

Spokesman For Emerging Africa Now Fears Murder By People He Sought To Serve

Editor's Note: Nearing the end of his tour of sub-Saharan Africa, NEA's At Large correspondent, Ward Cannel, is in Ghana, first of the West African nations to win freedom from colonialism. What six years of independence have meant to Ghana and her American-educated president, Kwame Nkrumah, is told in two exclusive dispatches, the first of which follows.

By WARD CANNEL

ACCRA, Ghana (NEA)—Can it be that emerging Africa's bad boy—Kwame Nkrumah—has had enough rope?

After six years of independence and a shameless coquetry with both the Western world and the Soviet bloc, his nation of Ghana appears to be in urgent need of repair at the seams.

The country's treasury reserve is dangerously low, down by two-thirds from its \$750 million high at independence in March, 1957.

The per-ton price of cocoa, the nation's major crop, is only about half what it was in 1958.

Although the country has demonstrated a highly disciplined capacity to tighten its belt in the interests of maintaining a solvent treasury, new austerity measures in the face of depleted reserves are bringing on increasing dissatisfaction among many groups.

A railway strike following the last wave of belt-tightening has

resulted in a firm anti-strike government policy.

A recent assassination attempt on President Nkrumah and reports of other restlessness in the country have brought on stronger security measures. Along with the jailing of political dissidents, the public circus of a trial of assassins, there has been a stepped up anti-U.S. press campaign which has, among other things, indicated the Peace Corps as a camouflage for CIA activity.

But the most telling change in Ghana has been in Kwame Nkrumah.

Today, the only thing seen of the man who was once the spokesman for emerging Africa is his statue on the government plaza and his picture which hangs in almost every lobby and corridor in the land.

The man himself stays home. News is brought in by a select group of advisers. Policy is made by consultation with a trusted cadre of four or five. All decisions, reversals of decisions, and reconsiderations of the reversals are made by Nkrumah himself.

The shining hope of African nationalism and continental maturity has come to rest with a man who is afraid to go out of doors and daily loses the last shreds of contact with his people.

Although the Nkrumah course calls for determined neutralism and cooperation with the Soviet bloc, this reporter found an overwhelming pro-U.S. and anti-Soviet sentiment among the everyday people he queried. One traffic cop, for example, put it this way:

"The Russians and the Poles and the others are not very friendly to us. I know some students who went to Bulgaria and did not like it at all. I think our president's friendship with these people is just a trick to get more money from your country."

The Ghanaian civil service, a well-trained organization brought up by the best of British training, is equally out of sympathy with the Iron Curtain cooperation scheme. Says one ministry man over a gin-and-tonic:

"They have contributed nothing as far as I can tell. The Russian planes in our Ghana Airways are too expensive to run. Their land survey team is measuring miles, not looking for new mineral resources. Most of their outright aid in industrialization is still only in the promise stage. And for every dollar they've given us we've had to put up two in order to make things work."

Part of Nkrumah's policies, of course, are both understandable and—with enough detachment—admirable.

It has been his job to turn into a nation a land whose boundaries were set by conference in

Europe 80 years ago with no

sloganeering, scape-goatery, suppression and spending.

The propaganda has made Ghana the best known nation in Africa. But such an image has been purchased at the price of enormous sacrifice in democratic

government, the libeling of the U.S. as a neo-colonialist ogre and

hind it into an administrator whose most consistent characteristics, according to a minor mem-

ber of the inner circle, is an

infinite capacity to change his

mind. And to keep his underlings in

line as he does so. If, says a

Nkrumah gets up at 9 and says it

in the room hurries to assure

him that of course it is mid-afternoon.

Next: What the future holds.

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BOMBED—This statue of Nkrumah, one of scores in Accra, Ghana, was damaged by a bomb in November of 1961.

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