

■ By discrediting Ghana, the British press hopes to retard self-rule for Africans in other countries

The Press Campaign Against Ghana

By George Padmore

WELL-INFORMED political Ghanaians in London are beginning to express alarm over the marked deterioration in the friendly relations between Britain and Ghana so soon after the independence of the first African member of the Commonwealth.

Full responsibility for the present strained relationship in Anglo-Ghanaian affairs is being placed largely upon the shoulders of certain irresponsible Fleet Street newspapers which have never become reconciled to the idea of freedom for Negroes. These newspapers have seized upon the expulsion of three alien Africans—Mr. Bankole Timothy, a Sierra Leonean Christian journalist, and two Northern Nigerian Moslem businessmen—to launch a campaign of

vilification, misrepresentation and slander against Dr. Nkrumah and other members of his Government, in the hope thereby of discrediting Ghana, bringing its Government and laws into ridicule and thus influencing British colonial policy against the granting of independence to Nigeria and other territories predominantly inhabited by Africans.

Immediately the Government's writs were served upon the three Negroes in July, the signal was given to the Fleet Street Press to move into action against Dr. Nkrumah, who had only recently before returned to Ghana from the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference, where he had been much lauded by the same press. Certain newspapers are said to have despatched special cor-

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respondents to Accra to send back tendentious and exaggerated reports in order to prepare British public opinion for anticipated disturbances and the long-hoped-for "Civil War," which some papers had predicted would occur before Independence on March 6th, and were greatly disappointed when things went off quietly.

All this preparation was part of a "psychological warfare" buildup in expectation of tribal outbreaks between dissident elements and the supporters of the Convention People's Party, which constitutes the Government. But thanks to the firm action taken by the Government before certain plans could be put into operation, public law and security in Ghana have been preserved, and things are quieter today than they have been for a long time past.

With the news of the deportations of three aliens, the world-famous Negro statesman and national liberator, Dr. Nkrumah, overnight became for a large part of the British Press the reincarnation of Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin and Caesar combined. Never before in the history of British journalism has Fleet Street poured out such a barrage of lies, distortions, innuendoes and downright vilification as has been heaped upon the head of a Prime Minister in the Commonwealth.

Not without reason, many responsible representatives of the Afro-Asian Bandung nations are in private expressing strong resentment at this vile campaign against the Government of Ghana and especially Dr. Nkrumah, for whom they all have a high respect.

From their own experience they

know that only "firmness" can save Ghana from internal disruption and civil disturbances such as have happened in Burma, Malay, Singapore and Indonesia—a situation which many enemies of colonial freedom are fervently hoping for and encouraging by fanning the embers of tribalism, regionalism, and religious communalism.

CAMPAIGN STEP BY STEP

Things started to move when Lord Burnham (a director of the die-hard Tory imperialist *Daily Telegraph*), in his capacity as acting chairman of the Commonwealth Press Union, sent a telegram to the Prime Minister of Ghana protesting against the deportation of Mr. Timothy. That the deportation of the other two men, who are not journalists, was forgotten is a fact of some significance, particularly as motives were imputed other than those stated officially by the then Minister of Interior and Justice that the presence of the three aliens was "*not conducive to the public good.*"

His Lordship was quickly put in his place by the brilliant young journalist and parliamentarian, Kofi Baako, who, in rejecting Lord Burnham's insinuations, assured the world that the "freedom of the Press in Ghana is assured and not endangered in any way." We wonder if Lord Burnham can give a similar guarantee that newspapers throughout the Colonial Empire enjoy equal freedom with the Press of Ghana to abuse those in authority and vilify governors and other high-ranking expatriates exercising dominion over these exploited countries!



United Press

THE OPPOSITION IN GHANA—*These members of the "Shifimo Kpe" movement attend an outdoor rally in Accra. The members of the movement are mainly from the Ga tribe. The large umbrellas denote the presence of chiefs in the assemblage.*

Perhaps Archbishop Makarios can give us the answer, since he has had plenty of time during his exile in the Seychelles to reflect upon the hypocrisy of British imperialists. It might not be unfair to comment here that no protest was heard from the Christian Council of Churches in Ghana and its Anglican Bishop to Mr. Macmillan on behalf of the Archbishop.

Perhaps he needed to be a Moslem in order to receive their sym-

pathy and support! Churchmen must be careful how they throw stones around in this age of double-talk and selective moral standards.

Kofti Baako's rebuff, which I confess warmed the cockles of my heart, seemed to have sent the Fleet Street champions of freedom of the press in Ghana into retirement. In fact, the British press as a whole almost simultaneously forgot Mr. Timothy and adopted as their new heroes Amudu Baba and Larden Lalemie.

GHANA ANTI-MOSLEM?

A highly religious tinge was given to this phase of the campaign, Fleet Street being actively supported by the B.B.C. The press reports and news broadcasts were heavily slanted to convey the impression that the two Nigerians were deported from Ghana because of their religion. Extreme emphasis was placed upon the description "Moslem." Never have Christian publicists so exploited Islam for such evil ends—the wicked misrepresentation of the government of the first independent nation in West Africa.

Dr. Nkrumah and his government were presented to the Moslem world as men hostile to Mohammedanism simply because the two Nigerians happen to profess this faith.

We emphasize this fact in order to illustrate the political implications which the exploitation of religion for imperialist propaganda ends can have for a country's international relations.

Fortunately for Ghana, the Minister of Justice was at the time on a visit to Egypt and Sudan, where the political leaders, President Nasser and Prime Minister Abdullah Khalil, are experienced statesmen who have themselves had occasion to imprison and deport fellow Moslems for being engaged in activities "not conducive to the public good." In fact, one of the first actions taken by Colonel Nasser on assuming power was to suppress the Moslem Blood Brotherhood for subversive activities. The Sudan government recently deported an Egyptian doctor from Khartoum for activities "not conducive to the public good."

It is well known that every day governments, including the "perfect" British Tory government, deports foreigners for activities "not conducive to the public good" without a line appearing in the newspapers.

Why do you think the British government spends millions on the Secret Service and M.I.5 (Military Intelligence Service) but to watch the activities of both British subjects and foreigners suspected of being engaged in activities "not conducive to the public good"? And no member of Parliament is even entitled to ask the Prime Minister how the money is being spent and who are the secret agents. Only two men know: the head of the Secret Service and the Prime Minister.

For if the names were revealed, it is possible that many British so-called journalists might not be able to move about as freely as they do in foreign countries. But it is not only the British who maintain agents. All nations do so, especially the Great Powers.

EDUSEI AND BING

The Moslem-baiting phase of the anti-Ghana campaign having exploded, since the Moslem countries of the Afro-Asian bloc see it as a crude attempt to bring misunderstanding between them and Ghana, the Fleet Street trouble-shooters shifted their ground. The campaign is now focused upon the contempt of court trial. Since this matter is *sub judice*, I shall refrain from comment.

Krobo Edusei, the minister of the interior, and Geoffrey Bing, Q.C., the newly-appointed attorney-gen-

eral, now seem to be the two main "villains," and they seem to be hated in circles stretching beyond Fleet Street.

But it is Mr. Edusei who has caused a shiver along the length of Fleet Street. There they have not one good word for the young Ashanti minister. Even an intelligent man like James Morris, the *Manchester Guardian* special correspondent, who should know better than his Fleet Street colleagues, could not restrain himself from ridiculing Mr. Edusei's English and dragging his wife's wardrobe into his report on the minister's first press conference. What bad taste for a disciple of the great C. P. Scott! After all, Mrs. Edusei's wardrobe is her private affair, and English is just as much a foreign language to Mr. Edusei as Twi is to Mr. Morris.

All in all, the capitalist press has made a mighty bad showing over Ghana. Everything has been exaggerated, distorted and presented out of focus and out of context. British readers have been more confused than enlightened. And now they are alarmed and no doubt hurt and surprised that certain influential younger politicians and trade union leaders are campaigning for Ghana to quit the Commonwealth as a consequence of the campaign of lies and slanders against their country in the British press.

John K. Tettegah, the influential general secretary of the Ghana Trades Union Congress, expressing the views widely held among the younger members of the C.P.P. and T.U.C. [Trade Union Congress] strongly condemned the patronizing attitude of certain British officials in

the Commonwealth Relations Office, who, it seems, are unable to adjust themselves to the fact that Ghana is no longer a British colony but a sovereign state equal in status to Britain.

It is difficult for British Imperialists, brought up in the belief that they have a divine right to lord it over the darker races of mankind, to accustom themselves to the new political relationship between their country and the post-war independent nations of Asia and Africa.

TETTEGAH'S SPEECH

Mr. Tettegah's outspoken speech, made at a reception held in Accra and attended by top-ranking members of the government and diplomatic corps, should give British officials here something to put in their pipes and smoke. They may soon realize that Dr. Nkrumah, like Pandit Nehru in India, who has also been the object of violent abuse in certain sections of the British press, may yet prove to be their best friend in Ghana. For he is the only man with the prestige to restrain those who advocate quitting the Commonwealth, especially if India points the way.

The statement in the American magazine, *Time*, of September 2, quoted by Mr. Tettegah, has not been commented upon in the British press. However, Mr. Tettegah's outburst will certainly not help to improve relations with the Commonwealth Relations Office, which some suggest should be closed down and merged with the Foreign Office, where officials are more accustomed to treat colored independent countries, inside or outside the Common-

wealth, as equals and not just as "ex-colonials," a mental attitude properly resented by Mr. Tettegah.

He is quoted to have said: "May I emphatically protest against the statement attributed to a spokesman of the British Commonwealth Relations Office that Britain is "tolerant" of Dr. Nkrumah's actions. Our country is a sovereign country, and if this is the British mentality because we chose to remain in the Commonwealth, the quicker our government reviews the position the better it will be for us."

EXPULSION OF SHAWCROSS

Regarding Mr. Shawcross's expulsion, the new minister of the interior, Mr. Edusei, jokingly told reporters that "if Ghana became a republic and left the Commonwealth, British lawyers could not come here to abuse the government in our courts."

This is not the first time that foreign lawyers have been excluded from Commonwealth countries and British colonial possessions. During the trial of Jomo Kenyatta, the Kenya African nationalist leader, whom I have the honor to number among my best friends and comrades-in-arms in the struggle for African freedom against colonialism and imperialism, the British government in Kenya refused to allow a number of colored lawyers to enter Kenya to defend Kenyatta. Among them was a Sudanese, a West Indian, an In-

dian, and a Ghanaian, Kobina Kessie of Kumasi, who is himself a member of the Opposition in Parliament.

As far as I can recall, neither the Fleet Street Press, the Ghana Council of Churches nor the Bar Association in Ghana protested against the denial of legal aid voluntarily offered by members of the colored race. Today, Kenyatta is rotting in prison, where he will most likely die. For after he has completed the present seven-year sentence imposed by the court, he will be re-imprisoned, for the Governor has already ordered his detention for life.

Running all through the inspired British Press campaign is a hardly-concealed anger against Dr. Nkrumah for transferring the seat of his Cabinet to the old slave castle of Christiansborg, as well as the Government's actions in issuing stamps and coins bearing the effigy of the Prime Minister. No occasion is allowed to pass without reference to these "crimes." For never before has a black man been so "presumptuous"!

What his detractors seem conveniently to forget is that Kwame Nkrumah is not just a Prime Minister; he is, like George Washington, the "Father" of this country, the Liberator of Ghana, the Architect of a new black nation. History will remember him in these roles long after other Ghanaian Prime Ministers have come and gone.

