

WHAT THE BRITISH PRESS
WOULD NOT PRINT
ABOUT GHANA

PRESS STATEMENT

by MR. N. A. WELBECK, *Minister of Information and Party Propaganda Secretary at the Press Club—Thursday 15th April, 1965*

It cannot be said that our Government is indifferent to, or unmindful of world opinion, even though we don't rush in to refute every slander and false rumour about our President and our country. We have just the same regard for decent opinion of mankind as Mr. Michael Stewart, the British Foreign Secretary, quoted with so much approval as being a requirement of the American constitution. Knowing the source and the cause of the hostility of the Western press and other communication media, we are apt to consider individual and particular cases of malice and slander as no more than symptoms in the recurring imperialist effort to use every means to weaken Ghana's resolution as a member of the vanguard for Africa's Unity and the expulsion of neo-colonialism.

We know how important it is for the imperialists and neo-colonialists to damage the image of Kwame Nkrumah the freedom fighter who is our President as well as the author of *Consciencism*, the philosophical handbook of the African Revolution. We know what great resources the imperialists have—what their influence is in the press, radio and television—what vast sums they can spend on subverting loyal citizens and on making active traitors out of political opportunists.

In the immediate past—since Osagyefo the President, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, proclaimed that our independence is meaningless without the liberation of the rest of Africa, since he set examples for the meaning of non-alignment, and since he steered our ship of state on to a socialist course—Ghana and its President have been subjected to the full fury of imperialist hostility. They have armed local traitors with guns and bombs to kill our President, and to terrorize our people. They have greeted every sort of traitor and opportunist fleeing from Ghana to escape the penalties of justice, as a victim of tyranny and a martyr for democracy. They have tried to ruin our economy by undermining faith in our plans and by lying about and suppressing the news of our achievements.

Knowing all this, we have not worried unduly, except to reply when African unity, our socialist society or our developing economy could be served by refuting false, malicious and slanderous rumours or allegations.

But the Congo crisis has spurred the imperialists to a greater offensive against Ghana and its President. Since we are in the vanguard of those who oppose the plans for the neo-colonialist take-over of the Congo, we must now meet not only the general hostility of the imperialists against a new state intent on making its independence a reality, but the hostility of giant financial trusts and combines operating in the Congo, which will use not only their unlimited funds, but their unlimited influence in Western councils and press organs against us.

It is no wonder that Busia, Gbedemah and others who have escaped from Ghana's justice, now seem to have unlimited funds for their treacherous campaign against their homeland. They can buy and supply forged photographs and documents, and have these publicised at press conferences and radio and television interviews as if they represented unbiased sources. Every Ghanaian adventurer and disgruntled person is considered a spokesman for the people of Ghana and the source of red hot news.

Whilst not embarking on a fruitless campaign to refute every lie and slander, yet one example has appeared lately of such a wicked and monstrous nature, that we have decided to nail it down once and for all for the whole world and for all honest men to see its poisonous fangs and vicious claws. We refer to the photograph which appeared in the *Daily Express* of London, on the 17th of March last, purporting to have been taken in a gaol in Ghana, of shackled Ghanaian political prisoners sitting on the ground. The photograph is headed "Members of The Opposition" and its sub-title is "Ghana M.P. sends *Express* the Grim Evidence."

This photograph, according to the *Daily Express* and I quote "came from its correspondent in Lome, Ernest Gogry, who wrote that it was given to him by Mr. Idana Asigry, a Ghana member of Parliament, who spent two years in a Government prison camp before he escaped."

Among the shackled prisoners in the *Daily Express* photograph are supposed to be and I quote the *Express* again, "members of Ghana's Loyal Opposition—politicians, officials of the opposition United Party and leading citizens who have been critical of the regime of Kwame Nkrumah."

President Kwame Nkrumah has already stated publicly that he does not recognize a single face in the photograph. We challenge all those present to name one man, or to produce someone who will recognize one man among all these "politicians, officials of the United Party and leading citizens".

You will recollect that President Nkrumah also remarked to Parliament that the men in the photograph looked in good condition and too free from care to be genuine prisoners. You will soon hear how right he was. This photograph was taken when these men had already been freed, had a chance to recuperate and were happy about their release. They were not prisoners under a strain, but freed men re-enacting the scenes of their former prison life as political detainees of the late President Olympio.

The immediate response of the *Daily Express* to Kwame Nkrumah's statement that these men in the photograph were not Ghanaians, was not, as could have been expected, to order an immediate investigation in an effort to identify these men, but to publish an uncorroborated statement that two men have been identified as Jack Allotey and Mr. Neequaye. This is so vague as to be almost laughable. There are hundreds of Alloteys and Neequayes in Ghana. The *Express* might as well have called them Mr. Jack Smith and Mr. Brown. Have these men not addresses, occupation or families by which they can be identified?

But we intend to go much further today, than to argue about the probabilities of the *Daily Express* photograph being a forgery. We will prove that it is a forgery.

It is a forgery as a photograph of Ghanaian prisoners in a gaol of Ghana, because it is, in fact, a photograph of Togolese prisoners in a prison in Togo. The men in the photographs are the prisoners of the regime of the late President Olympio of Togo, and the photograph was taken after his death, in January, 1963, on the orders of the leaders of the *coup d'etat* to show how political prisoners were treated in detention under the Olympio regime.

The photograph published in the *Daily Express* on the 17th March, 1965, and which the paper maintained to be genuine even after President Nkrumah's denial that the prisoners were Ghanaians, is one of several taken in the Togolese Detention Camp which the late President Olympio maintained in Lome. According to our information political

detainees in this camp, including the men in the photograph, had been arrested by Olympio on the grounds that they were plotting to overthrow his regime. They were released immediately after Olympio's death by the Army leaders who had staged the *coup*. A short while after their release all those who could still be found in Lome were called together to re-enact the conditions of their imprisonment to demonstrate to the people of Togo how President Olympio dealt with his political opponents.

Toye, who is number 10 in the *Daily Express* photograph was the first Togolese to be arrested by Olympio's police. A pistol was found in his possession. He was then subjected to a rigorous interrogation during which he divulged the names of all the persons connected with the alleged plot. The other persons in this photograph were arrested and put in chains in Lome Prison as a result of the information given by Toye to Olympio's Police.

We are displaying at pages 9 to 11, some of the photographs taken in Lome prison under the circumstances which we have just described. We now identify the personalities in the *Daily Express* photograph. They are all Togolese. Their names are:

- (i) Gbenyedji, a taxi driver staying at Rue d'Amutevi, Lome.
- (ii) Djanka, driver staying at 38 Rue d'Lassons—Quartier Zongo.
- (iii) Bernard Abidi, now working as a Clerk in the Judiciary service, Lome—Justice Parquet.
- (iv) Koffi Kotanu, washerman in Lome.
- (v) Djiwonu, a labourer at the Lome Airport.
- (vi) Nyaledjigbo, a labourer at Lome Wharf.
- (vii) Akatogli.
- (viii) Ziga.
- (ix) Aguessi Sossinu.
- (x) Toye.

Mr. Kow Richardson, the so-called United Party General Secretary, in his open letter of the 3rd April, 1965, identified No. 2 and No. 3 persons in the photograph as Jack Allotey and a Mr. Neequaye. This was a blatant lie—a lie which, for a charge can be nailed right on the head. No. 2 in the *Daily Express* photograph is not Jack Allotey, a Ghanaian, but

Mr. Djanka, a Togolese. We have in our midst this morning Mr. Djanka who will soon be presented to this Press Conference so that you will see for yourselves whether he is or is not the man in the *Daily Express* photograph identified by Kow Richardson as a Ghanaian by name Jack Allotey.

The first four persons starting from Gbenyedji have all been identified as members of Juvento, the party which opposed Olympio's regime. They were arrested in December, 1961 and were released in 1963 by the Togolese Military Personnel who carried out the *coup d'etat* on 13th January, 1963. The released persons went to their homes but shortly afterwards those released persons who happened to be in Lome at that time were summoned by the Army leaders to report at the Prisons where these photographs including the one published by the *Daily Express* were taken.

The second man from the left by name Djanka is still living in Lome and I am in a position to announce to the members of the Press that Djanka, as I said earlier, is here with us at this Press Conference to testify that he and his colleagues in the photographs are **not** (repeat **not**) Ghanaians and that they are Togolese who were in the detention camp of the late President Olympio. One would wonder how a photographer could manage to enter into such hideous detention camp to take these photographs. The answer is simple. According to Djanka, these photographs were taken after the death of Olympio when the political prisoners, as a result of the successful *coup d'etat*, were released. It was at that time that the photographs were taken at the instructions of late Nubukpor for the whole world to know the grim prison life under the regime of the late President Olympio.

We are not here to comment on the happenings in Togo during the late Olympio's regime. Our aim is solely to expose the photograph in the *Daily Express* as a wicked forgery to mislead the British Press and the British public with false tales of atrocities in Ghana. In as much as Djanka and other Togolese personalities have helped us to expose those Ghanaian traitors who have a career of serving the imperialists by slandering Ghana and its President, we think they, Djanka and the other Togolese personalities, have done a service to the cause of truth.

THEY ARE ALL TOGOLESE...
THEIR NAMES ARE: (SEE BELOW PICTURE)

Members of the Opposition...

GHANA
MP SENDS
EXPRESS
THE GRIM
EVIDENCE

By Ernest Gray



Shackled together the slaves of a regime... (More pictures and documents sent to the London Daily Express)

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:

OPENYEDJI, A TAXI DRIVER STAYING AT
RUE d'AMUTEVI.

DJANKA, DRIVER STAYING AT 88
RUE d'LESSONS.

BERNARD ABIDI, NOW WORKING AS A
CLERK IN THE JUDICIARY SERVICE,
LOME.

KOFI KOTAHU, WASHERMAN IN LOME.

DJIWONU, A LABOURER AT THE LOME
AIRPORT.

NYALEDJIBO, A LABOURER AT
LOME WHARF.

AKATOGLI

Shackled Togolese prisoners who were falsely described by the London "Daily Express" of 17th March, 1965 as being Ghanaian political prisoners.



Mr. Djanka, a lorry driver residing at 38 Rue d'Lassons, Lome, testifying at a Press Conference in Accra, Ghana, that he and his colleagues in the forged "Daily Express" photographs are not Ghanaians.



Mr. Djanka said: "My name is Djanka and not Jack Allotey as claimed by the London Daily Express. I am second from the left in the photograph which was published by the London Daily Express on the 17th March, 1965 and the other men in the photograph are all Togolese. We are not Ghanaians. The photograph was taken in Lome, Togo, and not in Ghana.

We were imprisoned under the regime of the late President Olympio. After the military revolt which overthrew his regime, we were freed by the military authorities and later recalled by them to pose for the photograph to re-enact the grim prison life under the regime of the late President Olympio".



A Togolese prison warder with the Togolese detainees.



A section of the Togolese political detainees



This picture of shackled Togolese prisoners was taken after the overthrow of the late President Olympio in a Togolese prison to re-enact prison life of political detainees during the Olympio regime.



A section of the international press corps in Accra which heard Mr. N. A. Welbeck, Ghana Minister of Information and Party Propaganda Secretary, at the Press Conference.

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