

# AFRICA

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## *Notes on Current Events*

by SOL DUBULA

### **Sandhurst—A Lesson to All Africa**

'THE GHANA COUP—FEBRUARY 24TH, 1966', by Colonel A. A. Afrifa, should be made compulsory reading for all in Africa who may still harbour the illusion that independence comes with the lowering of the foreign flag. In this book a man who played a leading part in the planning and execution of the coup demonstrates (though quite unintentionally) how he was ripened to play the role of neo-colonialism in Ghana.

A neo-colonialist collaborator is not only one who is on the secret pay-roll of the M.I.5 or the C.I.A. (although this must be so in many cases) but also one whose values have been so moulded by Western orientated training that he has contempt for his own people, their traditions and institutions and nothing but fawning admiration for those of his mentors. Bitter experience has demonstrated that to attempt the process of reconstruction and the consolidation of independence in Africa with men like Afrifa in important positions of State—whether in the Army or Civil Service—is an almost impossible task. And especially in the context of unstable conditions which are often the hallmark of a country which finds itself on the brink of major social changes, it is playing with fire to allow the military institutions of the colonial powers to train and, inevitably, corrupt those who will take command of the police and of the army.

In 1958 Afrifa, still an impressionable youth, was sent to Sandhurst. 'I was thrilled by Sandhurst,' says Afrifa, 'the beauty of its countryside

and its calm Wish stream which separated Sandhurst from the rest of the world. Sandhurst, so far, was the best part of my life—learning to be a soldier in a wonderful and mysterious institution with traditions going back to 1802.'

Did Afrifa ever wonder to himself that amongst the most consistent and not so mysterious traditions of this institution was the preparation of those who commanded armies of conquest which enslaved for so many centuries such a large area of Asia and Africa? Obviously he did not, or if it did cross his mind, it all became lost in a sort of enthusiasm for things martial as if bearing arms was in itself a noble and glorious act. 'It was' goes on Afrifa 'a good, solid, military school, where one pulled oneself up as a man. I met many boys of my age for whom there was nothing sweeter than bearing arms in the service of their country, boys to whom Her Majesty's army was a symbol of their very existence.' Amongst those whom he recalls having passed through 'one of the greatest institutions of the world' are men like King Hussein of Jordan and Ayub Khan of Pakistan.

It comes as no surprise that Afrifa's military lessons were supplemented by subjects such as Constitutional History—'we discussed problems frequently, particularly problems facing the Commonwealth which was assuming a new character with the independence of the African and Asian countries'.

Was it at these classes that the job of transforming the young Ghanaian into a black Englishman was so splendidly achieved? He not only expresses a great affection for the English breakfast (which he 'loves') but talks of the British Crown and its policy with an almost Tory-like reverence.

'Our severing of diplomatic relations with Her Majesty's Government of the United Kingdom over the Rhodesian issue was a rash and foolish step. It was in Kwame Nkrumah's scheme of self-glorification to break relations with Britain in this dramatic manner in which he did and in the same breath threaten the very existence of the Commonwealth. . . .'

As to where his loyalties lie in the tug-of-war between the forces of neo-colonialism and African unity, Colonel Afrifa leaves us in no doubt. 'Organisation of African Unity or no organisation of African Unity, I will claim my citizenship of Ghana and of the Commonwealth in any part of the world. I have been trained in the United Kingdom as a soldier and I am ever prepared to fight alongside my friends in the United Kingdom in the same way as the Canadians and the Australians will do.' Their breasts must be swelling with pride—those military pundits of Sandhurst—to read such stirring words from their protégé. He was certainly a good pupil. Despite a cliché here and there about

being proud of his Ghanaian citizenship, Afrifa makes clear the overriding role which the Union Jack plays in his life.

Perhaps the most disgusting and sick-making portion of Afrifa's unwitting self-revelation is that which deals with the struggle for Ghana's independence. The following could, almost word for word, have been written by one of the imperial spinsters who frequent Chatham House or by the official historian of the Colonial Office (and, for all one knows, might have been).

And while those big brains—J. B. Danquah, Akufo Addo, Obetsebi Lamptey and many others—advocated self-government step by step in the shortest possible time, Kwame Nkrumah insisted that it should be self-government 'now or never'. His majority of illiterate followers, to whom he promised bread and honey if they supported him—as if self-government did not mean hard work—disregarded brain and wisdom in favour of brawn. The British had no alternative—not that they believed it would work—but to grant to the country its independence as the wish of the majority of the people'.

And, to cap it all, read the following and see whether you have any doubt left as to the calibre of the men behind the Ghana coup:

*The more the British tried to hand over power step by step, the more Kwame Nkrumah and his followers shouted for self-government 'now'. The British, duty conscious, tried to do that which was right against all odds, but the people had become so inflamed that they became violent. . . . This was a situation which Kwame Nkrumah exploited. The Colonial Government had to hand over power to the people. (My italics.)*

Does it not read like a citation which usually accompanies the award of the Victoria Cross? In this case it is Her Majesty's gallant government which 'duty-conscious' and 'against all odds' tried to delay independence but was forced to retreat by the illiterate masses of Ghana!

Afrifa's admiration for the Imperialist-imposed political institutions knows no bounds. He complains bitterly that the previous generations under Nkrumah 'paid lip-service to the great institutions under which they were brought up. They mismanaged the affairs of Ghana, dissipated our heritage and abused our land'.

In almost every situation which involves a struggle between the people of Africa and their overlords, Afrifa uses words which demonstrate unequivocally whose interests he came back from Sandhurst to protect. During the U.N. Congo operation Afrifa was in command of an Engineers platoon. His narration of this episode again underlines that his affections for the Great White Chief extend beyond the British.

In the face of growing unrest and the near breakdown of civil law and order in the Congo, the Belgians had no option but to bow to the 'wind of change' which was then sweeping the whole Continent. Gradually they set about introducing measures giving a semblance of autonomy to the Congolese. At the same time, and for the first time, Congolese citizens were to be trained as administrators and eventually to take over the reins of government when independence was finally handed over. To Congolese Nationalists and the arch-enemy of imperialism, this was not enough.

Afrifa goes on to describe how Nkrumah 'worked on' Lumumba and invited him to Accra. 'Of course, this meeting was at the expense of the Ghanaian taxpayer.' Furthermore, Nkrumah helped split the Congo's National Progress Party which favoured a 'more natural change-over from Belgian rule to independence. At the same time he boosted up Lumumba's Party'.

'We had lost lives in a struggle which was not ours and in a cause that was not ours'. (Contrast this with his readiness to fight alongside the Canadians and Australians to defend Her Majesty's Commonwealth).

To Nkrumah and his aides the U.N. troops had failed the Congo because they could not eject Belgian troops. Of course, Patrice Lumumba was made to think likewise. Had he been left alone by his master-mind, Kwame Nkrumah, perhaps he would have realised the risk he was taking by deciding against U.N. troops and insisting upon troops from the East. Kwame Nkrumah had placed us in a terrible dilemma through an unbridled political adventure. He appointed and directed a stream of stupid ambassadors like A. Y. K. Djin and N. A. Welbeck, who did everything to obstruct the work of the U.N. in the Congo by their direct involvement and *interference on the side of Lumumba*. (My italics.)

A reader will be wasting his time if he searches in Afrifa's book for one word of criticism of imperialism, of the cruel oppression which the Ghanaians and other Africans were subjected to by it, of the distortions of the Ghanaian economy by imperialist economic policy in the interests of its sterling balances, etc., etc. Instead, every bit of muck which the Western press has thrown at Nkrumah's Ghana is swallowed by this lover of English breakfasts. He repeats without any qualification the exaggeration that 'Ghana was on the verge of famine. Commerce was at a standstill' under Nkrumah.

But now, almost unnoticed in the English daily and Sunday press, comes the publication of the Economic Survey 1965 published by the *present* Ministry of Information and Broadcasting for the Central Bureau of Statistics of Ghana. According to an analysis of the survey, by even such an anti-Nkrumah journal as *West Africa* (November 19th, 1966), 'Ghana's infra-structure improved rather than deteriorated under the Nkrumah regime'. In particular, there was a big increase in freight handled by Ghana Railways and water production by Ghana's Water-

works increased in 1965 by some 18.6 per cent. The population served with piped water, wells, bore-holes and ponds rose to some 32 per cent of the population. 1965 alone showed an increase in the generation of electricity of 9.1 per cent over 1964. In 1965 the two postal departments made tremendous improvements in their operation and made a surplus compared with a loss in 1964.

I do not claim that all was well with the Ghanaian economy when the coup occurred. But this report, for which no sort of Nkrumah bias can be claimed, nails the lie once again that Ghana under Nkrumah was in an economic quagmire. But let us return to Afrifa.

After the Congo operation he was again sent to the United Kingdom to the Infantry Schools at Hythe and Warminster. When he returned to Ghana from this course he became more interested in the political situation in his country. On his own admission he was deeply affected by the indirect indoctrination to which he was subjected during his second stay in the United Kingdom. 'Many questions were being asked about what was happening in my country. Having spent the best part of the year in the Congo, I could give no answers to these questions. People wanted to know why Nkrumah and Ghana were drifting towards Communism.'

Thus was prepared one of the men who was behind one of Africa's coups. It was not necessary that money should pass. It was not necessary that Whitehall should give the order. The legacy of slavish worship of the Master race and its institutions has been deeply imbedded in the minds of men like Afrifa. That this indoctrination was brought about with the co-operation of the very regime which he helped to destroy—for it is independent Ghana which sent him to Sandhurst—is one of the grave errors of the Nkrumah government. I wonder how many Afrifas there are at the moment being moulded by the Sandhursts of the West? How many of these men will be able to rise above the subtle ideological pummelling to which they are subjected in these institutions? I can only express the hope that the Afrifa book will alert those African governments to the extreme dangers of accepting this sort of 'assistance' from those who have never really accepted their technical withdrawal from the seat of power in Africa.

## **'West Africa' Makes Excuses for its Pets**

You will remember the act of international thuggery when the Ankrah regime decided to arrest and detain the Guinea delegation which was on its way to Addis Ababa for the last meeting of the O.A.U. The

excuse given was that the Guinea authorities were detaining Ghanaians in Guinea against their will and were preventing them from returning to Ghana.

We now know that a mediation mission consisting of Mr. Justin Bomboka (Congo), Mr. Joseph Murumbi (Kenya) and Mr. John Nelson-Williams (Sierra Leone) visited both Accra and Conakry and in Conakry interviewed 81 Ghanaians whom the Ankrah regime alleged were being held against their will. According to Mr. Murumbi, each Ghanaian was interviewed separately and told that there was an aircraft at his disposal which would take him back to Ghana if he so wished. Said Mr. Murumbi: 'All 81 said that they did not want to leave and signed a statement to that effect.'

This comes as no surprise. But what should cause surprise is the following piece of disingenuous journalistic chicanery. Commenting on the report of the mediation mission, *West Africa* of November 12th, 1966, says:

Has Ghana lost face because in the end in spite of the agreement reached in Addis Ababa the O.A.U. could not find any Ghanaian in Guinea who was ready to return to Ghana? We think not. We pointed out last week that most of these Ghanaians were the ex-president's security men, many of whom would deservedly be arrested if they returned to Ghana. The rest were students, some of whom have already returned to Ghana; others might feel that their welcome there would be cool. Moreover, most of them can be said to have gone to Guinea by choice. No doubt some are held there against their wishes, but this is not easy to prove.

Not only is this last statement a serious reflection on the integrity of the three gentlemen who served on the mediation mission, but in the absence of a reference to one bit of evidence, it constitutes a deliberate lie.

I suppose one should not expect too much from a journal which appears to have dedicated itself to the cultivation of those forces in Africa which would be most acceptable to the huge private monopolies whose advertisements and company reports stud the pages of *West Africa*.

## **Africa and the Common Market**

In this column in issue No. 26, we commented on the announcement that an agreement had been reached between Nigeria and the six members of the European Economic Community whereby Nigeria was made an Associate Member of the Common Market. Up to then there had been 18 nations in Africa with the status of Associate Member, and most of these were from the French-speaking territories.

We counselled a suspicious approach to an association with those who for centuries had used their economic power to bleed Africa dry.

Now comes some confirmation of this suspicion and from no less a source than M. Diori, Niger's President, who is also the Chairman of the French-speaking O.C.A.M. According to M. Diori, the States which were not associated with the Common Market had, in relation to the value of their exports, profited at the expense of the African 'Associated States'. The advantage which Associates have of not being required to pay the E.E.C.'s common external tariff levied against 'outside' countries is more than offset by the internal taxes which are imposed on such products. According to M. Diori, this 'in practical terms cancels out the preferences we get from the Yaoundé Convention'. He went on to point out that while the Common Market urged the African States to sell their products at world prices, 'as far as they themselves are concerned the notion of selling at competitive prices is absolutely unknown'. By this hypocritical process the 'Big Six' can ensure (and have in fact ensured) that the relationship remains an unequal one. For example, consistent with this attitude, the E.E.C.'s vegetable oil is protected at around 80 per cent higher than prevailing world prices.

Let us once again remember the age-old proverb: 'Fear the Greeks—especially when they come bearing gifts.'

## Malawi

Once again Malawi found itself in the camp of the imperialists when the General Assembly of the United Nations passed the 54-Nation resolution which called for the establishment of a 14-member ad hoc committee to recommend practical measures by which South West Africa should be administered so as to enable the territory to exercise the right of self-determination and to achieve independence. The resolution was passed by 114 votes to 2 (South Africa and Portugal) with France, the United Kingdom and Malawi abstaining.

What is the value of independence if a country's policy is determined by the need to appease the White racist Vorster regime or the Smith clique? No one belittles the real problem facing South Africa's smaller neighbours, whose economies are very much linked with South Africa's. But if this factor is taken too far, the mass of South Africa's non-whites will have as little hope of some sort of solidarity from these countries as they have from Matanzima's Transkei.

## Congo--Kinshasa

Very few individuals outside the group which stands for and supports colonialism and neo-colonialism, ever doubted that the chaos of the post-1960 Congo situation was manipulated by financial interests.

In a recent book by Jules Chomé, a Belgian lawyer (*Moïse Tshombe et L'Escroquerie Katangaise*) it is proved beyond a shadow of a doubt by means of documentary and other evidence that the pawn Tshombe was, in the words of Chomé, created by the Colonial milieu in conjunction with the Union Minière of Upper Katanga. This preparation for Katanga secession was made long before Independence and the revelation nails the lie of the Belgian authorities that they had nothing to do with it.

The imperialist-created chaos of the last six years in the Congo has been of the utmost value to the racialists and their supporters. The cry of 'What about the Congo?' studded the editorial outpourings of the Western press each time it discussed Africa's problems. That the same forces are still making efforts to manipulate the situation becomes clear once again from the announcement by the Mobutu Government that all foreign consulates outside Kinshasa would be closed and no new consulates would be allowed before the promulgation of new legislation concerning consular representation. When this decree is enforced foreign diplomats will have to have special permission to travel outside Kinshasa.

The reason for this, according to President Mobutu is 'to check the activities of imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism'. The decree will affect four Belgian, three United States, three West German, one U.K. and one French Embassy outside Kinshasa. It should be noticed that none of the Socialist countries have found it necessary to have a multiplicity of diplomatic establishments outside the capital. The lesson is clear. In the words of President Mobutu 'we have been told for a long time that Communist countries were responsible for subversion. But there is very little Communist representation in the Congo. We must ask who is responsible for the Kisangani mutiny and the Bukavu and Albertville incidents. The answer is that it is the Western countries, those which claim to act in the name of Western civilisation. . . . Freedom and independence are far more precious to us than the sacks of rice we are offered. What we want most is to be able to conduct our own affairs in peace'.

President Mobutu has also announced that an international pilgrimage centre would be made of the place where the former Prime Minister, Patrice Lumumba was murdered. We can only hope that in the not



too distant future the murderers of Lumumba and those behind them will be completely eradicated from Congolese national life.

## Zambia

Following the report of the Brown Commission into pay and conditions in the copper mining industry which recommended a rise for African mineworkers, the copper mining companies in Zambia have agreed to raise the earning of African mineworkers by 22 per cent as from October 1st, 1966. The report also attacks racialism amongst the expatriate miners and recommends recruitment from places other than South Africa. It also recommends the abolition of discrimination in everything from 'wages and leave to toilets'.

## Company Profits

In the company report for the first nine months of 1966 Unilever complains that in a large part of tropical Africa conditions continue to be disturbed with resulting adverse effects on profits. In the same report it is announced that the combined results of Unilever Limited and N.V. pre-tax profit was £92.5 million for the first nine months of 1966, compared with £89.6 million in the first nine months of 1965. The net profits for the same period stands at £48.6 million compared to £48.3 million in 1965.

## Guinea

Writing in *World Marxist Review* (No. 11) on the *Guinean Experience and Progressive Development in Africa*, Sikhe Camara, a member of the Democratic Party of Guinea and Guinea's Ambassador to the U.S.S.R., shows clearly that his Party and Government is conscious of the danger facing the newly independent States in Africa from imperialist intrigues:

The men who over the years had organised the resettlement of its peoples, destroyed its social structure, occupied its territory, in a word who systematically despoiled the continent, have not changed. Resorting to more veiled forms, acting more subtly and therefore all the more dangerous, they repeat or try to repeat the things done in the past. This new system of indirect domination, which is more effective and more in keeping with the period of decolonialisation, is known as neo-colonialism.

The Democratic Party of Guinea has continuously sought effective means for abolishing economic and military domination. It is conscious too of the need to overcome the dangerous survivals of the colonial era in the sphere of education and in the consciousness of the people.

The main weapon in this struggle is the Democratic Party of Guinea whose special character is described by Sékou Touré in his book *The Guinean Experience and African Unity*.

From the very moment the Democratic Party was founded, our wish was that it should not resemble the political parties in the European sense. Our party remained a broad movement for the liberation of Africa, whose mission it is to unite all Africans of goodwill around an anti-colonial and progressive platform. Thus plantation owners, merchants, chiefs and their subordinates, men and women, Muslims, Catholics, Protestants and those 'without religion' can find a place in the party provided they accept its programme.

Camara deals with the steps which were taken in the economic sphere to lay the foundations for an independent economy. These steps included a State monopoly of foreign trade, creation of an independent monetary system and National Bank, nationalisation of electric power and transport companies, of real estate societies, foreign banks, insurance companies, etc.

In coup-torn Africa, the measures taken by Guinea's National Council of Revolution is of special interest. These include the organising of civil defence brigades, a people's militia and an increase in the army personnel of the so-called border Federations in order to prevent an attempt which may be made to stage a coup from the outside. 'The army in Guinea is not a separate unit isolated from the rest of society and is, therefore, a reliable sentinel of the people's future and the Republic's sovereignty. The D.P.G. constantly sees to it that the army's morale and efficiency are on a high level.'

Camara deals also with certain general characteristics of countries which have embarked on the path of building a non-capitalist democracy. He states that regimes of this character guarantee not only democratic liberties but social rights including the right to work. In addition 'to restore the equilibrium unjustly upset in the past, the new regime must grant privileges to the formerly disinherited social strata and recognise the paramount importance of the working people'. On the multi-party system, he comments:

In the new countries the system of rival parties is hardly desirable, and even harmful, since in most of the regions of tropical Africa class differentiation is not the decisive factor in social life. During the colonial period all sections of the population of the continent suffered the same deprivations, persecution, inequality and injustice, in a word, all found themselves

in the same position. Even if some social classes did emerge in some of the countries they are of minor importance, and the contradictions between them are far from the stage when clashes break out spontaneously and become inevitable.

Dealing with the O.A.U., Camara makes the point that it would have achieved far more were it not for the intrigues of the imperialists who 'are acting hand-in-glove with the native reactionaries now again rearing their heads in our continent'.

## Sudan

A NEW CRISIS has developed in Sudan arising over the illegal banning by the right-wing government of the Communist Party, which played a leading role in toppling the hated military dictatorship. The Party, which had claimed from the start that the law declaring it illegal was unconstitutional, appealed to the Supreme Court, which duly upheld the Communist Party's right to exist and ruled that the law banning it was *ultra vires* the Constitution.

But the reactionary government refused to accept the Court's ruling and has continued to suppress Party activity by administrative methods. This has led to a storm of protest from workers and intellectuals; the fight for democracy and the rule of law still continues in this strife-torn country.