would have obstructed the extension of real self-government into the rural areas. Even so, when the Local Government Ordinance was debated in the Assembly, one of the senior chiefs, Nana Ofori Atta II, whose uncle Nana Sir Ofori Atta I was the principal collaborator of the imperialists in foisting the system of Indirect Rule upon the people, violently objected to the position assigned to the traditional rulers under the new system of local government. He even accused his erst-while white allies—the British political officers—of 'deserting the chiefs' and leaving them to the mercy of the C.P.P., whom he also wrongfully accused of inciting the people against chieftaincy. Unlike the majority of semi-literate chiefs like Nana Ofori Atta II, the European officials were intelligent enough to realize that from the time it had been decided to decentralize the machinery of government and distribute administrative powers to the local government councils to be elected largely by the common people, a bloodless revolution had been set in motion. Even before these reforms had been implemented, the common people, conscious of their newly won power, had begun to destool those Paramount Chiefs who had abused their powers when the white man was still in a position to protect them against their subjects.

Commenting upon this 'revolt' against autocracy, the *Gold Coast Observer* reported that

'destoolment of chiefs continues apace throughout the Colony and in Ashanti. And in so far as it is possible to judge, it seems that in every case it is the so-called

youths of the states who are either responsible for these destoolments or the prime movers of them. The situation seems to be worse in Ashanti than in the Colony, and the reason for this is not far to seek. It is known that in Ashanti the power of the chief has always been stronger than in the Colony. This power the chiefs seem to have had no hesitation in using against their subjects. Moreover, under the old regime, the system of Indirect Rule always inclined political officers to support the action of a chief, however obviously oppressive or arbitrary it might be. The traditional advisers of the chiefs—namely the Elders and Councillors—being either afraid or being apathetic to the sufferings of the ordinary subjects did nothing to check the arbitrariness of a rule which was becoming daily repugnant, as the subjects became enlightened through education and contacts with the outside world and ideas. Under these circumstances, the ground was prepared for the seeds of revolt, the growth of which these states are now witnessing.¹

Faced with the danger of a breakdown of law and order in the rural areas before local government machinery could be set up, the Prime Minister appealed to the people to restrain themselves until the new reforms came into being. In a statement to the Legislative Assembly in September 1951, Dr Nkrumah declared that

‘at the present time, for a variety of reasons, the Gold Coast is passing through a phase which is fraught with difficulties for its chiefs, to whom the country has for so long owed so great a debt of gratitude. . . . In broad outline, the government holds the view, to use the words of the Coussey Committee, that “the whole institution of chieftaincy is so deeply bound up with the life of the community that its disappearance will spell disaster”.’

The Prime Minister went on to warn the chiefs that ‘chieftaincy, in common with other human institutions, cannot remain static, but that it must in large measure

¹ *Gold Coast Observer*, January 8, 1952.

adapt itself to the changing requirements of the present time. The traditional authorities already play their part in the elections to the Central Legislature and it is the intention of the government that there shall be traditional representation upon everyone of the reformed local authorities and the chiefs shall act as the ceremonial presidents of the new councils.

‘The government is also of the opinion that the personal position of the chiefs must in some measure be safeguarded. In particular, while the government cannot be expected to support any chief against legitimate charges which may be brought against him by his subjects, it holds the view that the chief should be protected against charges which are ill-founded. . . . New ordinances will shortly be enacted to replace the existing Native Authority Ordinance and in preparing this new legislation, government has these considerations well in mind. . . . Destoolment must be clearly proved. . . . Once these new ordinances have come into operation no installation or destoolment should be recognized which does not comply strictly with the requirements of customary law.’

A month after the Prime Minister’s statement on the future of chieftaincy under the new régime, the very able and efficient Minister for Local Government, Mr Edward Asafu-Adjaye, who is himself related to the Ashanti Stool, introduced the new Ordinance into the Assembly.

COMPOSITION OF THE COUNCILS

Under the reformed local government set-up, there are three types of councils, excluding the already existing municipal councils—District, Urban and Local. The first kind will have authority over a comparatively wide rural area, while the others will operate over smaller areas. The Urban and Local Councils will be composed of two main types of members: (*a*) representative members, who will comprise two-thirds of the total, elected by the inhabitants of the areas by universal adult suffrage,

and (b) one-third, who will be traditional members appointed by the traditional authorities. The District Councils will be composed of both representative and traditional members elected respectively from amongst those returned to the Urban and Local Councils in the areas covered by the District Councils. Explaining why the Government had decided to adopt this dual form of representation—elected members and traditional members—Mr Kwesi Plange, the twenty-six-year-old Under-Secretary for Local Government, told the Assembly that the compromise was aimed at preserving as much as possible of the traditional forms compatible with modern democratic principles.

‘Honourable members will agree with me that the appointment of one-third traditional authority to the membership of the Local Councils is undemocratic because their traditional representation does not base its powers on the people and through the ballot paper they transfer this sovereignty to the elected representative who exercises this power for and on their behalf. But because we want to build on our heritage and tradition, we have the traditional representation to hold a watching brief for those who admirably tried in their ignorance to lose sight of the traditions of our forebears. Is the traditional representation and the method of proportional allocation of seats not in concert with our ancient and traditional institutions, I fondly ask?’

While the traditional authorities will have direct representation, the chiefs will have no official status in the councils. They may be invited to serve as president in a purely formal capacity but will have no voting right. Each council will elect its own chairman and vice-chairman annually from among the representative and traditional members. Similarly, the British District Commissioners, who formerly bossed the Native Authorities and Chieftain Councils, are also excluded from membership of the local government councils. Under their new title

of Government Agents, these erstwhile 'Bush Governors' will no longer be under the Chief Secretary, which post has been abolished, but will act as agents of the Minister for Local Government. This reorganization constitutes a fundamental administrative change, for when these political officers served directly under the Colonial Secretary they considered themselves to be the 'aristocrats' of the civil service. They not only lorded it over the chiefs and black civil servants, but looked down also upon the other white officers serving in technical capacities. In their new role of Government Agents, they will act as liaison officers between the African Minister for Local Government and the local councils and will be expected to see that the policies of the Central Government are properly interpreted to the officers and members of the local councils. To enable the councils to discharge the duties of maintaining order and good government within the area subject to their authority, they will be allowed to raise and administer funds in the form of rates, taxes and licences. In addition, grants-in-aid will be made by the Central Government. The councils will also be permitted to raise loans subject to the approval of the Minister for Local Government.

Closely bound up with the new machinery of local government is the administration of tribal Stool Lands. In the Gold Coast, all land is communally owned by the various tribes, organized into Stools or States. At the head of the community is the Paramount Chief. As occupant of the Stool—the symbol of state authority—the chief is merely the custodian of tribal lands, which he has no right to dispose of without the advice and consent of the traditional state council. Unfortunately, much of the land revenues used to be squandered by the chiefs on riotous living and litigation. More money has been paid to lawyers in fighting law suits in the courts over land rights than has been devoted to education, health and other essential social needs of the common people.

Under the present organization, the management of the Stool Lands will no longer be exercised by the traditional authorities but by the urban or local councils concerned. Ownership, however, will continue to be vested collectively in the tribes. The local government councils (except in the Northern Territories) will collect the revenues from the Stool Lands and pay them into a special fund in the custody of the Accountant-General, a department of the Central Government. The land revenues contributed to this special fund will be divided between the councils and the tribal authorities in proportions agreed between the local councils and the chiefs.

Certain members of the Opposition closely related to Stool families were violently opposed to this. These gentlemen wanted the Government to guarantee the chiefs two-thirds of all revenues, with only one-third for the local councils. Replying to this self-interested suggestion, the Under-Secretary for Local Government said:

‘No one will deny that there have been grave abuses over the collection and disposal of Stool revenue in the past and that the position could no longer be tolerated. Speaking generally, it cannot be said that the trust placed in the Stool holders or occupants has been faithfully discharged and the time has now come for the people to have a greater say in the economic use and fair distribution of the assets of communal lands. By bringing the management of these under the administration of local authorities we confidently believe that not only will greater benefit accrue to the people, but that the people themselves will come to know the facts about land transactions. This particular measure will tend to remove the possibility of suspicion from the Stool holders and should be welcomed by them as a protection against destoolment over land matters in the future.’ Mr Plange, whose consistently high standard of debate and political sagacity put him in line for ministerial status in any new Cabinet reshuffle, simply routed the Opposition.

Coming specifically to the suggestion that land revenues should be divided in the proportion of two-thirds to traditional authorities and one-third to the local authorities, Mr Plange quoted figures from the Report on Local Government Finance, 1950, relating to the financial year 1949-50. These showed, he said, that

‘in thirty-six Native Authorities (out of fifty-one in the Colony) payments to chiefs exceeded the amount received by Native Authorities from land revenues. Payments to chiefs and retainues include salaries of chiefs, elders and councillors, linguists and Stool dependents and also travelling, transport, upkeep of transport, customary expenses and donations and entertainment.

‘A division of one-third to two-thirds in all cases is impracticable and unrealistic for three reasons: (1) In a few cases it would mean paying over to the chiefs considerably more than they now receive. (2) In thirty-six cases it would mean that the chiefs would receive extremely small allowances—much less than any do now. (3) In some cases the chiefs would receive nothing at all.’

Mr Plange concluded by pointing out that

‘the provisions in the Bill as now drafted allow each case to be dealt with on its merits by agreement. This would not prevent a proportion of one-third to two-thirds being agreed in cases where that is appropriate, but the provision as it stands is flexible and allows each case to be treated individually.’

The Assembly endorsed the Government’s policy and agreed that in the event of a dispute between the traditional authorities and the local council over the distribution of the land revenues, a decision will be made by the Minister for Local Government, which will be final.

It was a well-deserved victory for the Minister and his youthful lieutenant, who seem to work as an excellent team.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

The first election for the new local government councils commenced on April 15, 1952, and lasted for several months. Unlike the 1951 general election for the Central Government, the result was a foregone conclusion. During the intervening period, the C.P.P. had attained such country-wide popularity that it had been transformed from an ordinary political organization into an organized expression of the Gold Coast people's national demand for self-government, analogous to the Indian National Congress before India obtained independence. The C.P.P. membership had risen to over 1,000,000 out of a population of less than 5,000,000. Not without reason the U.G.C.C. at a special delegates conference at Nyarkrom on March 9, 1952, decided not to contest the elections so as to avoid suffering a more ignominious defeat than the year before. This decision created further demoralization within its ranks and spread defeatism among its African middle-class supporters, who were hoping to stage a come-back after their defeat in 1951.

'The U.G.C.C. has done the country a great disservice by withdrawing from or declining to contest the local government elections, there are no two opinions on the point', declared the pro-U.G.C.C. newspaper, the *Gold Coast Observer*. 'This latest act of the party's leadership has astounded its diminishing circle of staunch supporters to no less an extent than the degree of disappointment it has occasioned to its more virile rival, the C.P.P., who have been spoiling for a fight.

'It is becoming more and more evident that the U.G.C.C. leadership is responsible for the waning fortunes of the body. . . . In the days of the supremacy of the common man there is not that taking for granted the correctness and wisdom of everything proceeding from the mind and mouth of the professional or practising lawyer, as had up till quite recently been the case in this country.

'The days of the ascendancy of the practising lawyer-politician are no more and will never return. This simple and patent fact ought to have dawned on the lawyer-laden executive of the U.G.C.C. If it had not, then it is one more proof of the all-absorbing fact that the U.G.C.C. is being led by men who are completely out of touch with the masses of the people. . . .'¹

Despite the absence of a strong opposition, the C.P.P. decided to use the occasion to educate the people in the principles of Western political democracy and the workings of local government institutions. It threw all its propaganda resources into the campaign. Thanks to its vision, the elections were characterized by a high degree of enthusiasm, especially in those constituencies contested by so-called independent candidates.

Having secured over 90 per cent of the seats in the 280 new councils, the C.P.P. was now in a position to consolidate its political power not only in the Colony area and Ashanti, but also in the Northern Territories, from which it had been excluded in the 1951 general election. The C.P.P. is the first African nationalist organization which had been able to overcome tribal exclusiveness and religious differences by means of a disciplined party advocating a constructive economic and social programme of reforms which cut across communal and ethnic divisions. No mean achievement in a country where British imperialists employed every conceivable stratagem of 'divide and rule'.

FUNCTIONS OF COUNCILS

With the implementation of local government reforms, modern political democracy has been brought right down to the common people in their rural townships, villages and hamlets. The chiefs no longer sit upon Official Gazettes but have been restored to their traditional Stools as Fathers and Elders of their people. And

¹ *Gold Coast Observer*, March 14, 1952.

British district officers have ceased to be civil *masters* and have become civil *servants*.

Apart from these European officials, a number of Africans formerly employed by the Native Authorities and the junior civil service will be seconded to the staffs of the local councils. To prepare them for their new duties, the Government has established a Local Government Training School at Accra, while others have been awarded scholarships to study public administration in the United Kingdom. On their return they may become instructors in the Training School. In this way it is hoped to provide the necessary trained personnel for local government machinery.

The success or failure of self-government in the Gold Coast will to a large extent depend upon the proper functioning of the local government councils. There is no reason why these reforms should not succeed. For, as the Coussey Report observes,

‘democratic principles in the main underlie the traditional institutions of this country. No chief, for example, speaks as the head of his state, except with the consent and approval of his councillors, who are the acknowledged representatives of the people. To talk of democratic principles is, therefore, not to introduce a new idea; it is rather to emphasize its vital importance in the reformed system of government and to provide for a further realization of an imperfectly realized idea.’¹

The new councils will serve to broaden the basis of the traditional Gold Coast democracy and provide a *modus operandi* for enlisting greater ‘ability and talent for work of government’ which the old Native Authorities were unable to do. That is why it is proposed to transfer much of the authority now exercised by the Central Government to the Local Authorities.

Apart from maintaining law and order within the area

¹ *Gold Coast Constitution Report*, Colonial No. 248, p. 15.

of its authority, each council may be assigned the responsibility to perform all or any of the public services concerned with health and sanitation, water supplies, roads and transport, schools and libraries, agriculture and livestock, soil conservation and forestry, market and liquor controls, and many other matters. To carry out these duties, the council will be given powers to make and enforce by-laws. It is only by giving as many people as possible public responsibilities that it will be possible to build a real democratic foundation of local government upon which the superstructure of Central Government can be maintained. At the same time, the citizens will be in a better position to curb the leviathan growth and octopus tendencies of the modern welfare state.

‘If the former [local government] is democratic and cherishes democracy, it will ensure that democratic principles are not lost sight of at the centre. Moreover, it is through local government that the widest possible opportunities will be provided for the majority of the people to contribute to, and participate actively in, the process of government.’¹

¹ Ibid.

X

IRREDENTIST NATIONALISM

A SURVEY OF GOLD COAST politics would be incomplete without reference to irredentist nationalism in Togoland, since a part of this former German colony is administered by the British Imperial Government as an integral part of the Gold Coast.

Lying between the Gold Coast and the French colony of Dahomey, Togoland covers an area of 32,930 square miles. It was annexed by Kaiser Wilhelm II in 1884 through the machinations of the famous German imperialist, Dr Gustav Nachtigal, at the time when the Western European powers were all grabbing territories in Africa. Togoland remained a part of the German Colonial Empire until the First World War, when the territory was invaded and seized by Anglo-French forces in 1914. At the end of hostilities in Europe, the colony was divided between Britain and France as a 'B' mandate under the League of Nations. The carve-up gave Britain 12,600 square miles with a population of 185,000 (since increased to 380,000); and France 22,000 square miles with 747,000 Africans (now numbering 763,360).

This share-out was justified at the time on the ground that the colony was inhabited by 'peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world'. However, in the partitioning of the territory, absolutely no regard was given to ethnic and linguistic considerations. The European overlords simply drew a boundary line right through the country running

from north to south, and many villages, indeed even members of the same families, were cut in two, leaving some under French rule and others under British.

The great majority of the inhabitants of the southern parts of both French and British Togoland (a United Nations Trust since the Second World War) are inhabited by the Ewe tribe. A good many members of this tribe have inhabited the Gold Coast Colony since before the German annexation of Togoland, and their numbers have been constantly increasing by the immigration of Ewes passing over the borders from both former German Togoland and present-day French Togoland.

With the second partition of Togoland territory in 1919, therefore, the Ewes have been spread through French and British Togolands and the Gold Coast, and there has grown up since that time a demand from them for the unification of their scattered numbers under some form of autonomous rule. Though the Ewes are a non-Akan people, their desire for unification has always been supported by progressive politicians in the Gold Coast. For example, the irredentist question was included among the demands presented to the Secretary of State for Colonies by the West African Congress delegation under Mr J. Casely Hayford in 1920. Encouraged by the sympathetic support of their Gold Coast brothers, the Ewes living under British rule took the initiative in voicing the post-war demand for national reunion.

Although Togoland is not technically a colonial possession of either of the administering powers, the British section is governed as an integral part of the Gold Coast Colony under Article 5a of the Trusteeship Agreement of 1946. This convention, signed between the United Kingdom Government and the United Nations General Assembly, transformed the former League of Nations mandate into a Trust Territory of the new international authority.

The Trusteeship Agreement also permitted the British

to rectify the frontiers of northern Togoland, which were contiguous with those of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, and to unite the Dagomba and Mamprusi tribes living on the Togoland side with their kinsmen in the Northern Territories. These tribes had originally been split between the German and British under the demarcation agreement of 1890.

Similar frontier rectification, however, was not carried out in southern Togoland, where the Ewes form a homogeneous community, but remain divided as pointed out above. There are some 126,000 living in British administered Togoland; 290,000 under French administration; and 330,000 in the Trans-Volta region of the Gold Coast, adjacent to British-administered southern Togoland.

The non-unification of Togoland sacrificed principle to expediency. In order to fulfil certain secret agreements made between Lloyd George and Clemenceau on the sharing-out of German colonies in Africa at the time of the Paris Peace Conference, rectification of the southern frontiers of Togoland was ignored to allow the French to get that section containing the German-built railway and the port of Lome. This perpetuation of the imperialist division of the Ewes is the main cause of their present irredentist problem.

Thus, not without reason, an Ewe delegate to the Trusteeship Council once observed that

‘the unification of Togoland was of minor importance in comparison to the international solidarity and security between France and Britain on the one hand and between the two of them and their allies on the other, and that this international solidarity must be achieved at the expense of the demand of the peoples of Togoland.’¹

ALL-EWE CONFERENCE

As a means of voicing their justifiable grievances before the United Nations, the Ewes living in the British

¹ U.N. Doc. T/PV 380, July 24, 1951, p. 32.

trust section, together with those inhabiting the Trans-Volta area of the Gold Coast, organized their own political movement independent of Gold Coast nationalist parties. This movement is known as the All-Ewe Conference. Its chief aim is to promote the unification of all Ewe-speaking people and to secure for themselves some form of autonomy.

Also operating in southern Togoland but in the French section, is another nationalist movement known as the Togoland Union or *Comité de l'Unité Togolaise*. This organization is opposed to Britain administering the area entrusted to her as an integral part of the Gold Coast. The Union has asked the Trusteeship Council, as an interim measure and for the term of Togoland's status as a Trust Territory, for the British section to be governed as a separate unit under a Northern and a Southern Council and to have in addition a joint Legislative Assembly distinct from that of the Gold Coast Colony.

Thus it will be seen that while the All-Ewe Conference was primarily concerned with the ethnic unification of the Ewes, the Togoland Union was more interested to have the two parts of Togoland amalgamated as a self-governing country. On the other hand, all the chiefs of the non-Ewe tribes in British northern Togoland, as well as those in the Buem-Krachi district, seem to favour political integration with the Northern Territories and the Eastern Gold Coast and the abolition of the trusteeship.

Shortly after the United Nations' Charter was ratified at the San Francisco Conference in June 1945, the All-Ewe Conference sent a protest to the Trusteeship Council stating that

'We deeply deplore the partition of our country as this constitutes a very serious barrier to our social, economic, educational, and political progress as a people, and we therefore do hereby resolve (a) that all the international frontiers cutting across Eweland be removed and all

Eweland brought under a single administration; (b) that the whole of Eweland become a Trust Territory; (c) that Great Britain be invited to become the Administering Authority in Eweland.'

This last suggestion was a diplomatic blunder. It immediately aroused the suspicion of the French imperialists who, unlike the British, do not subscribe to the doctrine of political self-determination and, therefore, see in every legitimate demand of a subject people for self-government an attempt to disrupt the French Empire and secede from the 'mother country'. Because of their intransigent colonialist outlook, the French officials suspected the Ewes of anti-French sentiments and preference for British administration. The Ewes soon recognized their tactical mistake and adopted a more non-committal approach. In a second appeal addressed to the United Nations in September 1946, signed by forty-five chiefs and elders on behalf of all Ewes under British and French rule, they again asked for unification under a single authority.

But this time the petitioners left the question of the Administering Authority to be decided by the United Nations. Despite this conciliatory approach, the United Nations Assembly proceeded to sign new agreements with France and Britain confirming the existing territorial divisions. After all, the Ewes are a small, unimportant African tribe whose claims to justice and self-rule can be ignored with impunity by great powers, particularly while Britain and France continue to give lip service to Article 76 of the United Nations' Charter, which asserts that

'it is the duty of the administering nation to promote the political, economic, social, and educational advancement of the inhabitants of the trust territories, and their progressive development towards self-government or independence as may be appropriate to the particular circumstances of each territory and its peoples and the

freely expressed wishes of the people concerned, and as may be provided by the terms of each trusteeship agreement'.¹

Determined to bring their case before the bar of world public attention, the Ewes mandated one of their distinguished leaders, the cultured and scholarly Mr Sylvanus Olympio, to present their demands to the Trusteeship Council in December 1947. In doing so, the Ewe spokesman avoided the mistake which his people originally made in naming the administering power under which they preferred to live until they achieved self-government. Mr Olympio confined himself to immediate and complete unification of the Ewes under one Administering Authority to be decided by the United Nations. This move placed the Trusteeship Council in an embarrassing position, since the selection of either would give offence to the other.

To escape from this dilemma, the Council decided that it did not feel disposed to ask one Administering Authority to abandon its trusteeship in favour of the other, nor had it the power to make recommendations concerning those Ewes living in the non-Trust territories of the British Gold Coast and French Dahomey. Once again the Ewe appeal was diplomatically side-stepped. The Trusteeship Council saved face by getting the British and French Governments to agree voluntarily to take certain measures to reduce the great inconveniences caused by the artificial frontiers between the two trust territories.

ANGLO-FRENCH CONSULTATIVE COMMISSION

To make good this gesture, the Administering Authorities established an Anglo-French Standing Consultative Commission for Togoland in 1948. It consisted of the Governor of the Gold Coast, the Commissaire of French Togoland and two representatives from each of the

¹ Chapter XII, Article 76 (B).

Gold Coast politicians, who are not interested in Ewe aspirations. The deadlock continued until after the first general election held in the Gold Coast in February 1951.

Several Gold Coast Ewes, including Mr Gbedemah, the Minister for Industry and Commerce, the Rev. Dr F. K. Fiawoo, the Deputy Speaker, Mr F. Y. Asare, Mr J. Kodzo and Mr G. O. Awuma were elected to the Legislative Assembly. In the summer of 1951, Dr Nkrumah and his chief lieutenant, Mr Kojo Botsio, Minister for Education and Social Welfare, visited New York and discussed the Ewe question with Dr Ralph Bunche, Director of the Trusteeship Division of the United Nations, and Mr Daniel A. Chapman, a Senior Area Specialist on African Affairs, himself an Ewe from the Gold Coast. Meanwhile, the British and French delegations to the Trusteeship Council submitted a memorandum to the General Assembly recommending the abolition of the Standing Consultative Commission and the setting up in its place of a Joint Council for Togoland Affairs, consisting of representatives from both Trust Territories.

In giving its approval, the Assembly suggested that the scope of the Joint Council should be sufficiently broad to enable it to discuss all questions of common concern to the Ewes living in British and French Togoland, including questions of political, economic, social, educational and cultural development. Again the Joint Council failed, for the same old reason that most reforms fail in Africa, being too little or too late.

Inspired by the tremendous political advance of the Gold Coast towards self-government, the Ewe representatives, consisting of Mr Olympio of the All-Ewe Conference, Mr S. G. Antor of the Joint Togoland Congress and Dr Martin Aku of the Comité de l'Unité Togolaise, were in no mood to accept this empty gesture from the Administering Authorities.

In the first place, the proposed Joint Council would be

purely advisory, having no legislative or executive powers. Secondly, it would have no authority to discuss the most vital problems—amalgamation of both Togolands or unification of the Ewe tribes. And thirdly, the Ewes in British Togoland protested against what they considered a grossly unfair distribution of seats—fourteen to the French and only four to those under British trusteeship. Mr Olympio, who has been very forthright in his criticism of French colonial administration, declared that ‘almost every conceivable weapon has been used against the Ewe people, including undemocratic elections, arbitrary arrests and the suppression of free speech and the right of assembly’.

Mr Antor was equally sceptical, and suggested that in order to guarantee fair elections, they should be held under the supervision of a United Nations Commission. He also proposed that the Council should have legislative and executive powers. The Ewes, he asserted, ‘were offered yet another consultative commission but without any real powers, and doubtless its membership would again be hand-picked. What could such a Joint Council do to stop the two Trust Territories from being swallowed up in the French Union and the Crown Colony of the Gold Coast respectively, thus losing all hope of eventual autonomy.’¹

Unfortunately, the Togolanders have not always presented a united front and, as a result, the British and French representatives at the United Nations have been able to play them off against one another and justify the *status quo*. While the overwhelming majority of Ewes favour ethnic unification, some support a unified Togoland federated with the Gold Coast, while others favour a united Togoland standing on its own. Certain non-Ewes want a Togoland unified with the French Empire, euphemistically called Union Française.

¹ General Assembly: Official Records, 226th Meeting, December 1951.

The pro-French Togolandiers representing the Parti Togolais du Progrès and the Union des Chefs et des Populations du Nord du Togo sous l'Administration Française, strongly opposed the views of the delegates of the All-Ewe Conference, the Joint Togoland Congress and Comité de l'Unité Togolaise, which they described as subversive.

When the first session of the Joint Council met at Lome, the capital of French Togoland, on August 1, 1952, the four British Togoland representatives of the All-Ewe Conference and two members of the Comité de l'Unité Togolaise walked out. The opposition delegates wanted a Council based upon parity of representation for both Trust Territories elected by universal adult suffrage. These demands had the support of the Ewe Native Authorities in British Togoland as well as of all the political organizations interested in Ewe irredentism, such as the Trans-Volta regional organization of the C.P.P., the Togoland Youth Organization, the Joint Togoland Congress and the All-Ewe Conference. Furthermore, the opposition accused the French officials of fraudulent practices and of intimidation during the election in the French part.

This was the confused situation which confronted the United Nations representatives when they visited Togoland in September–October 1952. The mission consisted of Mr A. Peachey of Australia as chairman; Mr H. E. Yong of Chiang Kai-Shek China; Mr Robert Scheyven of Belgium; and Mr Robert Quiros of El Salvador. While the Visiting Mission was in Lome, it is alleged that the French authorities closed the frontier between their territory and the British, and border police beat up some Ewes who tried to cross from British into French Togoland with the object of attending a rally in Lome. According to a protest sent to the Secretary-General of the United Nations in New York by the All-Ewe Conference, it was charged that French police brought

from Senegal and the Ivory Coast, terrorized the population and suppressed all meetings arranged to welcome the United Nations mission when they visited Lome, Palimé and Atakpamé. The office of the Youth Movement was raided and Mr Dowi, the editor of the African newspaper, *Les Echos du Togo*, was arrested for publishing the text of the protest message sent to the United Nations. The correspondent of a British-owned Gold Coast newspaper, the *Daily Graphic*, was also arrested, handcuffed and imprisoned in Lome after interviewing members of the Visiting Mission on behalf of his newspaper. A few days later, the editor of *La Vigie Togolaise* was arrested and imprisoned.

The high-handed actions of the French colonial authorities demonstrates the difference between the two Administering Authorities over this explosive question of Ewe unification. The French are trying to suppress the unification movement by bribery, intimidation and violence. But what is really disgusting is that the U.N. representatives failed to register any protest against the high-handed behaviour of the French officials. Their silence completely discredited them as impartial investigators. On the other hand, when the Mission arrived in Accra, the Prime Minister not only welcomed it officially, but the Gold Coast Government permitted Ewes from French Togoland to interview the visitors and express their demands. At a mass meeting at Accra on August 26, 1952, held under the auspices of the C.P.P., with the support of the All-Ewe Conference, the Rev. Dr Fiawoo voiced the demand for self-government for Togoland within five years. During the interim period, they want the present administration of both British and French Togoland to be reorganized and an independent administration set up under the direct control of the Trusteeship Council, after which the united Togoland would negotiate for federation with a self-governing Gold Coast.

'Independence and unification are natural and inalienable rights of the Ewes and the peoples of both Togolands', declared Dr Fiwoo. 'Anybody who denies us these rights gives judgment against the Divine Creator and he will be condemned by God.' He appealed to the Visiting Mission to tell the United Nations of the atrocities alleged to have been committed in French Togoland. 'We do not want to fight for our liberty and rights but if we are forced to do so we shall fight.'

Similar statements were expressed by Mr S. T. Agbeko, the treasurer of the All-Ewe Conference. The Visiting Mission is charged with the responsibility of not only investigating into conditions in both Trust Territories, but with submitting concrete recommendations to the Trusteeship Council on:

1. The demand of the Ewes for unification of their tribe.
2. The question of amalgamating both British and French Togoland in accordance with resolutions adopted by Council.

Judging from their report, the Mission failed hopelessly in discharging their assignment. They offered nothing new by way of a solution of the problem to the seventh session of the United Nations in December 1952.

Under these circumstances, it is difficult to see how the conflicting demands of the Togolandese can be reconciled while at the same time giving justice to the tribes of the northern part of British Togoland who seek integration with their kinsmen in the Gold Coast; unifying the Ewes on an ethnological basis; and at the same time joining up both British and French Togoland under one self-government administration regardless of ethnic considerations. The problem is made even more complicated by the intransigent attitude of the French, who favour 'cultural assimilation' and 'permanent association' of dependent peoples with metropolitan France rather than

ultimate self-determination, which the supporters of Togoland unification desire.

As a memorandum of the All-Ewe Conference to the United Nations observed: 'the British conception of a sound political development of a colonial people is vastly different from that of the French. . . .' The memorandum goes on to say:

'The most potent factor in the development of every country towards self-government or independence is education. In the Ewe territory two different systems of education obtain, which results in the production of dissimilar citizens. In the French zone, the emphasis is on the production of a perfect French scholar, whose foremost preoccupation is to become a French citizen as distinct from an Ewe citizen. This type of education leaves out of account all indigenous culture, even to the point of forbidding the teaching of the mother tongues. . . . In the British zone, the educational system does take account of indigenous culture. To this extent, the product of this system is a more suitable citizen in a territory working towards self-government.'¹

In light of these views, the United Kingdom Government should take the initiative in declaring its willingness to relinquish its trust over southern Togoland as soon as the Gold Coast obtains Dominion status. This would permit the Ewes under British trust administration to achieve a larger degree of unification with those in the Gold Coast, and open up the possibility of political federation with this more prosperous self-governing neighbour. Togoland lacks the economic resources necessary to separate national existence. Furthermore, the tribes of the northern part of British Togoland are already integrated in the Gold Coast.

It is quite clear that only some form of federation or union with the Gold Coast, along the lines adopted between Eritrea and Ethiopia, where a similar situation

¹ Trusteeship Council Official Records. VIIth Session.

existed, will enable the Ewes to come to a satisfactory and permanent solution of their extremely complicated and potentially dangerous irredentist problem.

Already one can scent a note of frustration in even so moderate a leader as Mr Olympio. Speaking before the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations at its meeting on December 10, 1952, he asked:

‘Do you, the United Nations, mean business when you say that we are to have self-government or independence? Do you mean business when you tell us that we are to be allowed to work out our destinies in accordance with our freely expressed wishes? If you do mean business, now is the time to show it to us. If you do not, what do you expect us to do? Shall we follow the examples of other peoples who have felt frustrated in their search for emancipation?’

‘For instance, shall we defy the laws, shall we let our hotheads make riots and disturbances? That is what they did in the Gold Coast in 1948—and the result was that within two years they were making for themselves a constitution giving them something very close to self-government. Do you advise us to follow *that* example? Shall we take up policies of civil disobedience, simply going in our own ways and ignoring the very presence of those who govern us? They did that in other countries—and those countries are independent today. Is that the course of action you would advise for us?’

‘Do you expect us to take matters into our own hands, and present you with a *fait accompli* which you will formally recognize and accept? We have seen you do that for other countries, over and over again.

‘But, Mr Chairman, we in Togoland still put from our minds the thought of using violence to secure our legitimate aspirations. Heaven knows, we have been provoked, but we have kept our faith in the promises of the United Nations Charter perhaps longer than any other people on earth.

‘But the time has come for you to tell us, frankly and honestly, where we stand. We cannot devote the rest of

our lives to making these annual trips to New York. We cannot go on wasting away our money and energy in reaffirming the truth for your benefit whenever the Administering Powers try to blacken it. We make our appeal not only to all those countries who have always had sympathy for our cause, especially those who have passed through the same experience as we are now undergoing. We appeal also to the great powers. We appeal even to the colonial powers. We appeal to Great Britain, which has seen the light in other parts of West Africa. We appeal to France; we ask France to remember that 1946, the year of the French Constitution, was a long time ago in the recent history of West Africa. We ask her to admit that the constitutions made at that very time in the British colonies are already long out of date, and have given way to new policies. We ask her to consider whether we, too, do not deserve progress towards self-government no less than the people of the Gold Coast and Nigeria. We appeal to United States, which taught us long ago to believe that she would show us the way to freedom. We ask her to consider whether it is not impossible for her to pretend to support the aspirations of colonial people, while she supports at the time the policies of the colonial powers.'

XI

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF NATIONALIST MOVEMENTS

WITHIN A YEAR after the inauguration of the Coussey Constitution on March 29, 1951, the executive structure of the Gold Coast began to undergo changes. The most significant of these was the formal recognition of Dr Nkrumah as Prime Minister. This announcement was made by the Secretary of State for Colonies on March 5, 1952, and Dr Nkrumah was given precedence in rank after the Governor and before any of the three British *ex-officio* members of the Government.

Following this important announcement in the House of Commons, the Gold Coast Executive Council resigned and a new instrument of government, officially designated the Cabinet, was appointed by the Prime Minister in consultation with the Governor, and afterwards submitted to the Legislative Assembly for its approval on March 12.

Describing this constitutional reform as an important step towards full parliamentary government, the Minister of Justice explained to the Assembly that under the existing provisions of the constitution, the representative Ministers are elected by the Assembly from names submitted by the Governor, and then the Leader of Government Business is elected by the Executive Council from among the representative Ministers.

Under the new arrangement, the Governor will present to the Assembly the name of a member for election

to the office of Prime Minister and the Prime Minister will, therefore, receive his mandate from the Assembly as a whole. After his election by the Assembly, the Prime Minister in consultation with the Governor will select the Cabinet, and the Governor will then submit the names of the Ministers to the Assembly for election. The Governor will also consult the Prime Minister in assigning portfolios and departments of the administration to the representative Ministers.

Commenting upon the political significance of his new status in relation to the balance of forces between the Gold Coast people's representatives and the British imperial representatives in the coalition Cabinet, Dr Nkrumah said that

'the change which has been made is no mere window dressing—no matter what our critics and detractors may say. The office of Prime Minister is the highest office in mature, self-governing democratic countries. By getting it into our constitution now, we have made a big step forward—a fact which is emphasized by the precedence accorded to Prime Ministers everywhere. He stands first among the Ministers, who collectively are responsible for deciding all questions of policy affecting the government of his country. Hitherto it was an *ex-officio* minister who occupied that place. There's much in a name.'

The Prime Minister went on to tell the Assembly that:

'We are making sure that there are no more civil masters in this country as under the old colonial régime, but *civil servants*, as in other countries, dictating no policy but faithfully carrying out the policy decided by the Cabinet. Any advice tendered by those in the civil service has been duly considered: the good has been taken and the bad rejected.

'We have taken hold of self-government in the Executive Council and are keeping it safe for the nation. Relations with the *ex-officio* Ministers have been cordial. As we representative Ministers are in a majority in the

Executive Council, we have directed policy, not the *ex-officio* Ministers. And here I am proud to report that never has there been any suggestion of the use of the reserved powers or even of the veto. Any talk, therefore, of African Ministers being dictated to by *ex-officio* Ministers and civil servants is an illusion that must be dispelled.'

This public statement of the Prime Minister was really a declaration of a situation which should have been obvious to the so-called opposition leaders, were they practised politicians and not merely ivory tower theorists, namely, that from the day the C.P.P. won the general election in February 1951, the Coussey Constitution was in effect as outmoded as the Burns Constitution of 1946. The 'checks and balances' for which the framers of the constitution provided were made void by the fact of the overwhelming support which Dr Nkrumah was able to command inside and outside the Government. This fact is something the intellectuals like Dr Danquah and chiefs like Sir Tsibu Darku are incapable of recognizing. To see the common people as a deciding political force is something quite alien to their understanding. 'Who are the people?' Sir Tsibu Darku had asked Mr Kwesi Plange at the last session of the 'outmoded' legislature, when he was pressing for the lowering of the voting age. If his subsequent destoolment as chief and exclusion from politics by his subjects has not taught him 'who are the people?' Sir Tsibu will never learn.

That the political initiative was Dr Nkrumah's from the moment the general election was over is implicit in the fact that the Governor had him released from prison and immediately consulted with him about the formation of a Government. Let us remember that the constitution laid down that the Governor should select eight members from any part of the Legislative Assembly to serve as Ministers, whose names were then to be submitted to the Assembly for approval. Supposing he had followed

precisely the letter of the constitution and picked out eight individuals, including Dr Danquah and Sir Tsibu Darku, on the ground that they had experience of government and would provide a certain continuity. With its majority in the chamber, the C.P.P. would have voted against the list on the principle that, being the majority party, it was their democratic right, in accordance with British parliamentary procedure, to appoint their leader of the Assembly, who would select his own Ministers in consultation with the Governor. This situation would at once have created a constitutional crisis. The Governor would have been obliged, too late, to recognize Dr Nkrumah's national leadership and, in the event, the C.P.P. leader might easily have raised his constitutional demands in return for his continued co-operation.

The Danquahs, the Ollennus, the Busias, and the rest of the middle-class intelligentsia of the opposition, in the manner of arm-chair politicians used merely to discussing questions in an academic manner without ability to recognize the true social forces at work, were incapable of understanding the political facts of the actual situation. British imperial proconsuls, however, are obliged to be realists and their experience has taught them when is the moment to adjust their policies in the face of stronger forces. Thus, it was not out of love for Dr Nkrumah's captivating smile, but in order to avoid a constitutional crisis that Sir Charles Arden-Clarke consulted Dr Nkrumah in drawing up his list of Ministers, which he then submitted to the Assembly for approval. The fact of this consultation with the C.P.P. leader gave him the *de facto* status of Prime Minister. Official recognition only made it *de jure*.

That is why, a year after the general election, the Prime Minister, in his review of events, was able to assert:

'I consider that the ideas which guided our party to accept office were sound. For one thing we have proved

to Britain and to the world for that matter that we can govern ourselves—as is evidenced by the granting of important changes in the constitution after only a year of operation. It is also a direct recognition that we Gold Coast people can govern ourselves. It is further significant that both the Labour Party through its Secretary of State, Mr Griffiths, and the Conservative Party through Mr Oliver Lyttelton, the present Secretary of State, have willingly concurred in granting this further constitutional advance.¹

At this stage it becomes important to examine the tactics employed by the C.P.P. in accelerating the political advancement of the Gold Coast from nineteenth-century Crown Colony government towards full self-government. These embodied both the Ghandian tactics of non-violent non-co-operative Positive Action and direct round table negotiations. Few dependent territories have achieved so much in so short a time. The Gold Coast bloodless revolution makes interesting comparison, therefore, with the rate of constitutional advance made by the new Asian member states of the Commonwealth—India, Pakistan and Ceylon—towards complete independence.

HISTORY OF INDIAN NATIONALISM

The Indian Congress Party is the classical example of the development of a national liberation movement in a former dependent country of the Empire. Yet it took Congress considerably more than four years to build up such a popular mass organization as the Gold Coast Convention People's Party, with its tentacles on every stratum of the population. Just as the C.P.P. was preceded by reformist organizations like the West African National Congress and finally the United Gold Coast Convention, representing the blossoming middle class and going beyond the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society,

¹ Address to the Legislative Assembly, March 12, 1952.

which depended predominantly upon the support of the tribal chiefs, the Indian Congress was preceded by moderate organizations like the British Indian Association and the Indian Association, which sought privileges exclusively for the feudal landlords, merchants and money-lending classes. This has been the traditional pattern of the early stages of all colonial nationalism.

The Indian Congress Party was formed in 1885 by a few Westernized upper-class Indians and a retired English Liberal member of the Indian Civil Service, Mr Allan Octavino Hume, a former Home Secretary and one of the leading brains behind Congress in the early days. At that time, Congress was nothing more than a reformist organization 'to promote a better understanding between natives and whites'. From time to time it let off steam by petitioning the Viceroy for minor economic and social reforms and 'representative institutions of modified character for the educated community, who by reason of their culture and enlightenment, their assimilation of English ideas, and their familiarity with English methods of government, might be presumed to be qualified for such a boon'.

The most vocal among its supporters were loquacious lawyers, the first generation of Western educated Indians. For many years the Congress provided the only safety valve for the moderate educated Indians who, in the words of one of their presidents, Mr Romash Chandra Dutt, merely 'desire to see some Indian members in the Secretary of State's Council and in the Viceroy's Executive Council, representing Indian agriculture and industries'.¹

Spurned by diehard imperialists like Lord Curzon, a more radical movement under the leadership of a brilliant journalist named Bal Gangadkar Tilak, emerged

¹ *The Economic History of India* by R. C. Dutt, vol. 1: 'India under Early British Rule', p. xviii.

in Bengal as a protest against the partition of that province during the Governor-Generalship of Lord Curzon in the period 1898 to 1905. These extremists, drawn from the students, the lower middle-class clerks and *déclassé* urbanized intellectuals, were the first to resort to revolutionary action in support of their demand for some form of home rule. Indeed, the early Congress leaders had no thought of challenging British domination. 'The educated classes', declared the President of the Congress in 1898, 'are the friends and not the foes of England—her natural and necessary allies in the great work that lies before her.' Despite its sycophantic attitude, Congress became the object of suspicion and even of the hostility of the powers-that-be. So much so, that Lord Curzon expressed the desire to be rid of it. In a dispatch to the Secretary of State for India in 1900, the Viceroy wrote that 'the Congress is tottering to its fall and one of my great ambitions while in India is to assist it to a peaceful demise'.

Weakened by internal ideological conflicts, the Congress did not die but split into 'moderates' and 'extremists'. The former, under Gopal Krishna Gokhale, advocated a gradualist policy of political reforms along constitutional lines, while the latter, under Tilak, broke away from the Congress, dominated by the 'moderates'. The 'extremists' resorted to terroristic activities in Bengal. They were ruthlessly hunted down by the British military and police authorities assisted by their native lackeys. In 1908, Tilak was sentenced to six years' imprisonment and many of his youthful supporters were deported to an island in the Bay of Bengal. Their sacrifices, however, were not in vain, for the following year the government introduced the Minto-Morley constitutional reforms, which were the first step to associate Indians with the government.

But it was not until the First World War that the nationalist movement in India gathered fresh momentum

and Congress became a dynamic nationwide organization. Made nervous, the Government imposed repressive measures which culminated in the massacre of 379 Indians and the wounding of 1,200 at Amritsar on April 13, 1919. This set the country ablaze and Mahatma Gandhi then emerged as the outstanding leader of Indian nationalism. It was due to Gandhi's policy of non-violent non-co-operation, first applied in September, 1920, that the Congress became a real people's movement reaching into the villages and committed to 'the attainment of *Swaraj* (self rule) by peaceful and legitimate means'.

CONSTITUTIONAL EVOLUTION IN INDIA

Just as Dr Nkrumah's non-violent non-co-operative campaign in the form of Positive Action in 1950 accelerated political development in the Gold Coast, so Gandhi's campaigns of non-violent non-co-operation of 1920-30 were responsible for extracting constitutional concessions from British imperialism. Following the Simon Commission's Report and the Round Table Conferences in London, the Indian nationalists were granted a larger measure of representation and responsibility in the provincial governments under the Hoare-Linlithgow Constitution of 1935.

But the Indians, like the Africans after the Coussey reforms of 1950, still had not reached their desired goal of complete self-government or independence. This one can see by examining briefly the main features of the Government of India Act 1935, which gave fundamentally the same sort of responsible internal self-government as the present Gold Coast constitution.

The 1935 Indian constitution replaced the old Montagu-Chelmsford Constitution of 1919. Called the Hoare-Linlithgow Constitution after Sir Samuel Hoare (now Lord Templewood), then Secretary of State for India, and Lord Linlithgow, then Viceroy, it provided

for the development of provincial autonomy by giving the provincial legislatures control of a wider range of subjects than they enjoyed under the Montagu-Chelmsford Constitution.

At that time, India was divided into seventeen provinces—eleven known as Governors' provinces, each under a Governor, and the remainder known as Chief Commissioners' provinces, each under a Chief Commissioner. In each of the Governors' provinces was a Legislative Council, partly elected and partly nominated. The executive power in the province was vested in the Governor, who acted on the advice of a Council of Ministers appointed from and answerable to the Provincial Legislature.

In the first election in 1937, the National Congress captured eight of the eleven Governors' provinces and, like the C.P.P., assumed office under the 'bogus and fraudulent' Hoare-Linlithgow Constitution.

In addition to 'provincial autonomy', the 1935 constitution provided for the establishment of an *All India Federation*. This was a clever device to link up or federate the British administered provinces and the Indian Princes States under one constitutional roof. Under the proposed scheme, it was intended that the executive power of the federation, including the supreme military power, should be vested in the Viceroy. He was to act on the advice of a Council of Ministers, answerable to the Federal Legislature, in the exercise of all powers other than those relating to defence, external affairs and religious matters. Like the Viceroy, the Provincial Governors had powers of veto and certification.

The Congress leaders refused to fall into this trap. They objected in particular to the Viceroy's control of foreign affairs and defence and as the Princes were also afraid of losing some of their autocratic powers, they too decided not to support the federal scheme. Consequently, the Central Federal Government as originally envisaged

under the 1935 constitution was never implemented. The Central Government in Delhi continued to operate under the 1919 Montagu-Chelmsford Constitution. Thus, until 1947, India was governed under a half-and-half constitution—'semi-self-government' in the provinces and 'super-Crown Colony Government' at the centre.

The Central Government consisted of two chambers—the Council of State with fifty-eight members, of whom thirty-two were Indians elected on a limited franchise; and the Legislative Assembly with 141 members, of whom 102 were elected on the basis of property and a literacy test. The Executive Council consisted of eleven Indians and four British officials, enlarged during the war years. As in the Gold Coast, the British members held the key portfolios of war, finance, home affairs and war transport. The Legislature could initiate legislation, but the Executive authority remained vested in the Governor-General-in-Council, and he had power to veto legislation or to certify as passed legislation rejected by the Legislature.

Their demand for a National Government having been rejected, the Congress leaders refused to co-operate with the British Government throughout the war years and government was carried on by dictatorial measures. Moderate pro-British Indians continued to serve on the Central Legislature. Repeated efforts were made to resolve the political deadlock, but the nationalists refused to compromise unless the British agreed to grant India complete independence immediately. This the Viceroy refused to do. However, in August 1940, Lord Linlithgow announced that after the war Britain would grant India Dominion status. In March 1942, Mr Churchill sent Sir Stafford Cripps with proposals to try and get Nehru and Gandhi to call off their non-co-operation policy for the duration of the war. The three main points of the Cripps Mission were:

1. Immediately after the cessation of hostilities steps would be taken to set up in India an elected body charged with the task of framing a new constitution for India.

2. Provision would be made for the Indian States to participate in the constitution-making body.

3. The British Government undertook to accept and implement forthwith the constitution so framed, subject to the right of a province of British India to refrain from joining under the new constitution if it so desired, and the signing of a treaty covering protection of racial and religious minorities.

After the failure of the Cripps Mission, Congress adopted its historic 'Quit India' resolution on August 8, 1942. On the following day and onwards, the British Government arrested the national leaders and thousands of Congressmen. A reign of terror was let loose throughout the country. The end of the war still found India in chains. It was not until 1947 that discussions between Lord Mountbatten, who succeeded Lord Wavell as Viceroy, and a group of leading Indian politicians resulted in agreement on a plan for the transfer of power to Indian hands. On June 3, 1947, Mr Attlee, Prime Minister of the Labour Government, announced in the House of Commons that it was the intention of his Government 'to introduce legislation during the current session for the transfer of power this year'. Accordingly, the Indian Independence Act was passed with effect from August 15, 1947, eighteen years after the Congress Party, under Jawaharlal Nehru's Presidency, had proclaimed complete independence as its goal.

The Act provided for the creation of two independent States—India and Pakistan. It also invested the Constituent Assembly of each new State with statutory and plenary powers. It further provided for the adaptation of the Government of India Act 1935 as a provisional constitution for each of the new Dominions, until the new States drafted their own separate constitutions.

Thus, sixty-two years after the founding of the Indian National Congress and twenty-seven years after Gandhi launched his first civil disobedience campaign, India reached independent status. The Gold Coast has covered the distance in only a fraction of the time from Dr Nkrumah's Positive Action campaign of 1950, for the Gold Coast Africans have more power in their Central Government than the Indians had in New Delhi before the enactment of the Independence Act of 1947.

The Moslems, who had been recognized by the British imperialists as a distinct community from the Hindus and given special representation in the Legislative Councils set up under the Minto-Morley reforms of 1907, were also granted independence at the same time with India under the status of the Dominion of Pakistan. Their aspirations for distinct and separate nationhood—encouraged by the British to divide India—were championed by the Moslem League, founded in 1906 by conservative Moslem landlords headed by the millionaire religious leader, the Aga Khan. After the London Round Table Conference of 1931, the League fell under the domination of a wealthy and able lawyer, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, who was at one time a leading member of Congress. Even after resigning from Congress, Mr Jinnah co-operated with that body against the 1935 federal scheme. But following Congress's overwhelming victory in the provincial elections of 1937, Mr Jinnah, who by that time was virtually the dictator of the Moslem League, broke the alliance with Congress and raised the cry 'Islam is in danger' from the Hindus. Under this communalist battle-cry, Mr Jinnah demanded a separate dominion for Moslems under the title of Pakistan, to which the British acceded in 1947, when they were forced to quit the Indian sub-continent, in order to avoid precipitating a nation-wide revolt which might have united Hindus and Moslems, and assured the unity of India under one sovereignty.

CONSTITUTIONAL EVOLUTION IN CEYLON

Let us now turn our attention to Ceylon, the youngest of the Dominions.

Ceylon, known popularly as the 'Pearl of the Indian Ocean', is a unique example of a dependent territory which has emerged from colonial status to full self-government by purely constitutional means. It became a Crown Colony in 1802 and was ruled by conventional Crown Colony methods for over a hundred years. The political agitation for constitutional reform was started by the Ceylon National Association just a few years before the First World War. In 1917, the Ceylon Reform League was established and two years later another organization, the Ceylon National Congress, appeared on the political scene and joined in the agitation for a majority of unofficial members in the Legislative Council.

These nationalist organizations represented the wealthy middle-class Singhalese rubber planters and coco-nut growers, big traders and members of the professions, mostly lawyers. In 1920 the British Government introduced a reformed constitution which provided for a Legislative Council of fourteen officials and twenty-three unofficial members, of whom eleven were elected on a territorial basis, eight represented the different racial communities, and the others special vested interests. Three years later the 1920 constitution underwent certain modifications; the officials were reduced from fourteen to twelve and the elected members increased from twenty-three to thirty-seven. Of these, twenty-three represented territorial constituencies and eleven the racial communities. The Governor continued to nominate three unofficial members to represent special British interests.

This state of things only led to communal conflicts and official deadlocks between the Legislature with a popularly elected majority but without power and a

nominated Executive with all the power. To resolve the unworkable government, the Colonial Office sent out a Commission under Lord Donoughmore in 1927.

THE DONOUGHMORE CONSTITUTION

By the time the Donoughmore Commission arrived, the Singhalese middle-class politicians had united their forces and built up a popular mass movement under the leadership of the Ceylon National Congress, headed by Sir Baron Jayatilaka and later Mr Dom Stephen Senanyake, who subsequently became the first Prime Minister. The Donoughmore Commission, like the Watson Commission which visited the Gold Coast in 1948, considered the 1923 Ceylon Constitution 'out-moded' and recommended sweeping reforms. Under the new changes, the Legislative Council was done away with and in its place was set up a State Council in 1931 which had both legislative and executive functions. The State Council was modelled on the London County Council and consisted of three senior British officials, the trinity of the old imperial hierarchy—Chief Secretary, Treasurer and Attorney-General—holding the usual key portfolios of defence and external affairs, finance and justice; fifty members elected by universal suffrage from an overwhelmingly illiterate population, and about eight members nominated by the Governor to represent special interests. Executive authority was vested in a Board of Ministers numbering ten, three of whom were the British ex-officials and seven Singhalese. Each Minister was given a group of departments.

After trying this constitution for a few years, the nationalists demanded the removal of the Governor's reserved powers and the granting of greater power to the State Council over finance. Their demands were embodied in a series of resolutions endorsed by the State Council, which formed the basis of discussions between the Board of Ministers headed by Sir Baron Jayatilaka

and the Governor. These negotiations dragged out from 1933 to 1936 without any definite action.

The outbreak of war interrupted further discussions, but in 1941 the British Government promised to review constitutional changes after the war. This proved unsatisfactory, and agitation continued along strictly constitutional lines. Things reached a crisis in 1942, when the Churchill Government refused to allow Sir Stafford Cripps, then on his political mission to India, to visit Ceylon. To placate Singhalese nationalist feelings, the British Government issued a detailed declaration in May 1943 showing the extent to which they were prepared to meet Ceylon's political aspirations at the end of hostilities. This also fell short of what the people wanted, so the Singhalese Ministers headed by Mr D. S. Senanyake, who became Leader of the Council in 1942, drafted their own constitution, which they presented to the Secretary of State for Colonies in February 1944, demanding its immediate consideration. Instead, the British Government, in order to prolong negotiations, decided to consult all the racial minorities and vested interests. On December 22, 1944, a Commission headed by Lord Soulbury arrived in Ceylon for this purpose. The Singhalese Ministers and the Ceylon National Congress members in the State Council refused to co-operate and officially boycotted the Soulbury Commission. They, however, submitted a memorandum in addition to their draft constitution.

THE SOULBURY CONSTITUTION

The Commission issued its report in October 1945. As it was based substantially on the Ministers' draft of 1944, it was accepted by the majority of the State Council in November of the same year. With the adoption of the Soulbury recommendations, the Singhalese nationalists changed from their non-co-operation tactics to participation in contesting the general election, under the new constitution, which provided for a Parliament consisting

of two chambers—a House of Representatives and a Senate—with a Cabinet responsible to the House of Representatives. While it gave Ceylon semi-self-government like the Gold Coast under the Coussey Constitution, it did not constitute Dominion status or independence, for the Governor still retained the right of veto and powers of certification on certain matters. External affairs, like defence, also remained in his hands. Ceylon had reached the threshold of independence, but had not yet crossed into the promised land. A little more pushing had to be done yet. Dominion status was achieved within two years after the acceptance of the Soulbury Constitution.

The first general election under the Soulbury Constitution was held in October 1947. The election was fought on party lines, like that in the Gold Coast in 1951. But the outcome, unlike that in the Gold Coast, resulted in a sweeping victory for the right-wing United National Party, which was a merger of the Ceylon National Congress with the Moslem Party, the Buddhist Party and representatives of the Singhalese bourgeoisie, which is more developed and better organized than the same class in the Gold Coast. The United National Party secured forty-seven of the ninety-five seats in the House of Representatives, while the left-wing parties—Communists, Socialists and Labourites—divided between them a total of eighteen. They fared a little worse than the Independents, of whom only twenty-two were elected out of 196 candidates. Two communal organizations—the Ceylon Indian Congress and the Ceylon Tamil Congress—got six and seven seats respectively.

Mr D. Stephen Senanyake, leader of the United National Party, became the first Prime Minister. Under pressure of the agitation carried on by the country's leaders, the Governor opened negotiations for Dominion status shortly after the formation of the Cabinet. This became a fact with the signing of the agreements on November 11, 1947. Soon after, the Ceylon

Independence Act 1947 became law, and Ceylon entered the Commonwealth as an equal and independent member on February 4, 1948.¹

Such was the evolution of Ceylon from a Crown Colony to full sovereignty within the Commonwealth of Nations. Apart from communal disturbances in 1915, the Ceylon national struggle was a bloodless one, more on the Gold Coast pattern than that of India.

In the Gold Coast, as in Ceylon, during the last years of the agitation for Dominion status, the political situation is fluid. In June 1952, in the midst of the elections for local government councils, the Secretary of State for Colonies, Mr Oliver Lyttelton, visited the Gold Coast. Everywhere he went, from Accra in the south to Kumasi in the north, he was greeted by monster nationalist demonstrations bearing banners and placards carrying slogans, 'We demand Self-Government Now' and 'Give us Freedom or give us Death'.

Even the chiefs—the erstwhile supporters of British imperialism—identified themselves with the agitation. In an address of welcome to the Secretary of State, the Asantehene, speaking on behalf of the chiefs of Ashanti, told Mr Lyttelton that the present constitution fell short of the aspirations of the people and that the chiefs supported the demands of the Prime Minister for further constitutional advance, in the light of the successful operation of the party system. Encouraged by the spontaneous united front of chiefs and people, Dr Nkrumah took the initiative of opening discussions with Mr Lyttelton on constitutional reforms. Before his departure from

¹ The first general election since independence took place in May 1952, following the death of Mr Stephen Senanyake. The United National Party, led by Mr Dudley Senanyake, who succeeded his father, was returned with fifty-four seats; the other forty seats were shared between nine other parties and independents, as follows: the Lanka Freedom Party 9; Lanka Sama Samaj Party 9; Tamil Congress 4; Stalinist Communist Party 3; Federalist Party 2; Sama Samaj Communist 1; Labour 1; People's Republican Party 1; and Independents 10.

the Colony, the Secretary of State announced that when the new constitutional proposals were formulated by the Prime Minister and his Cabinet colleagues, after consultation with the chiefs and representatives of the people, they would be examined and discussed between the United Kingdom and the Gold Coast Government. Four months after this declaration, on October 16, 1952, the Prime Minister put before the Legislative Assembly the questions covering the main features of the Coussey Constitution 'which it may be deemed expedient to review at this stage'.

In doing so, Dr Nkrumah considered that 'the chiefs and people should be consulted on all of them before proposals are formulated for discussion with the United Kingdom Government'.

FINAL STAGE TO DOMINION STATUS

Reviewing possible changes in the constitution, the Prime Minister said it should be considered whether the three *ex-officio* Ministers should be retained or replaced by representative Ministers. If the *ex-officio* Minister of Finance were replaced by a representative Minister the Government would consider it necessary to ensure that expert financial advice continued to be available, and this could best be achieved by appointing a financial and economic adviser to the Government.

The *ex-officio* Minister of Justice is also Attorney-General and, in the latter capacity, the Government's legal adviser. If there ceased to be an *ex-officio* Minister of Justice the Attorney-General's functions would continue to be discharged by the Attorney-General, who would remain the legal adviser to the Government. If the Minister of Defence and External Affairs were replaced, one implication would be that the Gold Coast is prepared to take over immediately full responsibility for its own defence, which is now mainly borne by Commonwealth armed forces. The Gold Coast possesses a very

small military force and contributes only a proportion of its cost.¹

At present the appointment of the eight representative Ministers depends on a resolution of the Assembly, the name of the Prime Minister being proposed by the Governor, and the others by the Governor after consultation with the Prime Minister. Dr Nkrumah said it would be more in accordance with British constitutional practice if he were free to select his representative colleagues without a resolution of the Assembly, the Governor having no power to reject his choice. Similarly, the appointment of the Prime Minister could be brought into closer analogy with British practice if, instead of depending on a resolution of the Assembly, it depended on his willingness and ability to form a majority Government at the Governor's invitation.

If this were done the Prime Minister would be the authority for declaring whether any Minister should be removed from office, and would have similar powers regarding the appointment and removal of ministerial secretaries.

Regarding the composition of the Legislature, the Prime Minister said it was for the chiefs and the people to consider whether the Assembly affords the best representation of the country which can be devised, and whether a second House should be established.

¹ The question of defence in the modern world should no longer be used to deny small nations the right of self-determination. For what nation can defend itself alone? Not even America and Soviet Russia, the two greatest world powers. Anyway, who is the enemy against whom the Gold Coast must prepare? If it is Soviet Russia and Red China, they are both very far away and before occupying the Gold Coast will have to over-run many other countries before reaching West Africa. If they are strong enough to reach Accra, then no amount of money spent by the Gold Coast will guarantee its security. Like all small states, including Britain itself, the Gold Coast will perforce have to place faith in the collective security of the United Nations and devote its resources to raising the standard of living of its people.

Dealing with the provisions of the Coussey Constitution relating to public service, the Prime Minister said it was for the chiefs and the people to consider whether any alteration was necessary, but certain points had to be borne in mind. The public service is an instrument of Government policy without which that policy cannot be carried out.

'It is not a political body, although it has inevitably become a subject of great political interest because political advance has outstripped the advance of Africanization. It should be remembered that the provisions of the constitution relating to the Civil Service were designed to perpetuate the best British tradition that the Civil Service should be kept completely free from political influence.'

In taking this step of putting it to the chiefs and people to make their proposals regarding suggested amendments to the constitution, Dr Nkrumah followed a more democratic procedure than that adopted by Mr Stephen Senanyake in 1944, when he and the other Singhalese Ministers alone prepared the draft Dominion constitution. He did so because 'it would in this Government's opinion be wrong for preliminary discussion to be influenced by a declaration of Government policy in respect of each of these questions.' He concluded by saying:

'We are now, in response to the invitation from the Secretary of State, given at our request, embarking on an enterprise which imposes very heavy responsibility on all who participate. The world, which is both critical and sympathetic, will watch with the closest attention how we deal with the problem. All I ask of chiefs and people is that they should place at the disposal of the Government the best advice they can give.'

The statement of the Prime Minister was welcomed by the Assembly, which endorsed his *modus operandi*. He

said it would be widely circulated and the traditional authorities and all political parties were to regard it as an invitation to submit their views by the end of March 1953. After consideration of these views, the Government will embody their own suggestions in a White Paper for debate at the June 1953 session of the Assembly. However, consistent with their policy of being 'against the Government', some disgruntled chiefs and opposition leaders who are afraid that independence will be achieved without their names being associated with it, have opposed Dr Nkrumah's form of referendum. They want the Governor to set up another Constitutional Committee, upon which they hope to serve. The last committee cost the country £40,000! Some of those who made this preposterous suggestion were rejected at the polls by the people in 1951, but they hope to stage a comeback if independence can be postponed for a few more years. They place their personal ambitions before their country's interests.

The aim of the Prime Minister's proposals is obviously to bring the constitution into line with the realities of the existing situation and enable the people to realize their political aspirations as quickly as possible. The changes sought should enable the Gold Coast to make smooth and quick transition from responsible government to full self-government as a Dominion within the Commonwealth. Any further delay at this stage may give rise to a serious political crisis when the country has already overcome most of its acute birth pains. Self-government has to come. There can be no turning back. It would be better to come now rather than later, while relations between the Africans and the British are more cordial than in any other part of the African continent.

When the Coussey Constitution was drafted, its framers did not envisage it functioning within a party system. The emergence of the C.P.P. with a clear majority, able to control the Assembly and Executive from within, and

with overwhelming national support pressing it from outside, has imposed many changes in the actual working of the original intentions of the constitution. As a result certain anomalies have developed which need to be eliminated by statutory regulation if a constitutional crisis is to be avoided.

For instance, it is obvious that the three *ex-officio* members of the Cabinet must relinquish their portfolios to African representative Ministers. Had the C.P.P. not been returned to power at the general election, the Cabinet would have been composed, as provided in the constitution, of eight African Ministers functioning as eight individuals and not, as is the case under C.P.P. dominance, as a *bloc* in a coalition government. In that situation the three *ex-officio* members would themselves have acted as an imperialist *bloc* to influence the eight individual African Ministers. In the actual situation, the C.P.P. constitute the dominant faction and make the *ex-officios* a minority serving no practical purpose as far as the determination of policy is concerned. Their continued presence in the Cabinet can only serve as a reminder that Gold Coast is not yet self-governing. Their withdrawal will permit the Cabinet to function on the British principle of collective responsibility, by enabling the Prime Minister to become fully responsible for the selection of his Ministers and the assignment of portfolios, without prior reference to the Assembly or the Governor.

Then there is the Legislature, which needs to be made fully democratic. This can only be done by making it an entirely elected chamber and providing a separate one for the chiefs and Elder Statesmen, in the form of a Senate. Moreover, it is certainly time for the representatives of 'special interests', which means alien commercial, mercantile, mining and other interests, to leave the people's parliament. There is no valid reason why they should have even two votes or occupy any seats in a

democratic Assembly. The interests for which they largely speak have their caucuses in the cities of London and Liverpool, where for some time past they have been using their pressure to try and stop the advance of Gold Coast towards complete self-government. If these 'special interests' feel that they should have representation in the Assembly, then let them get it the democratic way by forming their own imperial party and putting up capitalist candidates for election.

The greatest and most important anomaly is the control and guidance of the civil service by European permanent secretaries. The rapid Africanization of the civil service is the key to African administration. At present the rate of Africanization is painfully slow, and it must be accelerated even if it means temporary dilution of the service. The Cabinet must assume direct responsibility for the speeding up of Africanization. It cannot be left in the hands of the Public Service Commission, for it is not a simple administrative question, as in the United Kingdom. In a colonial country struggling for freedom, it is vitally important who holds the directing positions in its civil service. It is part and parcel of the national struggle.

To leave things as they are, with policy making in the hands of African Ministers while the execution of their policies in terms of administration is retained by expatriates, many of whom may not be in sympathy with the social and political aims of the African Ministers who have no control over them under the present arrangement, is certainly an anomaly. It seems that the only possible solution is to upgrade Africans who, even if ideologically hostile to the particular party in power, are, after all, natives of the land and not just birds of passage with no national or social roots in the community they serve. Where there are no Africans qualified to take over, Europeans or other non-Gold Coast citizens could be employed on contract in an advisory capacity until such time as local people are qualified for the posts.

Without some scheme of this kind, Africanization will continue to be a major cause of discontent. But once a satisfactory course of procedure has been established, the Government can well afford to allow the Public Service Commission to perform its functions of appointment, promotion and disciplining of members of what would then be an integrated Gold Coast civil service, subject to the necessary constitutional safeguards.

Another anomaly which the outside observer would consider trivial, but which some Gold Coast Africans may find an affront and galling to their national pride, is the question of the Governor's deputy. Since Dr Nkrumah has been elevated to the office of Prime Minister, he has taken precedence over all other Ministers, including the European Minister for Defence and External Affairs, and is second only to the Governor. Yet when the Governor is away, or for some other reason has to appoint someone to act for him, it is the Minister for Defence and External Affairs who deputizes, this being laid down in the letters patent. This means that the Prime Minister, who is first in precedence after the Governor, becomes second to the Minister while he acts temporarily as the officer administering the Government.

Why should this be? the people of the Gold Coast ask, failing to understand that the Minister for Defence and External Affairs acting for the Governor is the temporary representative of the Crown, and in that capacity takes precedence. This is a point which can be settled to meet the demands of national pride along with the rectification of the more vital anomalies which, if maintained much longer, will endanger the amicable relations which have obtained between the African representative Ministers and the Governor since 1951.

Similar complexities faced Ceylon at a similar stage of constitutional development. There the difficulties were intensified by the committee system of government provided by the Donoughmore Constitution. Each Minister

was at the head of a committee and it had reached a stage where there was a complete lack of co-ordination between the committees, each functioning almost autonomously. The Donoughmore Constitution finally broke down, and the Ministers drafted new proposals, as we have already indicated, which formed the base of the Soulbury Constitution. At the time the British tried to use the minorities, of which there are several—the Ceylon Tamils, the Indian Tamils, the Burghers, the Moslems, the Moors, and the Europeans, etc.—as a means of delaying constitutional change, on the grounds that these minorities needed protection against the Singhalese. It is at this stage of constitutional development, when a colony is at the threshold of Dominion status, that the British suddenly find minorities who need their solicitous protection. They are now ‘protecting’ the southern Sudanese from the northerners. But this did not help them in Ceylon. And it is something they cannot fall back on in the Gold Coast, where the population is racially homogeneous and the overwhelming majority of the people are behind the demand for ‘immediate self-government’.

Indeed, the popular forces which are pressing Dr Nkrumah from outside the Government will, we are sure, be effective in convincing the Governor, and through him the Imperial Government, that full self-government cannot be denied the Gold Coast much longer without provoking a national crisis. Nationalism can be either a constructive or a destructive force. Everything depends on how it is harnessed. For instance, even before the African Cabinet Ministers have issued a White Paper stating the Government’s views, the National Executive Committee of the C.P.P. endorsed the demand for ‘immediate self-government’. Announcing this at a delegates conference at Kumasi on December 28, 1952, Dr Nkrumah, speaking as party leader stated that the Conference

'Recommended that the Government of the Gold Coast makes representations to the Queen-in-Council through the Secretary of State for Colonies that the chiefs and people of the Gold Coast demand immediate Self Government, and that an Act of Independence be simultaneously passed by the United Kingdom Parliament and the Gold Coast Legislative Assembly declaring the Gold Coast to be under the new name of *Ghana*, a sovereign and independent state with Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II as head of State.'

XII

PATTERN OF GOLD COAST ECONOMY

THE GOLD COAST is not only the most politically advanced territory in tropical Africa, it is also one of the richest in natural resources. Its prosperity, however, rests upon a precarious foundation, since the Colony's economy depends to too large an extent upon a single export crop, cocoa, the price of which is subject to the fluctuations of the world market. The creation of a more carefully balanced economy to sustain the country's expanding social services and raise the standard of living of the people is the biggest and most urgent task facing the present Government.

In this respect, however, the Gold Coast is not peculiar. Its one-sided economic development is typical of all British dependent territories. 'Although British colonial policy is well defined as to its political aim, it is less specific regarding the economic development of the African dependencies.'¹

Under colonial rule these territories have been the victims of *laissez-faire* private enterprise which has been subjected to

'only a few official checks against excesses in their exploitation of the natives. . . . If Great Britain can be said to have a distinct colonial economic policy, it has been the same as that of other colonial powers, namely, the encouragement of exports from the colonies, and in

¹ *Colonial Policies in Africa* by H. A. Wieschloff, University of Pennsylvania Press, pp. 78-80.

return the selling to them of manufactured goods. This policy has been unplanned and uncontrolled and therefore has not always worked to the best interest of the natives.¹

A broad review of Gold Coast economy since the latter part of the nineteenth century will confirm this view.

Until the abolition of the slave trade, the tribes carried on a subsistence economy, supplemented by the export of 'black ivory', which was a monopoly of the chiefs, who sold prisoners captured in tribal wars as slaves to the European companies stationed along the coast. These chiefs were the first middlemen traders in the country. The basis of the slave trade was barter. Money as a medium of exchange was only introduced later. The Negroes were exchanged for cloth, beads, firearms, gunpowder, knives, iron pots and other cooking utensils, rum and gin. After the slave trade was prohibited in 1807, the country faced a slump, as human beings had been the only export commodity for several centuries. To set the wheels of commerce going again and thereby enable the Africans to pay for the imported goods to which they had then become accustomed, Captain George Maclean, the representative of the British merchants who had assumed responsibility for the administration of the forts and castles abandoned by the slave traders, encouraged the chiefs and coastal tribes to find new export commodities, such as ivory, palm kernels and oil and also gold, which they had been producing for centuries before slave trading had become so profitable. In this way, legitimate trade between the European merchants and African producers was gradually established all along the coast. By the beginning of the twentieth century, when British political power had penetrated into the hinterland of Ashanti and the Northern Territories, the import-export pattern of Gold Coast economy was clearly defined.

It has been said above that any distinct economic

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 79-80.

policy which Britain may have had in her colonies has been the encouragement of export in return for manufactured goods. A corollary of this fundamental policy has been to prevent colonial territories from becoming industrialized and to place all emphasis upon primary production in agriculture and mining.

Agriculture was assigned to the Africans, since at that time the mosquito made it impossible for Europeans to colonize the malarial and yellow-fever ridden forest country and operate large-scale plantations under white supervision on the pattern of those in the Highlands of Kenya and other parts of East and Central Africa. British capitalists and trading companies concentrated upon exploitation of the mineral resources and monopoly of the import and export trade.

In facilitating such agrarian policy as it had, the Government encouraged Africans to concentrate upon cash crops.

‘The development of this cash-crop cultivation has been without sufficient guidance and control. In years when such products as cocoa, peanuts and maize were in demand, the native growers extended and intensified their production, only to discover that a period of prosperity was followed by one of depression. Their goods were either not marketable at all or only marketable at greatly depressed prices, and in addition to these hazards they found that their soil had become either completely or nearly exhausted. Furthermore, those who turned to cash crop cultivation became more and more dependent on imported food products for which prices remained more or less stable.’¹

The history of cocoa production in the Gold Coast bears out these statements. Until 1907, rubber constituted the country’s main cash crop, but in that year cocoa overtook rubber and its production increased by leaps and bounds until it established itself as king on the Gold Coast economic chessboard. Indeed, the story

¹ *Colonial Policies in Africa* by H. A. Wieschloff, University of Pennsylvania Press, p. 80.

of cocoa's rise to pre-eminence in the economic life of the country is a fascinating one. Unlike so many other tropical agricultural industries—rubber, sugar, tea, sisal, coffee—which have been introduced into colonial territories by European enterprise, the cocoa industry of the Gold Coast owes its phenomenal development to the initiative of Africans themselves.

An Akwapim named William Tetteh Quarshie introduced the cocoa bean into the country in 1879. Quarshie worked on a cocoa plantation in the Spanish island of Fernando Po, into which colony the plant had been introduced from its indigenous home, Mexico, by Spanish planters. He brought home a few cocoa pods to show to his family, and planted the dried beans on his farm. The rich clay soil and shady forests surrounding the farm proved ideal and the trees thrived well. Within a few years they began to bear fruit, and neighbouring farmers became interested and bought seeds. Gradually, the farming population between the Accra plains and Nsawam started planting cocoa trees between their food crops. The first shipment abroad was made in 1891 and consisted of 80 lb. of cocoa valued at £4. By the turn of the century there was a growing demand for cocoa from Europe and America. In 1900 the amount exported was 536 tons valued at £27,000, and constituted 3·2 per cent of the export trade.

Ten years later cocoa export rose to a value of £867,000 or 33·2 per cent. In 1920 it reached £10,056,000 or 82·3 per cent of the Colony's export trade. That marked the peak. In the following year the trade fell to as low as £4,764,000, owing to a fall in world prices, and did not revive until 1927, when the export value rose to £11,728,000 or 82·7 per cent of the export figures, the highest on record between the two wars. While production was maintained, prices fell during the thirties and remained at a low level until recent years. The post-war output of 267,401 tons in 1950 was valued at £54,604,292.

Output declined by 14 per cent in 1951, when 229,526 tons fetched £60,309,769, a 10 per cent increase in value. Such is the fantastic recovery which cocoa has made since 1936, when a record crop of 311,151 tons was sold for only £7,659,743.

From the most humble beginnings fifty years ago, cocoa today constitutes 70 per cent of the country's export trade, and is the very life-blood of the Gold Coast. It is also one of the largest dollar earners for the British Commonwealth and Empire, since over 40 per cent of the annual output is sold in the United States and other hard-currency countries.¹ This has provided the Gold Coast with a substantial accumulation of capital reserves for future economic development. It is to be hoped that when the Colony becomes independent, a grateful Government and people will erect one monument to the mosquito, which has saved the land for the Africans, and another to Tetteh Quarshie,² whose foresight and initiative laid the foundations of the most prosperous peasant industry in the colonies.

Ironically enough, until recently, the Gold Coast farmers, thanks to the manipulation of the foreign trading companies, received little substantial benefit from the fruits of their labours, though their cocoa constitutes 92 per cent of the Colony's agricultural export and 70 per cent of its total exports. In East Africa, the landless Africans are exploited largely as wage labourers and squatters on European plantations, while in West Africa they are exploited as primary producers by the European trading companies, who, until the last war, bought and marketed the crops paying the farmers low prices, and,

¹ Gold Coast dollar earnings from cocoa alone amounted to 76 million pounds sterling in 1951, and together with Nigeria totalled 112 million pounds sterling—more than New Zealand, Pakistan and Ceylon.

² In 1952 the Cocoa Marketing Board contributed £25,000 for the erection of a welfare clinic at Mampong Akwapim as a memorial to Tetteh Quarshie.

in return selling them manufactured goods at exorbitant ones. This form of commercial exploitation has had a long history. It goes back to the earliest days of the trade relations between Europeans and Africans, all along the West African coast, reaching its present monopolistic stage only in the first quarter of the present century, when the British pioneer trading firms and African 'merchant princes' were either driven out of business or absorbed by giant concerns like the United Africa Company of London, John Holt and Company of Liverpool, and Paterson Zochonis and Company of Manchester.

Apart from these three big companies, which operate throughout West Africa, there are about a dozen firms registered in the United Kingdom which carry on wholesale and retail trade in the Gold Coast. There are also a number of smaller firms controlled by Indians, Syrians and Lebanese, mostly engaged in retail trade. The African *petit-bourgeoisie* can best be described as 'shoe-string capitalists'—middlemen traders and shopkeepers, whose businesses operate with small capital and are managed as purely family concerns. Besides these middle-class African merchants, a substantial volume of petty trading is carried on by thousands of women street hucksters and market vendors known as 'mammies'. They play an important role in Gold Coast internal trade distribution.

The European companies conduct both import and export business, partly on their own account and partly as local agents for other British companies. Some concentrate on wholesale trade, others confine themselves largely to retail. United Africa Company, which has octopus-like ramifications, meets the African producers and consumers at every level. Commonly known as U.A.C., this monopoly is so hated by the people that they vented their feelings by looting and burning down the company's store at Accra during the disturbances in 1948. This company is the biggest unit in the world-wide Unilever commercial empire. Its

chief spheres of activity are in the Gold Coast and Nigeria, where it originated in 1879. The U.A.C. was formed out of a combination of British firms trading in the Niger river delta of eastern Nigeria. Absorbing more firms in the next few years, the company became successively the National African Company (1882) and the Royal Niger Company (1886). For the next fourteen years the company administered the Niger delta districts under a charter from the British Government.

A competing group known as the African Association had been formed with the object of fixing prices to the Africans and keeping out other firms, but by 1893 the Royal Niger Company had swallowed up its trade in the chartered territory. This eliminated all its European rivals, while African middlemen were squeezed out by means of heavy fees for trade licences and the enforcement of marketing regulations—measures which could be easily carried through owing to the company's control of the administration and a local police force.

In 1900 the Royal Niger Company surrendered its charter and a distribution amounting to 145 per cent was made to the shareholders, partly from the sums received in compensation from the British Government, and partly out of profits. The company then became the Niger Company and continued its prosperous career as a commercial, transport and mining concern, paying dividends of not less than 10 per cent each year, until control was acquired by the Lever combine in 1920 for the sum of £8,500,000.

A new war for monopoly then started between the Unilever Company and the African and Eastern Trade Corporation Ltd. This was the last remaining combine, which had formed in 1919 out of the chief competitors of the Niger Company in Nigeria, Miller Brothers and F. A. Swanzy, a number of smaller firms and the African Association, with a capital of £6,000,000, against the Niger Company's £10,000,000.

On acquiring the Niger Company, Lever Brothers attempted to amalgamate with the African and Eastern Trade Corporation, but did not succeed in doing so until 1929. Up to that period both firms continued to expand at the expense of smaller ones. In April 1929, the newly formed United Africa Company Ltd. acquired the entire trading assets of African and Eastern Corporation and the Niger Company. The U.A.C. now owns all the shares of some forty companies and the controlling interest in over twenty-five other concerns in West Africa. The last to be absorbed, in 1935, was the Swiss African Trading Company, one of the oldest and most popular firms in the Gold Coast. Having acquired since the last war a predominant interest in every commercial enterprise worth controlling, the U.A.C. branched out into public works business. It created a construction company in 1946 in conjunction with the building contractors, Taylor Woodrow (West Africa) Ltd., which it now controls. Shortly after the amalgamation, the U.A.C. became a subsidiary of Unilever and Lever Brothers, which is one of the biggest monopolies in the world, having capital resources of £70,000,000 and an active interest in over 300 companies. The U.A.C. controls most of the West African trade. The total value of merchandise sold by the company in the Gold Coast and Nigeria in 1937 was £9,211,000. This has increased to £31,415,000 in 1947-8. The process of expansion still goes on.

Commenting upon the monopolistic trends discernible even before the U.A.C. octopus came into being, a Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Colonies wrote:

‘British West Africa, in contrast to East, is a country where large firms or combinations of firms have become established. As a result, there is a danger that in some places active competition which is the life blood of

progressive commercial enterprise may be restricted. Rings and monopolies in regard to the purchase of native produce always tend to restrict development, and are features of short-sighted policy.¹

That is precisely what has happened. By controlling the bulk of manufactured goods and imported foodstuffs, the big firms are on the one hand able to charge consumers maximum prices, and on the other, to pay producers of cocoa and palm products minimum prices for their crops. The U.A.C. alone exported more than 40 per cent of West African cocoa. During the depression in the thirties, when the world price for cocoa was at its lowest, the European firms engaged in the buying and marketing of cocoa, except the British Co-operative Wholesale Society, formed a combine popularly known as the 'pool', which fixed a uniform ceiling price to be paid to the producers. They squeezed the farmers to such an extent that the patient and long-suffering Africans had to resort to Positive Action in self-defence. During the harvest season of 1937-8, after a big price reduction had been announced by members of the pool, the farmers declared a boycott. They refused to collect the cocoa beans and make deliveries to the foreign firms. At the same time, they stopped buying European goods. This double non-co-operation had an immediate effect on the Colony's economic and financial structure, based as it is upon the cocoa industry. The minute the cocoa export trade was interrupted, customs revenue fell, and repercussions were felt in Lancashire. Textiles designed and manufactured in the United Kingdom exclusively for export to the Gold Coast dropped from 39 million square yards in 1936 to 14 million square yards within six months after the hold-up started.

Although the Governor, Sir Arnold Hodson, had

¹ *Report on West Africa* by W. G. A. Ormsby-Gore, Cmd. 2744, p. 169.

refused to intervene on behalf of the Africans, who were supposed to be the wards of the British Government, the Colonial Office was subsequently compelled to appoint a three-man Commission of Enquiry, headed by Mr William Nowell.¹ The Commission in its report published in 1938, castigated the U.A.C. and other members of the 'pool', and recommended the abolition of the monopolistic buying scheme. 'We have reached the conclusion that the continuance of the buying agreements introduced in the Gold Coast and Nigeria in 1937 is undesirable . . . and . . . in all the circumstances it is our opinion that the agreements should be finally withdrawn.'²

The Commission made several concrete recommendations to facilitate a better system of marketing cocoa so as to emancipate the producers from the clutches of the firms and the host of African middlemen brokers and money-lenders preying upon the farmers. The war intervened before these recommendations could be implemented, and in 1940 the British Imperial Government, operating through the Ministry of Food, decided to put an embargo upon the free marketing of cocoa imports into Britain. Instead of buying cocoa through the trading companies as such, the Gold Coast and other West African colonial governments were advised to set up a West African Produce Control Board to act as a marketing agency. The farmers sold their cocoa to the local branch of the Board, which in turn sold the cocoa and other primary products to the British Ministries of Food and Supply. In this way the firms were eliminated as independent dealers and shippers, although many of them, especially the much-hated U.A.C., acted as principal local buyers on behalf of the West African Produce Control Board.

¹ The other members of the Commission were: Mr G. S. Thompson, Mr C. A. L. Irving and Mr E. Melville, a Colonial Office official who acted as secretary.

² Report of the Commission of the marketing of West African cocoa, Cmd. 5845.

The Board functioned as a unified West African agency until October 1, 1947, when the Gold Coast Marketing Board was established for the 'purchasing, grading, export and selling of Gold Coast cocoa and the assistance, by all possible means, of the development of the cocoa industry for the benefit and prosperity of the producers'. This was the first time since Tetteh Quarshie planted the first cocoa seed that any Gold Coast government had ever expressed such interest in and solicitude for the farmers, as the most important economic community in the country. At that time the Board consisted of twelve members—the chairman and three other officials; four Africans representing the farmers (appointed by the Governor on the recommendation of the Joint Provincial Council for the Colony and Asanteman Council); two other Africans nominated by the Chieftain Council; and two Europeans representing the Chamber of Commerce and the British cocoa manufacturers with local buying agencies.

The Gold Coast Marketing Board inherited from the West African Produce Board about £14,000,000 as part of the profits which had accumulated during the war years from the bulk purchasing of cocoa. Most of it was earmarked for a Stabilization Fund as a cushion between the farmers and the overseas market in the event of a sudden fall in world prices. The Board was reorganized by the Nkrumah Government in 1951, with an unofficial African majority responsible for policy-making and marketing within the terms laid down by statute.¹

The Stabilization Fund reached the sum of over £53,000,000 sterling in 1952. In that year a Cocoa Purchasing Company was established under African management to assist the Marketing Board in buying the cocoa directly from the farmers, instead of through

¹ It is estimated that over £150 million has been accumulated by the various West African Marketing Boards from the sale of cocoa, palm oil, groundnuts and other produce up to the end of 1952.

middlemen brokers and in grading the beans for export. A separate organization known as the Agricultural Produce Marketing Board has also been set up to deal with the marketing of other export crops, such as copra, palm kernels and coffee. It functions on the same principles as the Cocoa Marketing Board, but is under its own management. These two marketing boards, together with the Cocoa Purchasing Company, represent the highest percentage of Africanization. The interests of the producers have been well safeguarded on the boards through their own nominees instead of through hand-picked lawyer-politicians and urbanized professionals not attached to the farming communities and unacquainted with the problems of the cocoa and other farmers. For example, apart from the amount set aside as an insurance against a slump, the Cocoa Marketing Board has contributed over a million pounds towards the endowment of the Gold Coast University College, cocoa research carried on by the West African Cocoa Research Institute at Tafo, and the rehabilitation of the industry, as well as awarding scholarships to children of cocoa farmers.

The buying monopoly once held by the big trading firms having been smashed, it is now possible to reorganize the harvesting, drying, grading and transporting of the crops to the port on co-operative lines. Already the Co-operative Marketing Association, which is still in its infancy, has marketed cocoa to the value of £4,100,000 in 1951, representing 31,617 tons or an eighth of the total crop. Every facility must be given for the development of the co-operative movement. Herein lies the key to the complete emancipation of both producers and consumers from the stranglehold of foreign capitalists.

It will be more difficult to break the grip of the mining companies unless it is done through the nationalization of all minerals and natural resources, water power, timber, etc. Sir Richard Acland has rightly observed that

'as long as private ownership of natural resources prevailed, one had no right to speak of development in the interests of the natives'.¹

Industrially, Gold Coast is shockingly backward. Secondary industries are non-existent. The country depends upon imports for such simple things as matches, soap, cigarettes, leather, shoes, textiles, paints and distempers, bottles, sugar, edible oil, margarine, cornmeal, cassava flour, coco-nut oil, condensed milk, cement, gin, rum, chocolate—all of which are being manufactured in typical agricultural colonies like the West Indies. The only secondary industries of any kind operating in the Gold Coast in 1951 were a few sawmills worked mostly by foreign concessionaires, producing timber and plywood for export, one or two furniture, mineral water and beer factories, fruit-canning works and weaving of native cloth, mostly in the Northern Territories and parts of Trans-Volta and Ashanti, and a small cocoa butter factory at Takoradi owned by a British concern. Until the Gold Coast manufactures more of the things it consumes, the trading firms will continue to make large profits for the benefit of foreign shareholders.

Because of the dominating influence of cocoa on Gold Coast economy, its price determines the amount of currency in circulation in any given year. During the pre-cocoa season, there is less money in circulation than during the harvesting months of October to January, when additional currency has to be released by the West African Currency Board in London to pay the farmers. The amount of money in circulation increased from £16,250,000 during the pre-harvest season of 1950 to £32,500,000 at the height of the season in December, an increase of £16,250,000. In the following year, there was an increase of £13,000,000 between the pre-season currency circulation of £21,000,000 and £34,000,000 in circulation by the end of 1951.

¹ Hansard, July 13, 1943.

All these increases invariably find their way back to the banks through the trading companies, for there is very little tradition for saving in the Gold Coast, and the farmers spend all their earnings on imported consumer goods and building materials, as they grow most of their own food—plantains, yams, potatoes, cassava and other crops. With large quantities of money chasing limited amounts of imported goods, due either to world shortage of supplies, controls operated by the firms in releasing supplies on to the local market, or limited port and transport facilities, the Gold Coast finds itself under constant inflationary pressures. As a result of high world prices for cocoa in recent years, the Cocoa Marketing Board has paid correspondingly increased prices to the farmers. This has influenced the cost of living by setting into motion inflation, since other sections of the community—fixed salary earners and wage workers—also demand more money to buy some of the imported goods and foodstuffs which the farmers are consuming in larger quantities than formerly, thanks to the millions of extra money in their hands.

If not immediately checked, this dangerous situation can have disastrous consequences for the entire national economy. A ceiling must be put to local cocoa prices in order to reduce currency circulation until such time as larger supplies of consumer goods are available to enable all sections to share them at normal prices. On the other hand, should it be necessary to pay ever higher prices than those prevailing today (1952), the extra amount might be credited to the farmers and invested in shares in a Farmers' Co-operative Building Society, which would undertake to build modern housing for them. This is another way to prevent too much money chasing too few goods, and at the same time provide capital for social betterment. In this connection, it might be necessary to introduce some form of price control upon essential commodities as distinct from luxury goods. The

people must also be educated away from the conservative habit of wanting only certain brands of goods, while equally good brands may be plentiful in stock. Here again, the consumers' co-operatives can be of great aid. Diversity in taste must be encouraged through education in the schools and adult education classes. And last but not least, the people must be encouraged to save through the post office. For this reason we consider village post offices important financial institutions in the economic development of the Gold Coast.

Apart from agriculture, trade and commerce, the mining industry is the only source of regular employment, excluding the Government, which is the biggest employer of labour. Until the latter part of the nineteenth century, gold mining was carried on by the Africans, but today the industry is in the hands of a few foreign syndicates, the largest and most prosperous being the Ashanti Goldfields Company.

The company was one of over 300 British outfits which secured mining and timber concessions after the military power of the Ashantis had been broken in the latter part of the last century. These concessions, says Lord Hailey, amounted to about a third of the total land area of the Gold Coast Colony and about one-eighth of the area of Ashanti.¹ The Ashanti Goldfields Company was registered in London in 1899. Its concessions cover a hundred square miles on a ninety-nine-years' lease. During the first quarter of the century, the company paid dividends totalling 1,142 per cent, an average of 45 per cent each year from 1901 to 1925. By the outbreak of the last war the company's four shilling shares were quoted at eighty shillings, and its paid-up capital had reached £1,250,000. In no year since 1929 has it paid less than 70 per cent dividend. In many years its dividends have reached as high as 90 per cent plus 50 per cent cash bonus. Other El Dorados are the Tarkwa and Abooso Mines Ltd.,

¹ *African Survey* by Lord Hailey, O.U.P., p. 778.

established in 1927 and paying annual dividends of from 25 to 50 per cent. The total profits of nine companies, including the Ashanti Goldfields, the Tarkwa and Abooso Mines, the Marbu and Consolidated Selection Trust, amounted to £2,561,556 in 1937-8, out of which they paid shareholders dividends to the tune of £1,957,167—90 per cent tax free, plus share bonus of 50 per cent.

Throughout and since the war years, the gold mines have continued to make fabulous profits. Production during the war years amounted to 4,266,000 ounces, and prices skyrocketed. Even after the closing down of some of the mines in 1943 because of transport and stores difficulties, seven of the original fourteen mines produced 650,000 fine ounces valued at £5,573,138 in 1946. Despite devaluation of sterling in 1949, which increased the costs of production, gold has maintained second place in Gold Coast economy. Output in 1950 amounted to 705,182 fine ounces valued at £8,718,623, and in 1951 to 692,301 fine ounces valued at £8,562,326.

It is interesting to recall how the British capitalists secured such a complete monopoly of the country's gold resources. In the latter part of the last century, when the British Government established political hegemony over the Colony and Ashanti, local agents of London mining syndicates induced the chiefs, the custodians of tribal or Stool lands, to sign away the mineral rights of the people for nominal considerations. These British agents 'dashed' the chiefs and their councillors a few hundred pounds, some cases of whisky and gin and yards of cloth, and got them to affix their marks to legal documents which they could neither read nor understand. In return for these concessions, the companies agreed to pay the chiefs an annual rent, which never exceeded £400. They get no royalties and in many cases the rent received by the chief is no more than £50 per annum. During a debate in the Legislative Council in 1939, the late Nana Sir Ofori Atta I told how six of his brother chiefs who had

given concessions to the largest mining company had been exploited.

'One chief gets £66,' he said; 'one chief gets £133; one gets £50; one gets £50; another gets £200, and the last gets £100 per annum. These are the rents payable to chiefs in respect of the Ashanti Goldfields Ltd., and there is nothing that goes to any of the chiefs on the profits that are earned.'¹

When Sir Ofori Atta and other chiefs serving in the Legislative Council appealed to the Governor to support a Bill to make the company pay the Native Authorities royalty on their profits, Sir Arnold Hodson refused. 'I feel sure it would be a shortsighted and extremely harmful policy for the Government to interfere in a matter of this sort, because capital is very sensitive and it might have the effect of driving it away to other parts of the world,' declared the Governor.

Imagine investors being driven away from one of the richest gold producing areas of the world, simply because the companies were made to pay the chiefs a little more than they were getting. Nevertheless, the Bill was unanimously opposed by the British civil service officials and the five Europeans (representing the Chambers of Commerce and Mines, Shipping and Banking) in the Council. The vote was eight Africans to twenty Europeans. This shows clearly that when the profits of the capitalists are threatened, the British officials, presumably the trustees and protectors of the Africans, join forces with the agents of monopoly capital to help defend vested interests.

Apart from gold, from which the country derives its name, it is also the second largest producer of industrial diamonds in the world.

Diamonds are mined by hundreds of African diggers in the Tarkwa district and elsewhere, African prospectors as well as four foreign companies holding concessions

¹ Reported in the *Legislative Council Debates*, 1939, Issue No. 1.

from the chiefs. The production of diamonds in 1950 was 932,451 carats valued at £1,837,452 and in 1951, 1,712,033 carats valued at £5,970,919. More than half of the output was collected by Africans and sold to the British banks, since private producers are not allowed to export the stones.

Labourers on the mines come mostly from the Northern Territories and live in compounds in very much the same way as those in the Belgian Congo. The companies maintain their own police to guard the mines and enjoy what in practice amount to extra-territorial rights. Visitors or local people who approach the mines too closely are warned off summarily, and, often enough, people are taken into custody by the companies' police and frequently beaten up. Arbitrary 'justice' is meted out to offenders dragged before the authorities in the areas attached to the mines. Therefore, Africans living in the mining areas have learned to avoid the companies' police, as they have acquired an unsavoury reputation for their brutal treatment of those who wander too close to the companies' properties.

Gold Coast ranks third among the world producers of manganese, the mining of which was started at Ensuta in the western part of the Colony during the First World War. Its development has been remarkable. The first shipment of 4,000 tons was made in 1916. Seventeen years later the African Manganese Company Ltd. was registered in London. 'Half the share capital [£15,000] and all the debentures [£400,000] are held by the five companies, from which the manganese concessions were [nominally] acquired, and through which the new company is associated with other mining concerns.'¹ Output increased steadily year after year. It jumped from 139,595 tons in 1923 to 419,224 tons in 1929, valued at £612,930. Ten years later production reached 763,300 tons valued at £2,264,715, and exports amounted in

¹ For details of the Volta river scheme, see Chapter XIII, p. 235.

1951 to 806,000 tons valued at £7,217,000, the second largest output in the world. It will surprise many readers to know that apart from a small annual contribution made by the gold mines, the mining companies in the Gold Coast have never made any contribution in the form of direct taxes to the country's revenue until the present Government introduced its new taxation measures in 1952. And even this will still enable the companies to continue to enjoy fabulous profits. Not without reason, they get alarmed whenever back benchers in the Legislative Assembly suggest the need for inquiry into the financial transactions of the mining industry and the question of labour conditions.

Finally, there is bauxite. This is being mined on a limited scale by open-cast methods in the Wiawaso district of the Western Province by the West African Aluminium Company Ltd. and British Aluminium Company Ltd., pending the Volta river development project. Output amounted to 124,945 tons valued at £223,467 in 1950, and 129,328 tons valued at £226,274 in the following year. When the Volta river scheme comes into operation, the bauxite will be converted into aluminium on the spot. The output will be on a sliding scale of from 80,000 tons to 210,000 tons annually when maximum production of aluminium has been reached.

Timber is also among the principal natural resources of the Gold Coast, which is already the biggest timber-producing colony in the Empire. But the industry is being exploited in the most haphazard way by a swarm of foreign concessionaires, African loggers and timber contractors. Entire areas of the Colony have been denuded of valuable mahogany for export abroad. Logs have fetched as much as £45 for veneer quality, but the average price is between £15 and £25 per ton, while other kinds of timber sells for £12 to £15 per ton. The value of manufactured timber exported in 1950 rose from £3,852,984 to £9,787,372, although output fell from

10,162,837 cubic feet to 9,787,372 cubic feet during the same period. Apart from mining, timber is the only major non-agricultural industry in which large numbers of Africans are engaged. Natives also own a few saw-mills, but the bulk of the timber manufactured for export is in the hands of foreigners.

In the light of the foregoing economic analysis, it is obvious that 'political self-government and political independence have little meaning unless they are accompanied by a substantial measure of economic self-sufficiency and by a right degree of independence from foreign capital'. This view is now commonly accepted among colonial nationalists. That is why it is important first to have political power, for only then will the colonial peoples be in a position to plan for their economic and social needs.

'The new point is growing that in the future a fair share of the profits and royalties from industrial enterprises should accrue for the development of social services within the dependencies. Furthermore, it is contended that dependencies should be given a greater amount of self-sufficiency, that in any case they should not be subjected to the economic needs of the metropolitan area. . . .

'In present-day discussion regarding the economic future of dependencies, two points in question seem to be particularly outstanding. The first one concerns itself with the question of a reasonable amount of industrialization, the second deals with the disposition and control of natural resources. The consensus of opinion is that the predominantly agricultural economy of Africa should be supplemented by secondary industries in order to free the African territories from the comparatively expensive imports of European-manufactured goods.'¹

To help provide the necessary capital and know-how, all foreign firms operating in the Gold Coast should be made

¹ *Colonial Policies in Africa* by H. A. Wieschloff, University of Pennsylvania Press, pp. 80-1.

to register locally and plough back into the country a part of their profits in the form of establishing secondary industries employing and training Africans at all levels of production.

Industrialization and higher agricultural productivity are fundamental questions which the Gold Coast Government must tackle and tackle firmly if economic meaning is to be given to political self-government and independence.

TABLES OF GOLD COAST TRADE FOR THE
YEARS 1950 AND 1951

IMPORTS

<i>Product</i>	<i>1950</i>		<i>1951</i>	
	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Value</i>
Cotton piece goods	84,972,189 sq. yd.	£ 8,595,930	83,400,470 sq. yd.	£ 10,799,698
Cement	177,891 tons	1,150,614	222,179 tons	2,199,962
Flour	47,906,742 lb.	1,172,383	56,120,114 lb.	1,541,156
Sugar	29,148,061 lb.	811,666	32,818,096 lb.	1,138,696
Tobacco	2,836,418 lb.	1,135,192	3,576,632 lb.	1,508,903
Commercial vehicles	3,237	1,640,346	2,196	1,517,567
Private cars	1,555	664,973	2,470	1,191,233
Bicycles and tricycles	51,654	425,493	37,425	362,277

EXPORTS

<i>Product</i>	<i>1950</i>		<i>1951</i>	
	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Value</i>
Cocoa	267,401 tons	£ 54,604,292	229,526 tons	£ 60,309,769
Gold	705,182 fine oz. troy	8,718,623	692,301 fine oz. troy	8,562,326
Manganese ore	711,367 tons	5,007,411	806,080 tons	7,216,617
Timber	10,162,837 cu. ft.	3,852,984	9,787,372 cu. ft.	4,911,671
Diamonds	932,451 carats	1,837,452	1,712,033 carats	5,970,919
Bauxite	114,948 tons	223,467	129,328 tons	226,274

XIII
PROBLEMS OF
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ALTHOUGH THE PRESENT structure of Gold Coast economy needs drastic reorganization to make it more balanced, the country enjoys a favourable balance of trade and substantial financial reserves have been earmarked for development purposes. The total value of import trade in 1951 was £63,326,092 as against exports to a total value of £91,249,192, an increase of 19·5 per cent over the previous year. Revenue during the financial year 1950-1 amounted to nearly £21,000,000, while expenditure was a little over £14,000,000. By March 31, 1952, revenue had increased to £29,113,240 and expenditure to £24,315,830, with £9,000,000 set aside towards financing the present Government's Economic Development Plan.

As early as 1946, when the administration of the Gold Coast was the direct responsibility of the Governor and senior British civil servants, who then constituted the majority of the Executive Council (the policy-making body), the Secretary of State for the Colonies instructed them to prepare a Ten-Year Development Plan in order that the Colony might qualify for aid under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1945. But the officials appointed to prepare the plan, though they promised it at almost every session of the Legislature, for year after year failed to produce it, thanks to the dilatory workings of colonial bureaucracy. However, a plan of sorts was

finally devised by a staff of political officers in the Secretariat who knew nothing about economics, much less the difficult science of economic planning. Their white elephant was presented to the very last session of the Legislative Council under the old constitution in 1950. By then political events had overtaken the Ten-Year Plan which, on its production, was already as outmoded as the Council. It was subsequently scrapped by the Prime Minister when the C.P.P. came into power as hopelessly inadequate for tackling the urgent economic and social problems of the country.

While the attitude of Dr Nkrumah and his African Ministers—politicians committed to the creation of the Welfare State—is understandable, the inadequacies of the Ten-Year Plan were not altogether the fault of the planners, but rather of the system under which they had worked. For Crown Colony administration makes no provision for economic planning, and colonial governments, therefore, maintain no qualified economic staffs capable of undertaking such duties. Moreover, the large majority of British officials sent out to govern colonial territories are wedded to nineteenth-century capitalist doctrines and are hostile to the very conception of economic planning. To them, the only function of Crown Colony Government is to maintain law and order, balance the budget and, revenue permitting, provide transport facilities for foreign entrepreneurs to exploit the country's natural resources and promote trade and commerce with the minimum of government interference. In short, theirs is a negative attitude to government, recognizing government's responsibility in the economic sphere as being restricted to the provision of ports and harbour facilities, the construction and maintenance of railways and roads only in so far as these may enable a colony's raw materials to be brought to port for shipment overseas, and manufactured goods to be brought in. Industrialization is sternly discouraged.

'Until recently they have not even, in my judgment, had sufficient goodwill towards the people whom they governed,' writes Dr W. Arthur Lewis, West Indian-born Professor of Economics at Manchester University, and one of the foremost authorities on colonial economies and planning in the Commonwealth.¹

'However' [he adds], 'in the past ten years this has changed much; there is less snobbery, less complacency, more enthusiasm and more real affection. What now lacks is not goodwill but economic understanding. . . . This is because there are no proper economic departments, though here and there economic advisers have been appointed in the last three or four years, and given a man and a boy for their staff. Moreover, the Economic Department of the Colonial Office has been until recently the last refuge in this country of what is popularly called nineteenth-century *laissez-faire*, and both the advice and the advisers sent out to the colonies have been of this school. Much damage has been done to the colonies by this *laissez-faire* approach to their problems.'

Dr Lewis, who was for many years a member of the Colonial Office Economic Development Council, points out that this kind of thing may do very well for economies which have established themselves over a long period of years and have evolved stable economic and social conditions. He thinks

'it may be that in stationary economic states, well supplied with public facilities, with modern legislation, with capital, and with far-sighted entrepreneurs—the kind of state which figures in the fascinating curvology that passes under the name of contemporary economic theory—the arguments for *laissez-faire* are strong.'

¹ Professor Lewis is a member of the Board of Directors of the Colonial Development Corporation under Lord Reith. He visited the Gold Coast in the winter of 1952 at the invitation of the Government 'to survey the industrial and commercial activity and potential of the Gold Coast and to advise on and recommend ways and means of procuring a rapid expansion of the country's economy'.

But in colonial countries these stable conditions have not yet evolved. Instead, we find

'primitive societies, short of capital and entrepreneurship, lacking in roads and public facilities of all kinds, innocent of the elementary legislation that makes the economic framework of a modern society, and looking constantly for leadership and guidance to the public officers sent to administer them with unrestricted powers. The economics that is relevant to their problems is not the economics of utility, but the economics of laws, institutions, tenures, nationality, race, religion, ideology, and kindred determinates of economic equity and of the rate of economic progress, which were banished from the economic text-books and seminars as disreputable topics over seventy years ago. In such societies leadership is not a political suspect, but the most valuable quality that colonial government can offer, and what their peoples expect of them. In a fat, rich country like the United Kingdom, where further progress is deemed unnecessary, and productivity is a shameful word, we need not think about such matters, and governments that seek to influence them are wicked. But in primitive societies the duties of government are large and positive, and those who neglect these duties, or seek to belittle them, are guilty of a breach of trust. The colonies must have planning, plenty of planning, and planning of the highest order, or the promise of rapid development towards self-government which gives moral sanction to their being held by force is nothing but a sham. They do not, at present, get such planning. Their basic economic problems are almost untouched.'¹

Yet in face of these profound facts, the British civil servants who drew up the discarded Ten-Year Plan for the Gold Coast blandly declared that

'development is not the exclusive concern of government, and great importance is attached to development by

¹ *Colonial Development* by Professor W. Arthur Lewis, published by the Manchester Statistical Society, pp. 20-2.

commercial and private enterprise and by the masses of the people acting in their own interests. . . . The most important part of development cannot, in a democracy, be directed by the Government. The most which the Government can do outside the sphere of government departmental activity is to attempt to stimulate initiative, enthusiasm and endeavour.'

How this was to be done without direction immediately related to development the architects of the Ten-Year Plan did not divulge.

Having rejected this 'do nothing' approach to the fundamental economic problems of the Gold Coast, the Nkrumah Government decided to embark upon the maximum amount of planning, and within six months of assuming responsibility they presented a new Development Plan to the Legislative Assembly. This was a distinct achievement for a young and inexperienced government. It showed faith and courage: faith in the common people in whose welfare it was conceived, and courage in the ability of the Ministers responsible for its fulfilment.

The Development Plan, written in simple and concise language devoid of pseudo-economic jargon, states in broad outline the immediate problems confronting the Gold Coast, and indicates the steps which the Government intends to take to remedy the neglects of past British administrations. It is hoped thereby to lay sound foundations for future agricultural and industrial development, to create a more balanced and diversified economy based upon increased all-round production, and to raise the existing standard of living of the people.

While recognizing the contribution which commercial and private enterprise can make in helping forward industrialization, the Plan boldly states that the major responsibility for development planning must be the concern of government. On the other hand, the Government has wisely refrained from making rash promises as to specific dates of fulfilment, since the execution of

many projects indicated in the Plan will depend upon factors outside the control of the Gold Coast.

'In a world of uncertainties and constantly changing circumstances, it is impossible to lay down a plan for future years which states in minute detail all that it is hoped to achieve. No one can foretell the trend of future world events in the political and economic fields. The most that can be done, therefore, is to set down a statement of objectives which, if circumstances allow, should be attained in the years ahead, and that is what this Plan sets out to do. It must remain flexible, for it will require constant review and modification as the years pass; but its existence will ensure that development proceeds as a balanced whole rather than as a series of uncoordinated projects. This will result in the best use being made of the available resources without undue bias towards any particular aspect of development. All activities of government are closely related to each other and to non-government activities and changes of policy in one sphere must be made with due regard to other development projects, both governmental and non-governmental.'

The Plan as presently conceived falls into four main sections, and will involve a minimum expenditure of £73,962,000. They are:

	£	%
Economic and Productive		
Services	12,444,000	16·85
Communications	26,110,000	35·30
Social Services	24,512,000	33·10
Common Services and General		
Administration	10,896,000	14·75
	£73,962,000	100·00

The funds for financing the proposed plan of development are expected to come out of revenue, with the exception of about £3,000,000 provided by the Colonial

Development and Welfare Fund, which has practically all been devoted to education—the University College and the College of Arts, Science and Technology received £1,500,000 each.

The Development Plan attempts to link up the main economic and social demands embodied in the election manifesto of the C.P.P. with the party's political agitation for independence.

'Our entry into the Assembly in full strength will open up better opportunities to struggle for immediate self-government', asserts the C.P.P. manifesto. 'Whilst that struggle is proceeding the C.P.P. will do all in its power to better the condition of the people of this country. It must be pointed out, however, that the implementation of this development programme can only be possible when self-government has been attained, and we are in full control of our own affairs.'

Realizing the importance of increasing the productivity of the existing industries—agriculture, mining, timber—'without which the country cannot achieve the improvement in the standard of living which is the ultimate object of all development', the Government has wisely decided to invest more than half of the total capital on economic and productive services and slightly less than one-third (33·1 per cent) on the social services which, important as they are, do not directly contribute to the country's economic development. While providing for all aspects of development, the emphasis of the Plan is upon laying a 'firm economic basis capable of sustaining and expanding the existing social services'. In order to achieve its objectives, the Government will have to overcome a number of urgent problems of a technical nature, the immediate need of the Gold Coast being materials and skilled personnel rather than money. Of these difficulties the Government is very conscious.

Apart from timber which, ironically enough, is not used for house building purposes, the Gold Coast lacks

building materials. It does not even make bricks, much less manufacture cement or steel rods for reinforcement. Consequently, says the Plan, 'a high proportion of the materials required for development must be imported, and this means a dependence on world conditions of supply. . . . It is likely that the needs of rearmament throughout the world will have an adverse effect on the availability of supplies in the future.' But even if materials are available, there is still the problem of port facilities and transport to be solved.

At present the Gold Coast has one first-class port at Takoradi, which is already working to full capacity. The railways serve a limited section of the country, and motor transport is in a deplorable state due to lack of good roads. Even the existing so-called first-class roads cannot cope with the present volume of heavy traffic. Transport will therefore have to be given high priority, not only in order to cope with increased tonnage, but also to improve communications which are also important for opening up new agricultural areas.

Takoradi harbour has recently been enlarged at a cost of £2,000,000 loaned by the Government out of the Cocoa Marketing Board reserves. A new harbour at Tema, fourteen miles east of Accra, is also being constructed at a cost of £9,000,000. When this port is completed it will serve the eastern province of the Gold Coast and link the hinterland of the country with the Accra coastal region. It is proposed to spend £16,000,000 on harbour and railway construction, which will include four new lines: from Awoso in the western province of the Colony to Berekum in western Ashanti; from Kumasi in Ashanti to Navrongo in the Northern Territories; from Achiasi to Nsawam, linking the east to the west; and finally, a westward line linking Takoradi to Bonyeri, the site of the limestone deposits which it is intended to exploit for a cement factory envisaged in the Development Plan.

Transportation constitutes the key to industrial development, and unless this bottleneck is solved in the early stages, it may well slow down the rate of progress when the Plan gathers momentum. It is, therefore, encouraging to note that 'the Government is determined to build up a first-class network of tarred roads throughout the entire length and breadth of the country. With this in view a sum of £8,000,000 has been allocated.' At present the Public Works Department is responsible for the upkeep of main roads, of which only 894 miles were bituminous surfaced in 1951. The rest are gravel. In addition to these so-called first-class roads, local authorities and chieftain councils are responsible for about 6,500 miles of dirt roads which are unsuitable for heavy transport purposes, especially during the rainy season. A Central Roads Advisory Board with subsidiary committees in the Colony, Ashanti and Northern Territories was established in 1951 to work in co-operation with the Minister for Communications on methods of reorganizing the entire roads system. Already substantial improvements can be recorded. By the end of 1952, the amount of tarred main roads had increased from 894 miles to 1,050 miles. A number of new roads were also completed by 1952, and work started on the long-discussed coastal road between Takoradi and Accra, which will shorten the distance by about forty miles and tap new agricultural areas to help supplement the food supplies of Accra, which has a constantly growing population.

It is obvious that the country's economic development has already outgrown the capacity of the Public Works Department to maintain an up-to-date roads system. What is needed is the setting up of a Roads Development Corporation as a statutory body, which will train African engineers and technical staffs to build and maintain roads instead of, as at present, employing foreign contractors who are under no obligation to train Africans. Unless something of this sort is done, the Gold Coast will always

have to depend upon the services of outsiders for the maintenance of one of its most essential public services. Economic development must march hand in hand with rising technological knowledge among the Africans. A start should certainly be made in the field of road engineering. Maintenance alone will cost the Government about £2,000,000 annually.

Closely linked with, and dependent upon, road transport is agricultural development. 'Grow more food' presupposes the existence of roads along which to take the crops to market. At present, farmers are greatly handicapped in marketing their produce because of the lack of roads in the food-growing areas of the country, especially in the Northern Territories. Despite its rich and varied mineral resources, Gold Coast is primarily an agricultural country, and the Development Plan lays great emphasis on the expansion of the cocoa industry and other cash crops for export, and the increase of foodstuffs for local consumption. Transport, the essential factor in marketing, must therefore keep abreast of increased agricultural output.

Ever since 1946 the cocoa industry, the life-blood of the Gold Coast, has been menaced by a plant disease known as swollen-shoot. Of a total of 500,000,000 trees, the disease is killing 18,000,000 a year. Efforts are being made to bring the disease under control by cutting out infected trees. The British officials applied compulsory methods which met with strong opposition from the farmers. But after the present Government came into office Dr Nkrumah and his Minister for Agriculture, Mr Archie Casely Hayford, suspended compulsory cutting out. In January 1952 Dr Nkrumah announced a Cocoa New Deal. Propaganda teams composed of C.P.P. members of the Legislative Assembly and other volunteers under the Minister of Agriculture toured the cocoa-growing districts in mobile film vans and explained the New Deal to the farmers, to whom they appealed to

co-operate with the Government in trying to eradicate swollen-shoot by voluntary methods and rehabilitate the industry.

The Government agreed to pay the farmers compensation of ten shillings for each large tree cut out on an instalment system. Four shillings is paid on cutting out the tree, and two shillings a year is then paid for the next three years. Two shillings of this sum is an advance to enable the farmer to prepare for replanting, the balance being compensation for cutting out. Compensation for small trees is a quarter of the full rate. Nearly £2,000,000 was paid to farmers in 1951 by the Cocoa Marketing Board out of a special fund of over £9,000,000 set aside for rehabilitation of the industry.

Instead of supporting the Government in its wise and generous policy some of the leaders of the opposition group—the so-called Ghana Congress Party—have been trying to win support among the farmers by advising them not to co-operate with the Nkrumah Government in the cutting out of diseased cocoa trees and the replanting of new ones under the Prime Minister's Cocoa New Deal scheme.

This is a short-sighted policy, for if the opposition party ever came to power they, too, would have to try and save the cocoa industry by adopting the only method which a team of agricultural scientists of international repute advised the Government to adopt until experiments with chemical insecticides prove effective to destroy the mealy bug.¹ The team was specially selected by the United Nations Food and Agricultural Committee and consisted of such eminent men as Dr G. H. Berkeley of the Dominion Laboratory of Plant Pathology of Canada; Dr E. H. Carter, head of the Department of Entomology of the Pineapple Research Institute at Hawaii, and Professor E. Van Slogteren of Holland. Since their report was

¹ Colonial Office White Paper No. 236: *Report on Gold Coast Cocoa Disease.*

issued, the Government has engaged the services of the well-known Cambridge firm, Pest Control Limited, to carry out experiments with Hanane, which is proving effective against the mealy bug.

While the battle against swollen-shoot goes on, backed by all the propaganda resources of Government, efforts are being made to modernize agriculture and bring new lands under cultivation of a wider variety of cash crops. For example, the Development Plan aims to increase palm kernels from 3,375 tons in 1950 to 15,000 tons by 1960; copra from 800 tons to 1,000 tons; coffee from 93 tons to 400 tons; and rubber from 261 tons to 1,000 tons.

Measures to increase food production are also envisaged as part of the plan for agricultural reconstruction. The present system of subsistence farming 'is inefficient and wasteful of the resources of the land and is unsuited to the needs of a population which is rapidly increasing, particularly in the urban areas. If an adequate and balanced diet for all is to be ensured and a higher standard of living achieved, more efficient farming methods must be employed.'

To carry out the necessary reorganization, the sum of £3,500,000 has been allocated for agricultural education, soil conservation, irrigation and research, apart from an additional £85,000 for animal husbandry, £82,000 for tsetse-fly control, £179,000 for forest conservation and £57,000 for fisheries—all of which are integrating factors in the drive to provide more and varied foods, meat, fish and dairy products within the Gold Coast.

Experiments in large-scale mechanized farming have already begun at Damongo in the Northern Territories under the auspices of the Gonja Development Company, a subsidiary of the Gold Coast Agricultural Corporation. The main purpose of the Damongo scheme is to find out whether mechanized farming is practicable and economical. The project bears certain striking resemblances to the famous Gezira cotton scheme in the Sudan, and is

being carried out in three stages. The first stage was to investigate the agricultural potentialities; the second stage covered the construction of roads, the laying in of water and erection of essential buildings for the accommodation of the agricultural and technical staffs and workers; and the stage now in progress, the working of farms and settling of tenant-farmers.

The final scheme involves an area of over 30,000 acres, divided into units, each of which is under a separate management responsible for the technical administration of the unit and the welfare of the settlers. Each tenant-farmer will have a holding of thirty acres, part of which will be cultivated while the remainder is being rested. He will also be provided with a two-room dwelling and veranda. The Company maintains what in Soviet Russia are called by collective farmers 'machine and tractor stations', with fleets of tractors, ploughs, harrows, reapers, graders and other up-to-date agricultural machinery. The Company is responsible for clearing, ploughing and fertilizing the land, which is divided into plots of about two acres, according to the contour of the ground. After this preliminary work is done, the African tenant-farmers plant the crops and look after the weeding and help in the harvesting. The proceeds from the sale of crops, rice, guinea corn, maize and groundnuts, are divided between the Gonja Development Company and the tenant-farmers. The former gets two-thirds and the latter one-third. Apart from the crops produced under the direction of the Company, each farmer is allowed a two-acre plot for the cultivation by himself and his family of local market crops like sweet potatoes, tomatoes, beans and peppers, for domestic use or for sale to augment his income.

With the development of proper road systems connecting the southern and northern parts of the Gold Coast, the Northern Territories will be increasingly in a position to supply much of the vegetables and meat

consumed in the non-producing areas of the south, especially the coastal towns. Communications form the lynchpin of the Development Plan, and on them will depend the Plan's final success or failure. Moreover, apart from the economic importance of communications, they have a vital civilizing influence. By facilitating travel, modern means of transport will accelerate social and cultural development in the north and will help to break down the isolation which has hitherto existed between the people of the Northern Territories and those of the Colony area and Ashanti.

Although the mining industry is a foreign monopoly (except diamonds, which are also collected by Africans but not exported by them), the Development Plan envisages an increase in the production of all minerals—gold, diamonds, manganese and bauxite—which make the second largest contribution to the national economy. While the question of nationalizing the industry has not been suggested by the Government, the subject has been frequently mentioned by C.P.P. back-benchers in the Assembly, especially Mr Anthony Woode, a trade-union leader, to the great annoyance of the European representatives of the Chamber of Mines. However, 'it is the intention of the Government to set up a Mineral Resources Board to examine the mining industry and particularly to ascertain whether the country is deriving the maximum benefit from the exploitation of her mineral wealth'. Meanwhile, the Government has introduced a new system of taxation which will increase the export duty on gold and other minerals from £800,000 to £2,000,000 annually, which will go into the general revenue.

Industrially the Gold Coast stands at zero. It is remarkable how devoid the country is even of those secondary industries which could easily have been developed as by-products of agriculture. For example, the country spends thousands of pounds annually upon

importing jute sacks for bagging cocoa, thus making its major industry dependent upon the outside world for the very means of getting its cocoa beans abroad. To free the country from this dependent position, the Government is to investigate the possibility of establishing a bag-making factory as one of the industrial projects envisaged under the Development Plan. Another priority of equal importance is the erection of a cement factory. Without this industry, the problem of housing cannot be solved.

Like most other under-developed countries, the standard of housing in the Gold Coast has never been high. Outside the main towns the vast majority of the population live under appalling conditions. Most of their houses are mud shacks, devoid of the most elementary sanitation and proper water for consumption. To remedy this state of affairs, the Government intends to set up a building industry capable of producing houses of modern design by prefabricated methods suitable for people in the lower income brackets. Preliminary work in connection with the construction of a factory was started by a Dutch firm, A. V. Schokbeton, in 1952. When the factory goes into production it is estimated that it will prefabricate up to 15,000 four- and five-roomed concrete houses fitted with running water, electricity, toilet basins, water closets and other amenities. The Government will spend £2,500,000 on completing municipal housing projects in the main towns of Accra, Cape Coast, Sekondi-Takoradi and Kumasi. Loans totalling up to £2,000,000 will also be given to individuals on the basis of a maximum of £1,600 per person at $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on deposit of 20 per cent of the estimated cost of the building. These loans will be repayable over thirty years. In addition, the Government will extend financial assistance to local authorities to carry out slum clearance in the larger towns and mining areas as part of the programme of town and country planning outlined in the Development Plan.

High priority will also be given to the development of health services, with special emphasis upon the preventative rather than on the curative side of medicine. A new hospital costing £1,500,000 is being built at Kumasi, and new health centres will be established in different parts of the country both by the Central Government and the local authorities. Since health work is essentially a matter for community effort, the best results can only be achieved by arousing the interest and co-operation of the people: '... understanding of the need for sanitary measures and confidence in the work of the health centres must be created.'

The existing medical and public health services were investigated in 1952 by a special commission appointed by the Minister of Health. The services will be re-organized along the lines recommended in their report. Apart from the medical side of public health, the Government has made generous provisions for expanding supplies of good clean water, especially in the rural areas where the population suffers badly from lack of good drinking water. Boreholes will be drilled and new reservoirs, waterworks and pumping stations constructed. Some have already been completed at Hohoe, Wiawso, Salaga and Damongo. The present difficulty is to obtain enough equipment and trained personnel to operate all the new installations planned.

In 1948 the population of Accra, then estimated at 135,926, consumed about 2,300,000 gallons of water daily from the waterworks at Weija. This will be increased to 6,000,000 gallons a day when the filter-house and sedimentation tanks forming part of the new extensions are completed. The supply available at the end of 1952 had already reached 4,500,000 gallons daily. Similar provisions are being made for increasing the water supply of Kumasi, the capital of Ashanti and the second largest town in the Gold Coast, Sekondi-Takoradi and Cape Coast.

Education, another vital factor in the implementation of the Development Plan, is undergoing complete re-organization. Illiteracy (like poor health, bad housing and malnutrition) is one of the chief impediments to industrialization and increasing productivity. The Gold Coast has a long tradition of primary education, which was started by missions in the coastal towns 'as long ago as 1752, when the Rev Thomas Thompson, one of the early missionaries of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, arrived from America'.¹ Yet there is 90 per cent illiteracy, and up to now such educational facilities as exist have been too literary in character. Apart from the Basel Mission, started by Swiss-German Protestants, very little attention was given to technical training, with the result that educated Africans, who are mostly engaged in clerical occupations, tend to despise manual work. This bias towards white-collar jobs has denied the country the skilled labour force which is now required for development purposes. The Gold Coast has too many lawyers and not enough doctors, dentists, pharmacists, veterinary surgeons, engineers, agronomists, chemists, accountants, economists, architects, electricians; too many clerks and not enough carpenters, bricklayers, house-painters, plumbers, interior decorators, good farmers, mechanics, tailors, shoemakers, printers, fitters, moulders, etc.

To try to remedy the lopsided state of affairs in the field of education, the Government has embarked upon an ambitious programme of free primary education for all children from six to twelve years of age, supplemented by post-primary and technical training. At the primary stage, basic instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic as well as other subjects will be given according to age group. The course will provide instruction in English and the local vernaculars—Twi, Fanti, Ewe, Ga, etc. The ultimate aim of the new plan, the first of its kind in an

¹ *History of the Gold Coast* by W. E. F. Ward, Allen & Unwin, p. 193.

African colony, is to enable African children to proceed to one of three types of post-primary schools: middle, secondary, or technical.

Those entering the middle schools will be given a four-year course of a practical rather than an academic nature, while the secondary schools, fifteen of which are being established in the principal towns, will cater for an academic type of education, leading up to the University College of the Gold Coast, to which the Government has contributed £1,500,000 out of its development fund. About three hundred Government scholarships will be awarded annually to boys and girls in the secondary schools.

The technical schools will offer a five-year course with special emphasis on technology, agricultural science, commerce and industry. These schools will act as 'feeders' to the College of Arts, Science and Technology established at Kumasi in 1952 at a cost of £1,500,000 provided by the Government out of its development fund. One of the primary purposes of the college is to provide 'qualified persons in the technical field, on which the success of the Plan depends'. The college will have accommodation for 2,000 students and will offer courses in building, engineering, accountancy, agriculture, science and commerce, among other subjects.

In appreciation of the valuable contributions which have been made by the various missionary bodies and religious denominations in collecting funds among their adherents for the construction of elementary and secondary schools, the Government has agreed to continue to subsidize all existing missionary schools, but will assume full responsibility in future for the education of all children by providing school buildings and equipment, and paying teachers. The new secular schools will be under the management of the local educational authorities, though the salaries of the teachers will be borne as at present by the Central Government. To provide the

necessary staff, sixteen new teachers' training colleges will be established, in addition to the twenty already in existence. They will graduate 1,200 teachers annually.

In implementing the programme of education, priority and special attention will be given to the Northern Territories and other formerly neglected areas, in order to help them to make good the leeway with the Colony, especially the larger towns, where educational opportunities have long existed, thanks to the missionaries. The scale of the new plan, which came into operation on January 1, 1952 (ten months after Dr Nkrumah took office), may be seen from figures of enrolment and expenditure before and since the reformed scheme started. In December 1950, there were 212,000 registered pupils in elementary schools. By January 1952 the number had increased to 270,000, and it is estimated that it will reach over 400,000 in January 1957, when it is hoped to provide enough school buildings and trained teachers to cope with the school-going population. Government expenditure on primary education increased from £207,500 in 1950-1 to over £900,000 in 1952, and is expected to reach £1,250,000 by 1957.

The entire educational programme will involve £11,975,000. Buildings and equipment for all types of instruction envisaged when the plan gets into full swing are estimated to cost £8,148,750, while the total recurrent expenditure is expected to increase from £2,500,000 in 1952 to nearly £4,000,000 in 1957. Never has so much money been invested in so short a time on education in any colonial country.

Commenting on the state of education in the Gold Coast between the two world wars, Mr Leonard Barnes, a foremost British authority on colonial affairs, writes:

'In 1913 education there cost £25,000; in 1931, the peak year, it cost just over a quarter of a million. This is ten times as much and there can be no objection to

calling it such, or calling it an increase of 900 per cent if you prefer. The same fact can be stated, though less impressively, by saying that educational expenditure took eighteen years to rise from 3 per cent to 7 per cent of Government revenue. Both forms of statement omit another fact, which is equally relevant, namely, that even in 1931, four Gold Coast children out of five were receiving no schooling of any kind, and less than $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent got past the primary stage. . . . In none of our tropical African colonies is the proportion of children who get any kind of schooling above 20 per cent, and it sinks to 8 per cent in Sierra Leone, where British rule has been established for a century and a half. Education is nowhere free. Authorities have calculated that at our present rate of progress it will be 700 years before the natives of even the Gold Coast can read and write their own language, or 3,500 years, if the natural increase of population is taken into account.¹

Nevertheless, when Mr Kojo Botsio, the Minister for Education, presented the Government's educational proposals to the Legislative Assembly in August 1951, only six months after the Nkrumah Ministry had assumed office, the leaders of the Opposition Party bitterly opposed instead of welcoming the Government's gesture in abolishing school fees in primary schools as the initial step towards a more comprehensive policy of free education. Among those who voted against free education were intellectuals like Dr J. B. Danquah, Dr Kofi A. Busia, Messrs Magnus J. Sampson, William Ofori Atta, Gerald O. Awuma, C. W. Tachie-Mensah, S. H. Donkor; such Colony chiefs as Nana Kofi Adu II, Nene Azzu Mate Kole, and a few others from the Northern Territories—that part of the Gold Coast which, ironically enough, stands most in need of all kinds of educational facilities. These northerners are said to have been influenced by the Roman Catholic hierarchy, which strongly opposed the Government's decision to discontinue subsidizing

¹ *Empire or Democracy* by Leonard Barnes, Gollancz, p. 141.

out of public funds *new* schools owned and managed by religious bodies. The Government, however, will not prevent Roman Catholics or any other denomination from establishing and maintaining new schools paid for by voluntary public contributions. Generally speaking, the Protestant missions are giving the Government full support in the fields of both juvenile and adult education, which is one of the most popular literacy activities in the Gold Coast. Adult education is also carried on under the auspices of the People's Educational Association and University College Extra-Mural Department on lines similar to those of the Workers' Educational Association in Britain, while mass education is being sponsored by the Welfare Department of the Ministry of Education.

Apart from expanding educational facilities in 1952, the Government awarded a large number of scholarships to students to study applied science and skilled trades in universities, colleges and polytechnic institutions in the United Kingdom. By raising the scientific and technological level of the youth, the country will provide itself with a managerial class as well as a skilled labour force capable of directing and operating the new industries such as the Volta river hydro-electrical scheme, envisaged as 'foremost among the development projects contemplated for execution in the near future'.

Not only is this the most ambitious part of the Development Plan, but, when completed, it will represent one of the biggest industrial enterprises in tropical Africa. The main purpose of the project is to construct a dam and hydro-electrical power station near Ajena on the Volta river, which would provide enough electricity to exploit the bauxite deposits at Mpraeso and Yenahin for conversion into aluminium. It is estimated that these deposits are sufficient to produce annually for over 200 years a million tons of bauxite, which will yield as much as 210,000 tons of aluminium.

In addition to aluminium production, the hydro-electrical station would make available power for electrifying the railways, the mines and secondary industries, as well as for public and domestic purposes. The project will also create an artificial lake 2,000 miles square, which could be used for developing a freshwater fishing industry. Water would also be available for irrigating the Accra plains which are now unsuitable for agricultural purposes because of the absence of sufficient rain in that part of the Gold Coast. The bauxite would be transported to the aluminium works by rail, involving the construction of a new line from Yenahin to Kumasi, while the existing Kumasi-Accra line would be used until near Koforidua, where another line would be built eastward to Kpong, the proposed site of the aluminium smelter. The aluminium would then be transported by rail to the new port of Tema, which will be linked by a branch line with Accra.

The total capital expenditure needed to start the scheme would be about £100,000,000, but would finally reach £144,000,000. It has been proposed to share the provision of this capital between the governments of the United Kingdom and the Gold Coast and the two private companies concerned: Aluminium Limited of Canada and the British Aluminium Company. The British Government's share of the proposed capital would be £43,000,000 at the start and might rise to nearly £56,800,000. The Gold Coast Government would contribute up to about £44,600,000, and the aluminium companies a maximum of nearly £42,600,000. The Gold Coast Government would be responsible for the construction of the port of Tema, the necessary railways, roads and other public works, and, together with the United Kingdom, the capitalization of the hydro-electrical power plant. All three parties, the United Kingdom and Gold Coast Governments and the aluminium companies, would share in differing proportions the cost of the

aluminium smelter. The companies would be obliged for thirty years from the start of production to offer buyers in Great Britain not less than 75 per cent of the metal produced.

The British Government's contribution would take the form of a loan to the Volta River Authority (and subsequently to the Volta River Electricity Board) responsible to the Gold Coast Government. Its chairman would be appointed jointly by the two Governments. The Authority and the Board would also contain a representative of the British Government and the aluminium companies. The loan would be repayable over eighty years and would be used exclusively towards the cost of constructing the power plant, the assets of which would be the United Kingdom's security. The aluminium companies, under a sixty-year contract for the use of the power, would undertake to pay the operation costs, including interest, as well as the cost of providing for renewals and amortization.

As to the distribution of capital for the smelter,

'the Gold Coast Government, Aluminium Limited, and the British Aluminium Company would provide the equity capital of the smelter company, Aluminium Limited contributing the major part. The Gold Coast Government, as trustees of the people of the Gold Coast, would have the right to provide 10 per cent of the equity capital as it was issued from time to time. After the smelter company had been in production 25 years, and upon the request of the Gold Coast Government, the smelter company would in addition undertake to offer for sale at a reasonable price to private Gold Coast investors equity stock (either new stock or stock then in the hands of the aluminium companies) in an amount equal to the amount of equity stock previously transferred to private Gold Coast investors from the Gold Coast Government's original holdings. The aluminium companies attach importance to private enterprise and are anxious that Gold Coast private investors should participate in the equity of the smelter, but realize that

for some time it is unlikely that private Gold Coast funds will be available',

declares a White Paper which has been published outlining the proposals for the project. This document makes clear what the British Government and the aluminium companies will get out of the project, but it is suspiciously silent on what the Africans will get. The British will have a priority on 75 per cent of the aluminium, which will enable them to influence the price and prevent sale to quarters from which the Gold Coast would reap higher rewards and hard currency. The aluminium companies will hold practically all the equity in the smelter, and the provision to release any further shares in the equity inside the Gold Coast, and then only to private investors, will deprive the Government from ever securing a great interest in it. Moreover, the fixing of the repayment of the loan from the British Government within eighty years, and the fact that the smelter company will be responsible only for paying the costs of operation of the power plant, means that in effect it will be paying the lowest possible price for its electrical power. No mention is made of the Board being allowed to make any profit, which, on the face of things, seems a direct contravention of the private enterprise which the aluminium companies seem to be so solicitous to encourage.

The White Paper does not disclose what royalties the Gold Coast Government will receive on the production of the aluminium, what export duty it will levy; nor is it clear whether the smelting company will be registered in the Gold Coast and thus pay its income tax to that Government. All in all, while it is clear that the scheme will provide the United Kingdom with a source of aluminium outside the hard currency area and the smelting company with profits from an assured market, the benefits which will accrue to the Gold Coast are not discernible, beyond the incidental ones of an artificial

lake and the possible provision of some electric power for the development of other industries once the smelting company's needs have been met.

Another very important question which the White Paper does not answer is how the aluminium companies secured their concessions. The White Paper makes reference to a Mr Duncan Rose, a Yorkshireman who went prospecting from Johannesburg, who is said to have made over some concession to the Aluminium Company of Canada, which has acquired an interest in the West African Aluminium Company formed by Mr Rose. This is a matter which the Gold Coast people may feel it would profit them to investigate. We have referred in earlier pages to the miserable rents which certain chiefs are receiving for concessions which they made, often unwittingly, to the Ashanti Goldfields Company. It may come as a shock to the Gold Coast people to find that they have perhaps given away rights to work yet another rich natural resource of their country for little or nothing.

Now that the White Paper has thrown the matter open to public discussion and inquiry, it is up to the Gold Coast people to make their views in the matter known to their Government. It may be that they will consider that as the project is one which will take some few years to bring to fruition, no immediate purpose will be gained by giving a hurried decision, and that a decision in better perspective can be made after they have gained their independence and are free from imperial pressures.

Having reviewed and commented upon the main projects embraced by the Development Plan, we now turn to the vital question of who is to be responsible for its execution. According to a statement in the Plan, it has been decided to establish a committee from the Executive Council (now called the Cabinet) to be known as the Executive Council (Cabinet) Development Committee, to be in general charge of the execution of the Plan.

‘It is further proposed to appoint a Minister for Development who in his capacity as Chairman of the Committee will be responsible for the operation of the Development Fund, and for matters which do not fall within the exclusive sphere of any one Ministry. In all other respects the carrying out of the plan will rest with the Ministries, departments, local authorities, and other bodies to which responsibility will be allocated in the normal manner when development estimates are approved from time to time.’

Let us examine this proposal more closely, for while such a policy-making body as the Cabinet Development Committee is essential, what is equally important is the establishment of a National Planning Commission headed by a chairman enjoying Cabinet status, who should be the Minister for Development. In that case, the Prime Minister instead of the Minister for Development should be the Chairman of the Cabinet Development Committee, the supreme policy-making body. The functions of each of the two bodies—the Cabinet Development Committee and the National Planning Committee—must be clearly defined. The Cabinet Development Committee will be responsible for making policy decisions. As the members of the Cabinet Development Committee will themselves be Ministers holding portfolios, and therefore responsible for the execution of those sections of the Plan coming under the responsibility of the departments within their respective Ministries, it is obvious that what is needed in addition to the already existing civil service departments is a body which will be free from administrative duties yet responsible for and capable of co-ordinating the different aspects of the Plan and advising the Cabinet Development Committee on economic, technical and administrative matters. This is of vital importance ‘if a proper balance is to be maintained between the maintenance of existing works and services on the one hand and the execution of new capital

development on the other hand; and if the available supplies of man-power and money are not to be uneconomically dissipated'.

For such a 'brains trust' to perform its duties effectively, the Minister for Development, as political head of the National Planning Commission, must have the right to recommend the appointment of technical advisers and specialists either on permanent or contract terms. To ensure the success of the Plan they must obviously be people who are in agreement with the Government's broad policies of development, and should include economists, statisticians, accountants, production and costing experts, etc. The Permanent Secretary of the National Planning Commission, who will occupy a key position, must be an economist of the highest qualifications. He must be sympathetic to the political and social aspirations of the Gold Coast people. To have someone, for instance, whose whole economic philosophy rejects planning as essential for the social betterment and industrial development of the country, would be inimical to the success of the Plan. The Permanent Secretary, therefore, must be an expert on planning, and since economic development cannot be divorced from the politics of a people struggling for sovereign independence, it is essential for him to have and hold the confidence of the members of the Cabinet Development Committee, above all, of the Prime Minister. This is a paramount factor, since political decisions will to a large extent depend upon his advice conveyed to the Cabinet Development Committee through the Minister for Development, who must have the right to obtain all the relevant reports and data relating to the Development Plan from the various Ministers, local authorities and other public bodies which may be assigned certain responsibilities in the carrying out of the Plan.

Of considerable importance, too, is the establishment of the Gold Coast's own agency for the purchase of

essential plant, machinery and other equipment of all kinds at present conducted through the Crown Agents. As a bureaucratic outfit concerned with the requirements not only of the Gold Coast but of dozens of other colonial territories, the methods of the Crown Agents' office are of necessity devious and slow. This was not of much import in the days of Crown Colony administration when the problems of development did not demand priority of supplies. Then the Gold Coast could afford to take its turn in the Crown Agents' queue. But with the urgency of obtaining supplies to fit into a planned economy, it is absolutely essential for the Gold Coast Government to follow the example of Sudan and set up its own buying agency as part of its Commissioner's Office in London. Experts to inspect goods and equipment supplied against the Government's orders can always be hired as occasion requires. Therefore it will not be necessary for the Gold Coast buying agency to employ a full-time staff of engineers and other technical experts.

In this connection, a few words must also be said about the traditional relations between Britain and her dependent territories. Because of Britain's position as the ruling power, she has imposed upon the colonies ever since the Ottawa Agreement in 1932 unfair trade terms which have compelled these dependencies to buy British goods on any terms; and what is even more outrageous, they are being deprived of essential supplies necessary for raising their standard of life while the British Government is making use of their large credit balances obtained from sales of their primary products for subsidizing secondary industries in Australia and New Zealand and also to close her own dollar gap.

The Gold Coast Government must insist upon the right to secure supplies from any source which offers the most advantageous terms and quickest deliveries. For example, Germany and Japan today are only too anxious to meet the needs of colonial development on terms that

will challenge any which Britain can offer. Colonial politicians will prove most irresponsible if, from purely sentimental attachment to the 'Mother Country', they sacrifice the welfare of their long-suffering people in order to help nations like Australia, which operate a stringent colour bar against Africans and Asiatics. It is significant that Dr Nkrumah, Prime Minister of the Colony which, next to Malaya, has contributed most to the Commonwealth dollar pool, was not invited to participate in the 1952 Commonwealth Economic Conference, while Sir Godfrey Huggins, Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia, which is no more an independent sovereign state than the Gold Coast, with a population of a few thousand whites lording it over millions of Africans, was so honoured. What has Southern Rhodesia got to offer Britain other than tobacco? She is not a dollar earner, but rather a consumer of dollars earned by the toil, tears and sweat of Africans and other colonial peoples.

All these are essential factors in the whole scheme of planning, for which the Government is able to provide the capital and secure the materials, equipment and expert advice to carry the Plan into effect. But its full and permanent success is dependent in the final analysis upon the enthusiasm and support it can muster from the population. Upon the Department of Information Services will fall the task of giving the widest possible publicity, through film, radio, literature and press, to every progressive stage of the Plan. Its implications and benefits for the community are to be carefully explained and enthusiasm built up and harnessed in carrying it to successful conclusion. Even the best plan in the world will fail in its objective if the population has no feeling for it and refrains from supporting it. This was proved, for instance, in the people's opposition to the previous Government's measures for cutting out of diseased cocoa trees. 'Attempts by the then Government to enforce cutting out were often stoutly resisted and

violence and even bloodshed resulted', records a leading article in *The Times*.¹ Successful planning demands the closest partnership between government and people.

The C.P.P. has already shown its capacity for linking its programme with the aspirations of the common people. Born of their yearnings for a new life and led by men and women who themselves come from the masses rather than from the so-called aristocracy and semi-feudal classes, they have within the short period of less than two years since they have been in office given tangible proof of their readiness and ability to assume responsibility and face the grilling tasks of sweeping away the legacies of economic and social neglect left by one hundred years of British Crown Colony rule. The Government have got through a phenomenal amount of legislation essential for the advancement of the country, and has put into motion many projects which within a few years will begin to show positive results in laying firm foundations upon which an independent Gold Coast nation can be constructed.

In this respect events in the Gold Coast have confirmed our point of view that political responsibility is an essential forerunner to economic reconstruction, and not vice versa, as apologists for imperialism maintain. 'Seek ye first the political kingdom', declared Dr Nkrumah, 'and all other things will be added to it.' For only a government of the people, elected by the people, responsible to the people, and serving the interests of the people, and not an alien bureaucracy, however paternal, can put into effect those economic measures essential for lifting a dependent territory from stagnation into pulsating life.

This is the lesson which the men at Whitehall must learn before it is too late.

¹ *The Times*, December 19, 1952

APPENDIX I

AFRICAN WHO'S WHO
IN THE FIRST GOLD COAST CABINET

MR EDWARD ASAFU-ADJAYE is an Ashanti and was born in 1903. He received his early schooling at the Government Boys' School in his native town of Kumasi, and his secondary education at Adisadel College in Cape Coast. He proceeded to England and took an Honours Degree in Philosophy and Law at University College, London, in 1926. In the following year he was called to the Bar as a member of the Inner Temple, where he won the hundred guineas Profumo prize. Mr Asafu-Adjaye served on the Gold Coast Colony and Ashanti delegation to the Colonial Office in 1934, and was for many years active at the Bar and in politics as a member of the Kumasi Town Council, Ashanti Confederacy Council and the Legislative Council of 1926, before entering the Assembly as the first Territorial Member for Ashanti.

MR KOJO BOTSIO, the first Secretary-General of the C.P.P., is a Fanti. He was born at Winneba on February 21, 1916. His father was a civil servant. Like Mr Gbedemah, he received his early education at Adisadel College before entering Achimota College, where he qualified as a teacher. After some years school-teaching, at St Augustine's College, Cape Coast, Mr Botsio went abroad for higher studies at Fourah Bay University College in Sierra Leone, before proceeding to Brasenose College, Oxford. After a post-graduate course at London University Institute of Education, Mr Botsio became a teacher in a London County Council school. In 1946 he resigned to become warden of the West African Students' Union. He returned to the Gold Coast in 1948 as vice-principal of Abuakwa State College at Kibi. The same year he became

secretary of the Committee of Youth Organization, teaming up with Dr Nkrumah, with whom he was associated in London as treasurer of the West African National Secretariat, formed in 1946 to agitate for self-government and federation of the West African colonies. On the formation of the C.P.P. in June 1948, Mr Botsio abandoned the teaching profession and became full-time secretary of the new party. He was arrested during the Positive Action campaign of 1950 and sent to prison along with Dr Nkrumah and other nationalist leaders.

MR J. A. BRAIMAH was born in the Northern Territories in 1916. He was educated at the Government School at Tamale, being one of the first of his tribe to receive a modern education. He became an official of the local administrative service and holds the rank of Kabachewura or chief of Kabache. He visited England in 1948 to study local government administration and served on the Coussey Constitution Committee and other public bodies.

MR K. A. GBEDEMAH, an Ewe, born on June 17, 1912, the son of a medical dispenser in the Nigerian Government Service. He was educated at Accra Government School and Adisadel College in Cape Coast, where he completed his secondary education. He later became a science student at Achimota College, where he took the inter-B.Sc. course. After some years in business as a confectioner, he joined the staff of the Accra Academy as a science master from 1939-43, when he returned to commercial life as a timber merchant. He entered politics in 1948, when Dr Nkrumah, a former schoolmate at Achimota, formed the C.P.P., of which he was vice-chairman until his election to the Assembly in 1951. He served a term of imprisonment in 1950 for sedition, while working as a journalist on the staff of the *Accra Evening News*, the mouthpiece of the radical nationalists.

MR ARCHIE CASELY HAYFORD is the son of the founder of the West African National Congress, the forerunner of the C.P.P. He also is of Fanti stock and was born on April 8, 1898, at Axim. After receiving his early education at Mfantshipim, the oldest Methodist secondary school in the Gold Coast, Mr Hayford spent some years at Dulwich College, London, before entering Clare College, Cambridge, where he read law, and was called to the English Bar as a member of the Inner Temple. On his return to the Gold Coast, Mr Hayford practised for

some years before the Government appointed him one of the first African magistrates in 1936. He retired in 1948 to enter politics in the footsteps of his distinguished father. He was one of the first prominent upper middle-class professional men to identify himself with the common people, and specialized in defending the radical nationalists in the courts during the series of prosecutions instituted against the C.P.P. leaders before the party came to power. He was given the popular title of D.V.B.—Defender of the Veranda Boys. The term ‘veranda boys’ was a contemptuous one coined by the so-called black aristocrats to describe the plebeian supporters of Dr Nkrumah before they became Assemblymen and Ministers.

MR A. E. INKUMSAH, who succeeded Dr Ansah Koi, is a Fanti, born on April 26, 1900. He was educated at Mfantshipim College, and was an accountant with a firm in Kumasi before becoming a storekeeper, and later a druggist and chemist, in Sekondi. From 1947 to 1951 he was a member of the Sekondi-Takoradi Town Council and was prominent in public life. He associated himself with the progressive national liberation movement and worked with the local branch of the C.P.P. Mr Inkumsah has been a member of the Nkrumah Government since its inception and occupied the position of Under-Secretary to the Minister of Commerce and Industry before being promoted to full ministerial status.

DR ANSAH KOI is an Akwapim, born on June 6, 1904. He received his early education at the Wesleyan Methodist Secondary School at Freetown, Sierra Leone, before proceeding to England in 1926 for professional studies at University College Medical School. He qualified L.R.C.P. and M.R.C.S. in 1935. Dr Koi returned to the Gold Coast in 1937 and joined the Government Medical Service, which he left in 1939 to enter private practice. He entered public life through the Akwapim Youth Association, which he founded. He later joined the U.G.C.C. but transferred his allegiance to the C.P.P. after the split in the former organization. Although a member of the C.P.P. at the time of the general election, he was elected to the Assembly by the Joint Provincial Council of Chiefs.

MR THOMAS HUTTON MILLS is also the son of a barrister, the late Mr T. Hutton Mills, a former member of the Legislative Council and vice-president of the West African National

Congress. He is a Ga, born at Accra in 1895. He, too, is a lawyer, and was educated at St Catherine's College, Cambridge, and the Inner Temple. Legal adviser to the C.P.P., Mr Mills was imprisoned as one of the leaders in the Positive Action strike of 1950.

DR KWAME NKRUMAH, unlike most of his ministerial colleagues, who come from middle-class homes, is a real son of the common people. He is a Nziman, born in the village of Nkroful in the western province of the Gold Coast, on September 21, 1909. His father was a goldsmith and his mother, who lives with him, was a petty trader like so many of the working-class women in West Africa.

Although themselves illiterate, the Prime Minister's parents determined to give their child educational opportunities denied to them. As soon as he was old enough, the boy was enrolled at the Roman Catholic Mission School at the nearby town of Half-Assinie, where his father carried on his craft. From there he passed on to another Catholic school at Sekondi, where he completed his secondary education, and was awarded a teacher's training course scholarship to Achimota College. There he came under the influence of the distinguished English headmaster, the Rev A. G. Fraser, and the famous Dr Aggrey, the 'African Dr Arnold'. After school-teaching for several years at Axim and the Roman Catholic Seminary at Amisano, Dr Nkrumah decided to go abroad for advanced studies, and left for the United States in 1935. He arrived at New York with £10—the \$50 demanded by the U.S. Immigration Authorities at the time. Like the many other hundreds of Negro boys from the colonies thirsting for knowledge denied them at home, Nkrumah worked his way through Lincoln University by doing all sorts of jobs. He was hotel lift boy, dishwasher, railway porter, ship painter, during his summer vacations.

Having taken his B.A., he turned to the social sciences and obtained post-graduate degrees of M.A. in Philosophy and M.Sc. in Political Science from the University of Pennsylvania. He returned to Lincoln University as Lecturer in Political Science in 1943. He relinquished a promising academic career after a year, as he wanted to return to West Africa to apply the knowledge he had acquired abroad in the service of his country's struggle for freedom.

On his way back to the Gold Coast, Nkrumah arrived in London in June 1945. He enrolled at the London School of Economics as a post-graduate student to present a thesis for his doctorate. Meanwhile, he took an active part in colonial affairs and was elected a vice-president of the West African Students' Union in 1945. In the same year he was invited by the executive committee of the Pan-African Federation to serve with Mr T. R. Makonnen as the joint organizing secretaries of the Pan-African Congress, which held its fifth international conference in Manchester in October 1945. There a programme of Pan-African nationalism was formulated by two hundred Negro delegates representing nationalists and trade union organizations from all over Africa, the West Indies and America under the joint chairmanship of Dr W. E. B. DuBois, the doyen of the Afro-American intelligentsia and founder of Pan-Africanism and Dr Peter Milliard of British Guiana, the President of the Pan-African Federation of Great Britain.

Arising out of the decisions taken at the Pan-African Congress conference, Nkrumah and other West African delegates, among them Mr Wallace Johnson, pioneer trade union organizer of Sierra Leone, set up the West African National Secretariat in London in 1946 to direct the programme of self-government and federation of the West African colonies. In the following year, Dr Nkrumah returned to Africa to become the secretary of the United Gold Coast Convention.

Thanks to the political knowledge he obtained in America and the organizational experience gained while in England, he soon established a reputation as an able organizer and propagandist. In 1948 he was deported from Accra along with other nationalist leaders during the disturbances in the Colony. Two years later he was again arrested and sentenced to two years' imprisonment for organizing Positive Action strikes. By the time of his release in 1951 he was the foremost political personality in the country, the leader of the largest nationalist movement in the history of the Gold Coast. A year later he became the first Negro Prime Minister in the British Commonwealth. In the same year he was awarded the LL.D. by his alma mater.

Dr Nkrumah is exceedingly hard working. His day begins at 6 a.m., when he reads through his official papers and deals with correspondence. By eight he is to be found either at the party

headquarters or his official office. When the Legislative Assembly is in session, Dr Nkrumah takes an active part in its deliberations, guiding and supervising his less experienced ministerial colleagues in their parliamentary duties.

A light lunch after the adjournment of the Assembly at noon, and Dr Nkrumah returns to his office for conversations with members of his Cabinet and top-ranking officials and interviews with ordinary people who travel from all parts of the country to put their problems before him. He is a very good listener, always ready to learn from even the most humble. When the day's official business is over, Dr Nkrumah meets party leaders at C.P.P. headquarters. Very often he addresses public meetings at the Arena Sports Ground—the public forum of Accra—as a means of keeping the citizens informed on government policies.

'I am your servant,' he tells them. 'You have made me what I am. And it is my duty to come to you from time to time and give an account of my stewardship. When the people are dissatisfied with me, they have the right to throw me out.'

Week-ends usually find Dr Nkrumah on tours of his constituencies, addressing rallies and discussing problems with farmers, workers and other members of the rural communities.

Starting from the very bottom of the ladder, without any fairy god-mother to foster him, Dr Nkrumah has had to fight his way up largely through his own efforts. His motto has always been *labor omnia vincit*, which many middle-class intellectuals aspiring to political leadership might well emulate. For the idea is widely current among colonial students in Britain that simply because they have attended a university for a few years or acquired a profession, they are automatically entitled to political leadership, as by divine right.

Dr Nkrumah has shown that leadership is the reward for devoted service and can be achieved only by those who, having received the benefits of education, are prepared to plough their way back to the people and win their confidence. In this case, success has certainly not spoiled Dr Nkrumah. He still retains the common touch and is happiest among the ordinary people rather than in the society of officialdom. He has seen too many promising colonial leaders seduced more by flattery than by a handful of silver or a bit of ribbon to wear in the coat.

His modesty, integrity and unselfishness have endeared him to all. He lives a simple austere life, and shows little interest in money and other materialistic idols. When his party took office, he offered to pay his salary of £3,000 over to the C.P.P. after deducting a modest sum to meet his personal expenses. A non-smoker and teetotaller, Dr Nkrumah is no kill-joy. He is very sociable and most popular among his followers, who call him affectionately their 'show boy'. On the other hand, there is a prominent streak of reserve in him, which to those who do not know him intimately, may give the impression that with all his popularity he is a lonely man. This, however, is not true. It is only the outward manifestation of an inward reflectiveness. He is fundamentally a thinker who likes to weigh up well the pros and cons of a situation before making a decision. But once a decision is made which calls for action, he throws himself wholeheartedly and enthusiastically into the struggle. It is in action that Dr Nkrumah is at his best. He hates bureaucracy and red tape as much as he despises official protocol.

Because he is able to recognize the genuine from the spurious, it enables him to maintain a calm and cheerful detachment. Dr Nkrumah is gracious and polite to all alike—and never turns a deaf ear to anyone in need of his services—rich or poor, high or low, white or black. Even his closest colleagues cannot understand his kindness and generosity to those European officials, chiefs and other pro-British Africans who, in the early days of the struggle when they were in power, were often most cruel and vindictive to him and his party supporters. 'I came out of gaol and into the Assembly without the slightest feeling of bitterness to Britain. I stand for no racialism, no discrimination against any race or individual, but I am unalterably opposed to imperialism in any form,' declared Dr Nkrumah after his release in February 1951. There is greatness in this attitude. It is not without reason that even his bitterest political opponents and the British expatriates have the highest respect for his sincerity and singleness of purpose.

APPENDIX II

Who's who among African Ministerial Secretaries in 1953.

- (1) Mr J. H. Allassani, Ministerial Secretary for Development.
- (2) Mr J. K. Donkor, Ministerial Secretary for Health and Labour.
- (3) Mr Ohene Djan, Ministerial Secretary for Finance.
- (4) Mr J. B. Erzuah, Ministerial Secretary for Education and Social Welfare.
- (5) Mr Krobo Edusei, Ministerial Secretary for Justice.
- (6) Mr E. K. Bensah, Ministerial Secretary for Commerce, Industry, and Mines.
- (7) Mr A. Imoru, Ministerial Secretary for Agriculture and Natural Resources.
- (8) Mr Kwesi Plange, Ministerial Secretary for Local Government.
- (9) Mr F. Y. Asare, Ministerial Secretary for Housing, Town and Country Planning.
- (10) Mr Atta Mensah, Ministerial Secretary for Communications and Works.
- (11) Mr R. A. Ampodu, Ministerial Secretary for Defence.

MR JOSEPH EMMANUEL APPIAH, the personal representative in the United Kingdom of the Prime Minister, was born in Kumasi in 1923, the son of a former schoolmaster and now Chief Secretary to the Ashanti Confederacy Council. Mr Appiah received his secondary education at Mfantshipim College in the Gold Coast before coming to Britain to read Law at the Middle Temple. During the early part of the Second World War, he served as transport officer first at Takoradi and later on at Freetown, Sierra Leone, on the staff of the United Africa Company.

Mr Appiah's political activities as a nationalist began during his college days when he organized a students' strike. Since then, he has taken an active part in the Gold Coast Youth movement and the West African Students Union of Great Britain and Ireland, of which he was elected president in 1951 and 1952. He is also an *ex-officio* member of the West African Labour Parliamentary Committee; delegate to the fifth Pan-African Congress in 1945; the Congress of Peoples Against Imperialism in Paris 1948; Conference on World Government in Rome 1950, and special envoy of the Convention People's Party to the Neo-Destour Nationalist and Trade Union Congress in Tunis, North Africa, 1951.

As the accredited representative of the Prime Minister and the C.P.P. in Great Britain, Mr Appiah's mission is 'to establish friendly relations with all political parties and to get in touch with foreign firms interested in Gold Coast development'.¹

¹ *The Times British Colonies Review*, Autumn 1952, p. 11.

APPENDIX III

CONSTITUTION OF THE CONVENTION PEOPLE'S PARTY OF THE GOLD COAST

Certain sections of the British Conservative Press have frequently asserted that the C.P.P. aims at establishing a 'Black Dictatorship'. This unfounded allegation is not sustained in the Aims and Objects of the party as stated in its Constitution.

NAME

The Party shall be known and called the Convention People's Party.

AIMS AND OBJECTS (NATIONAL)

(I) SELF-GOVERNMENT NOW and the development of (Gold Coast) Ghana on the basis of Socialism.

(II) To fight relentlessly to achieve and maintain independence for the people of (Gold Coast) Ghana and their chiefs.

(III) To serve as the vigorous conscious political vanguard for removing all forms of oppression and for the establishment of a democratic socialist society.

(IV) To secure and maintain the complete unity of the Colony, Ashanti, Northern Territories and Trans-Volta.

(V) To work with and in the interest of the Trade Union Movement, and other kindred organizations, in joint political or other action in harmony with the Constitution and Standing Orders of the Party.

(VI) To work for a speedy reconstruction of a better (Gold Coast) Ghana in which the people and their chiefs shall have the right to live and govern themselves as free people.

(VII) To promote the Political, Social and Economic emancipation of the people, more particularly of those who depend directly upon their own exertions by hand or by brain for the means of life.

(VIII) To establish a Socialist State in which all men and women shall have equal opportunity and where there shall be no capitalist exploitation.

AIMS AND OBJECTS (INTERNATIONAL)

(I) To work with other nationalist democratic and socialist movements in Africa and other continents, with a view to abolishing imperialism, colonialism, racialism, tribalism and all forms of national and racial oppression and economic inequality among nations, races and peoples and to support all action for world peace.

(II) To support the demand for a West African Federation and of Pan-Africanism by promoting unity of action among the peoples of Africa and African descent.

MEMBERSHIP

There shall be two classes of membership:

(I) *Individual* (II) *Affiliated*

(I) *Individual Members*: Any person who is of the age of 18 or above and who accepts the objects, policy and programme and discipline of the Party shall be eligible for membership provided that:

- (a) He or she does not support imperialism, colonialism, tribalism and racialism.
- (b) He or she is not a member of any other political party or of any organization whose policy is inconsistent with that of the Party.
- (c) He or she is ineligible to be a member of a Trade Union, Farmers' Organization or other *bona fide* organization recognized by the Party.
- (d) Application for individual membership shall normally be made on a duly prescribed form which shall be filled in by the applicant and normally passed to a Branch Secretary for consideration by his committee as to acceptance or otherwise. On enrolment every member shall be supplied with enrolment and dues cards.

Admission Fee: Each individual member of the Party shall be requested to pay an enrolment fee of two shillings upon joining.

Monthly Dues: Each individual member of the Party shall pay a monthly due of 6d. to the Party through a local branch.

(II) *Affiliated members:* Shall consist of the following:

- (a) Trade Unions, including Civil Service Association.
- (b) Farmers' Organizations.
- (c) Co-operative societies, unions, associations.
- (d) Organizations of professionals, artisans and technicians.
- (e) Youth and sports organizations.
- (f) Cultural organizations.
- (g) Women's organizations.
- (h) Ex-servicemen's Union.

(i) All such organizations must accept the objects, policy and programme of the Party.

(ii) They must in the opinion of the National Executive be *bona fide* organizations.

(iii) An organization wishing to affiliate shall forward a resolution to that effect duly signed by its President and Secretary to the General Secretary of the Party, who shall in turn bring it before the National Executive Council of the Party for acceptance or otherwise.

(iv) Each organization upon being accepted for affiliation shall pay an affiliation fee of £1 1s. od.

FUNDS OF THE PARTY

The general funds of the party shall be derived from proceeds of functions (dances, football matches, etc.), voluntary subscriptions, appeals, donations, bequests, sale of literature, badge and other things approved by the National Executive, admission fees of individual members and organizations and monthly dues of individual members and organizations.

Except in the case of authorized imprest accounts, all funds shall be deposited in a bank and application for withdrawals must be signed by the Chairman and either the Secretary or the Treasurer.

All income of the party from sources which are outlined in clause 3 above shall be allocated as follows:

National headquarters 60 per cent. Branch 40 per cent.

PARTY COLOURS

The official colours of the Party shall be red, white and green in horizontal stripes, if flown as a flag.

NATIONAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE

(I) The National Annual Conference of the Party shall be convened annually in August at such date and place as may be fixed by the National Executive. A special emergency Conference may be convened by the National Executive or the Central Committee of the Party.

(II) *Composition of Annual Conference:* The National Annual Conference shall be constituted as follows:

- (i) Delegates duly elected and mandated by each affiliated organization to the number of two delegates for each five thousand or part thereof.
- (ii) Six delegates duly elected by each constituency.
- (iii) *Ex-officio* members of the Party Conference shall be as follows: All National Officers of the Party, members of the National Executive Council of the Party as well as members of the Central Committee, members of the Legislative Assembly, and two delegates elected by the Conference of the Ghana Youth League.
- (iv) *Ex-officio* members shall not be entitled to vote unless they are duly elected as representatives by their constituency branches or affiliated organizations.

ELECTION OF DELEGATES TO THE PARTY CONFERENCE

Qualification and disqualification of delegates:

- (i) Every delegate must individually accept and conform to the Constitution, Programme, Principles and Policy of the Party.
- (ii) Delegates must be *bona fide* members or paid permanent officials of the organization electing them, and no Assemblyman shall be elected as a Constituency delegate to the annual conference.
- (iii) No person shall act as a delegate for more than one organization.
- (iv) No person shall act as a delegate who has not paid his or her dues up to date, or who has not paid the political levy of his or her Trade Union or other affiliated organization.
- (v) No person or persons acting as candidates or supporting candidates in opposition to duly endorsed Party official candidates shall act as delegate(s).

FUNCTIONS AND POWERS OF NATIONAL ANNUAL
DELEGATES CONFERENCE

The National Annual Delegates Conference shall have power:

(I) To lay down the broad basic programme and policy of the Party for the ensuing year. The decisions of the Annual Delegates Conference shall be binding upon all Members of the Party, its constituency branches and its affiliated organizations.

(II) To consider the report and audited accounts presented by the National Treasurer on behalf of the National Executive Council.

(III) To elect members of the National Executive Council who shall be as follows:

(i) Deputy Chairman.

(ii) One representative from each Constituency.

(iii) Two Youth representatives from Youth Organizations.

(iv) Two women representatives from Women's Organizations.

(IV) *Ex-Officio*. The National Executive shall have the right to co-opt six other members. The General Secretary, National Treasurer, National Propaganda Secretary shall be *ex-officio* members and members of the Central Committee shall be members of the National Executive. The members of the National Executive Council shall continue in office until a fresh election is held at the next Annual Delegates Conference.

AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION

The existing Constitution or any part thereof may be amended, rescinded, altered or additions made thereto by resolutions carried by a majority vote at the Annual Delegates Conference. Notice of every such resolution passed at a Constituency Conference must be sent in writing to the General Secretary at National Headquarters of the Party two months before the Delegates Conference.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

(I) The Life Chairman (and in his absence the Deputy Chairman) shall preside over the meetings of the National Executive Council.

(II) The Duties of the National Executive Council:

- (a) To carry out the policy and programme of the Party as laid down by the Annual Delegates Conference.
- (b) To organize Regional Councils, Constituencies and Branches, and to guide and supervise their work.
- (c) To enforce the Constitution and rules of the Party and to take any action it deems necessary for this purpose whether by way of disaffiliation of an affiliated organization, dissolution or suspension of a branch of the Party, suspension or expulsion of an individual member. Any such action taken by the National Executive Council shall be reported to the next Annual Delegates Conference of the Party to which appeals shall lie from organizations, branches and members concerned.
- (d) To maintain accounts and submit a report and a statement of accounts to the Annual Delegates Conference of the Party.
- (e) To initiate and undertake all such activities as may further the aims and objects of the Party.
- (f) To approve candidates for Central and Local Government Elections from lists prepared and submitted by the Regional and Constituency Executive Committees.
- (g) The National Executive Council shall delegate powers to the Central Committee to set up specialized departments and other advisory bodies within the framework and under the supervision of the National Secretariat.
- (h) Any vacancy occurring in the National Executive Council during the course of the year shall be filled by the Party Leader.
- (i) The National Executive Council shall meet in plenary session at least once every three months to hear reports on the state of the Party and the work of the Central Committee.
- (j) All decisions taken by the National Executive Council shall be transmitted to the Regional and Local Party Organizations through the Secretariat.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

Composition: There shall be a Central Committee of the National Executive consisting of the Party Leader and eight other members selected by him and approved by the National Executive. Other members of the Party with special knowledge or with

special standing in connection with service to the country may be co-opted.

Functions: (I) The Central Committee shall act as the 'Directorate' of the National Executive in seeing that the decisions and policies of the National Executive are duly executed.

(II) To supervise the administrative machinery of the Party at all levels—national, regional, constituency and branch executives and to take such measures as it deems necessary to enforce decisions and programme of the Party as laid down by the National Executive.

(III) The members of the Central Committee shall reside in Accra and shall meet in permanent session once a week or if emergency arises from day to day to review major trends, formulate tactics and strategy for the guidance of the National Executive, and in the event of emergency to assume full responsibility of safeguarding the basic programme of the Party, its security and defence.

(IV) As the main 'Directorate' of the National Executive Council all actions taken by the Central Committee shall be reported to the next quarterly meeting of the National Executive in plenary session.

(V) The Leader of the Party shall appoint from among the members of the Central Committee a permanent control secretary who shall be held responsible for summoning the meetings of the Central Committee, keeping its records and preparing the necessary reports to the National Executive Council.

(VI) The Central Committee shall work in closest collaboration with all members of the Party in the National Legislative Assembly.

DISCIPLINE

For the purpose of maintaining absolute discipline in the Party, the Central Committee shall be a tribunal of justice. Its decisions shall be reported to the National Executive Council at its next quarterly plenary session for ratification or otherwise pending the final appeal to the next Annual Delegates Conference.

REGIONAL PARTY ORGANIZATION

REGIONAL CONFERENCE

The Regional Conference shall be convened annually by the Regional Executive. A special Regional Conference shall be

convened on the instructions of the National Executive Council through the Secretariat at National headquarters, Accra, or on the demand of at least one-third of the branches of the Party in the Region. The Regional Conference shall consist of two representatives elected from each Constituency within the Region.

Regional Officers: The Regional Officers shall be as follows:

Regional Chairman	} Appointed by the National Executive Council and should be fulltime officers.
Regional Secretary	
Regional Propaganda Secretary	

The members of the National Executive from the Region concerned shall be *ex-officio* delegates to the Regional Conference without vote.

The members of the Regional Executive shall be *ex-officio* delegates but shall not be entitled to vote unless elected by Branches.

Powers of Regional Conference: The Regional Conference shall have the power:

- (a) To lay down Regional policy and programme for the ensuing year providing that such policy and programme are in strict conformity with the basic policy and programme laid down by the Annual Delegates Conference.
- (b) To consider the organizational reports presented by the Regional Secretary on behalf of the Regional Executive.

COMPOSITION OF REGIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES

The Regional Executive Committee shall consist of the following:

The Regional Chairman. The Regional Secretary.
 The Regional Propaganda Secretary and
 Two representatives from each Constituency within the Region.

The Chairman shall preside at Regional Conferences. The Chairman, Secretary and members of the Regional Executive

shall continue in office until new appointments have been made by the National Executive. In the event of vacancies such place or places on the Regional Executive Committee shall be filled by the National Executive Council.

Duties of Regional Executive Committee: The duties of the Regional Executives shall be:

- (a) To organize branches in the districts, cities, towns and villages within the Region: co-ordinate their activities and work.
- (b) To carry out the policy and programme of the Party, instructions and directives received from the National Headquarters Secretariat. The Regional Executive Committee shall be entitled to make recommendations to the National Secretariat on matters of affiliation, dis-affiliation, dissolutions or expulsions of affiliated organizations, branches and members of the Party within the Region.
- (c) To submit reports to the Regional Conferences, as well as to the National Secretariat for transmission to the National Executive Council.
- (d) To manage, control and guide the work of the Party in Regional Local Government Bodies and elections thereto as well as the work in the educational and cultural organizations under the general supervision of the National Headquarters Secretariat.
- (e) To undertake any activity which may further the work of the Party in the Regions concerned.

Regional Funds: The Regions shall have no funds of their own. Salaries and allowances of Regional Officers shall be paid from National Headquarters direct. Office expenses and travelling expenses, etc., shall be met out of imprest given by National Headquarters. The imprest amount for each Region shall be £50.

CONSTITUENCY PARTY ORGANIZATION

(I) *Annual Conference:* A Conference of the Constituency shall be held twice a year, to which every Branch in the Constituency possessing a Charter shall send two delegates. The place of the Conference shall be determined by the

Constituency Executive subject to the Conference. In event of an emergency special Constituency Conferences may be held at the discretion of the Constituency Executive Committee.

(II) *Composition of Constituency Executives:* The Constituency Executive shall consist of not less than nineteen persons including officers. The sixteen representatives apart from the three *ex-officio* members shall be elected at each Annual Conference. Where several areas compose a Constituency there should be two representatives from each branch of the constituency. The Chairman, Secretary and Propaganda Secretary shall be appointed by the National Executive Council.

(III) *Functions of the Constituency Executive Committees:* The Constituency Executive Committee shall carry out the policy and decisions of the Annual Constituency Conference which must be in keeping with the basic policy and programme of the Party as laid down by the Annual Delegates Conference.

BASIC PARTY ORGANIZATION

The Branch is the basic organization of the Party. The Party shall establish branches in all towns and villages. A chartered branch shall consist of at least twenty-five members. Each branch shall be governed by a Branch Executive Committee which shall be elected annually at a General Meeting of the Branch.

In big towns which have been divided into wards for local elections, there shall be Party Wards corresponding to these wards. All Party Wards shall function within their respective Branches in the towns, but each Party Ward shall have a Party Ward Executive, and representatives of the various wards shall be members of the Branch Executive. Where towns are considered too large they could be divided up into sections.

Branches in the constituencies and municipalities shall deal direct with their respective constituency headquarters.

Branch General Meetings: There shall be a general meeting of each Branch at least once a week.

Branch Executive Committees: There shall be a Branch Executive consisting of the following officers:

Chairman	Vice-Chairman	Secretary
Assistant Secretary	Treasurer	Propaganda Secretary

The Branch Executive Committee shall consist of the six *ex-officio* members and seven other members.

Functions of Branch Executives shall be:

- (a) To carry on propaganda and organizational work among the community in order to implement the policy and programme of the Party.
- (b) To pay constant attention to the sentiments and remarks of the masses of the people; to report such sentiments and remarks to the National Headquarters Secretariat; to promote the political, economic and cultural life of the people and to take the lead to organize the masses in the locality in which the Branch operates.
- (c) To recruit new members, to collect Party membership dues which must be remitted to the National Treasurer.
- (d) To check and verify the record for Party membership and to report to the National Headquarters Secretariat any act of indiscipline and other offences which might bring the Party into dishonour and disrepute.
- (e) To educate the Party members and to supervise their political education. The Branch Executive Committee may suspend but has no mandatory powers to expel any member without first reporting such a member to the Central Committee.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE OF THE PARTY ORGANIZATION

(I) The Parliamentary Committee shall consist of all Party members in the Legislative Assembly.

(II) The Parliamentary Committee shall be under the direct supervision and control of the Party Leader who will report to the National Executive and the Central Committee on the work, activities and general behaviour of all members of the Party in the Assembly.

(III) The Party Leader shall appoint a Parliamentary Committee Chairman and Deputy Chairman from among the Assemblymen to maintain discipline and to guide them in their parliamentary duties. The Parliamentary Committee Chairman and his Deputy shall maintain daily contact with the Leader or his Deputy.

All salaries for Party members in the Assembly shall be paid over to the National Treasurer. The Party Leader will arrange such remuneration with the Assemblymen on terms mutually agreed upon between the Assemblymen and the National Executive Council.

QUORUM

With the exception of the Central Committee a quorum will consist of one-third of the membership of the Party Branch Executives, Constituency Executives, Regional Executives or National Executive.

INNER PARTY ORGANIZATION

(I) *National Secretariat*: The Central Administrative machinery of the Party shall be known as the National Secretariat and shall consist of the General Secretary, National Treasurer, and National Propaganda Secretary. They shall be appointed by the National Executive Council. The National Executive Council shall also have power to appoint such other officers as the work of the Party may necessitate.

(i) The National Secretariat shall be under the direct supervision and control of the Central Committee of the National Executive Council of the Party.

(ii) The National Secretariat shall be located in Accra.

(iii) The Secretary of the Central Committee shall act as a liaison between the National Secretariat and the National Executive Council of the Party.

(iv) The Chief function of the National Secretariat is to transmit decisions of the National Executive Council and the Central Committee to the Regional and Constituency Executives and the Party Branches, and to perform such other duties connected with Party administration. The National Headquarters Secretariat shall maintain close contact with Branch Secretaries and Treasurers as well as Constituency and Regional Secretaries.

(II) *Women's Section*: Individual women members of the Party shall be organized into sections. Women's sections may be organized on Branch and ward basis. A General Council of Women's Sections shall be established to co-ordinate the activities of women in the Party.

There shall be no separate status for women in the Party.

A woman who becomes an individual member of the Party becomes thereby a member of the women's section. Women may join the Party through the Women's Sections.

The women's sections shall hold rallies, dances, picnics and other social functions throughout the year. A special Ghana Women's day shall be observed once a year at Easter.

Each Party Branch shall have a Women's Section to cater for the special interests of women, but the Women's Section shall be part and parcel of the Branch and its Executive Committee.

(III) *Party Youth League*: The Youth of the country under eighteen years shall be organized into Party Youth Clubs. These clubs shall collectively constitute the Party Youth League. The Secretary of the Central Committee shall be a member of the Central Council of the Party Youth League, and the Secretary of each Branch of the Party shall also be a member of the local Branch of the Party Youth Club.

(IV) *Publications*: The Party shall publish its own literature, periodicals, magazines, pamphlets, books, etc., as and when they shall be deemed necessary.

PARTY'S MANIFESTO

The National Executive Council of the Party shall decide which items from the Party Programme shall be included in the Manifesto which shall be issued by the National Executive Council prior to General or Local Government Elections.

PARTY NATIONAL HOLIDAYS

INDEPENDENCE DAY	(For Gold Coast January 8th)
WOMEN'S DAY	(For Gold Coast Easter Monday)
ANTI-IMPERIALIST DAY	(For Gold Coast May 24th)
PARTY ANNIVERSARY	(For Gold Coast June 12th)
PARTY ANNUAL CONFERENCE	(For Gold Coast August Bank Holiday)
YOUTH DAY	(For Gold Coast September 21st)

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