

CALLING DANQUAH A SPY IS INSULTING TO THE MEMORY OF GHANAIAN NATIONALISTS

BY ASARE OTCHERE-DARKO

In his book, *“By Nkrumah’s Side”*, Tawiah Adamafo, a former confidante of Dr Kwame Nkrumah and Information Minister of the Convention People’s Party administration, who was later on to be tried and convicted for the Kulungugu assassination attempt on the life of Ghana’s first President, wrote of the nature of the CPP at the time:

“I knew their intrigues and jealousies, the vicious whispering campaigns and the rumour mongering, the deliberate name-smearing and wicked mud-slinging, the character assassination, the interminable inner party struggle, the incompetence and greed, the bribery and corruption.”

It is refreshing that today’s CPP has picked the good and the inspiring from Nkrumah’s extraordinary leadership of Ghana, such as social justice, industrialisation and African solidarity and abandoned the negatives, including what Tawiah Adamafo listed above.

Unfortunately, the National Democratic Congress, under the leadership of a man who considers himself an ‘Nkrumaist’, Prof John Evans Atta Mills, has focused on reviving, owning and implementing the very same ills described above by a former CPP chief propagandist. That description quoted above could be said to fit the NDC more today than perhaps even the CPP before February 1966.

On Saturday, September 24, 2011, during a serious discussion on the controversial decision by President Mills to make Nkrumah *the only* Founder of Ghana, I made the point that the dictionary defines founder as one who establishes something or forms the basis for something and that by December 28, 1947, when Nkrumah was brought back to Ghana to serve as the first general secretary (and national organiser, effectively) of the United Gold Coast Convention, the concept of the territorial entity called Ghana, including the Ashanti Confederacy, the Northern Territories, and South Togoland, as put forward by the home-based Gold Coast intelligentsia, led by Dr Joseph Boakye Danquah, had already been accepted in 1944 by Governor Burns, forming the basis of the Burns Constitution which came into effect in 1946. Thus, Nkrumah did not play the kind of role played by the Founding Fathers of America who brought together, first, the 13 states.

Though, Nkrumah gave the independence movement a prominent, decisive, necessary, stimulus and final push it was unfair to history and the sacrifices of many, particularly the tall list of nationalists since John Mensah Sarbah’s Aborigines’ Rights Protection Society of 1897, to say that one man was responsible for founding a territorial entity that was in place and a struggle that was joined even before his physical presence in Ghana.

I went on to point out that, one of Nkrumah’s European advisors during his time in the United Kingdom, Fenner Brockway (the Baron Brockway), an anti-colonial activist and Labour politician, who died in 1988, recalled that “Nkrumah was very disinclined to go” back to the Gold Coast on the invitation of the UGCC’s executive committee. “Both George [Padmore] and I urged him to go and change the organisation since it was the only

organisation in Ghana. I don't think I had much influence, but George Padmore certainly did."

I also pointed out that, according to the autobiography of Nkrumah's former close pal and neighbour at Primrose Hill Gardens, Hampstead, London, Joe Appiah, the only other route for returning home being considered after World War II by Nkrumah was the possibility of obtaining the editorship of the *Ashanti Pioneer*, "as a stepping stone to greater heights". Records of his letters, available at the University of Ghana, show that Nkrumah had also discussed a plan for establishing restaurants and bookshops with his cousin back home, Ackah Watson. The UGCC gave him the platform and that UGCC was created by others before him, and the symbol of the 'Big Six', at least attests to this collective effort towards self rule in Ghana.

But, the Deputy Minister of Science & Technology, in his earlier contribution, had described Nkrumah as like Lionel Messi of Barcelona, who plays well with Barcelona, even if not with his national team, but he is the only one who gets the crown as Best Player. By his own logic, Nkrumah was the 'Best Founder' of Ghana just like Messi is not the only player of Barca. Omame went on to describe J B Danquah as a traitor, a "CIA Agent," who even worked against the interest of Ghana's cocoa farmers.

This was said with an absolute de-intellectualised appreciation of the historical fact that even the concept of a Cocoa Marketing Board was that of Danquah and that date March 6 and the name Ghana were both proposed by Danquah and accepted by Nkrumah. I had expected the host to demand a substantiation of the serious allegation against Danquah but that did not happen. My repeated calls for evidence were ignored by both Omame and the sit-in *Newsfile* host.

I have had the opportunity to read the book by Richard Mahoney, whose father was US ambassador to Ghana between 1952-65, and nowhere in that book is Danquah described as a CIA agent. In fact, the younger Mahoney, who was not older than 10 years at the material time, refers to some financial support, stipends, that were allegedly offered to Danquah's wife and 13 dependent children by an official at the embassy, who was the CIA local agent, when Danquah was first imprisoned by Nkrumah for 11 months between February 1961 and January 1962, without the prior knowledge of his father. Instructively, William Mahoney only became the ambassador to Ghana after the alleged support to Danquah's wife! In no declassified CIA cable or file is Danquah described as a 'protected' source and nowhere is he referred to as giving information to the US that can be described as treasonable.

Indeed, how does the unsubstantiated allegation in Richard Mahoney's book make Danquah a 'CIA Agent'? Going by the logic readily deducted from the Mahoney episode, does that mean that some senior members of President Mills' current Cabinet who have been accused of receiving occasional financial support from President Kufuor's National Security Co-ordinator were also NPP Agents?

Does the fact that Alassane Outtara's appeal to the international community earlier this year for support to overthrow the Laurent Gbagbo regime and help restore the democratic mandate of the people of Cote d'Ivoire make him an agent of the nations that responded, including France and the ECOWAS nations that signed up to the agreement to undertake

military action, including Ghana? Can we describe Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo and others who got support from the KGB in their fight against Apartheid as KGB spies or agents? We must be fair to those who sacrificed for the freedoms that we enjoy today and not insult their memory and discourage future patriots.

It was no secret during the time of Ghana's independence struggle and the post-independence ideological struggle on which future path for the young nation, that the Danquah-Dombo-Busia tradition preferred the American/Western model of a federalist state, multi-party democracy, rule of law, individual freedom and responsibility and free enterprise to the socialist state-capitalist, authoritarian option.

Indeed, the disclosure of confidential cables, through *Wikileaks*, has thought us that even those who describe themselves as socialists or social democrats and no friends of America are captured as disclosing information to the US. Thankfully for them the leaks have given them the *humus* opportunity to explain or deny what has been attributed to them. Should that not make some of their friends more cautious now when it comes to labelling others CIA agents?

I went on during *Newsfile* to make the point that there has been a deliberate attempt to describe the opposition in Ghana at the time as anti-independence. I went on to refer to the 1953 Legislative Assembly, where Nkrumah, in introducing a new constitution, moved what he described as the "Motion of Destiny". This motion called for the Assembly to authorise the CPP administration to: "Request the British Government to introduce legislation leading to Ghana's Independence Act *as soon as the necessary constitutional and administrative arrangements are made*".

I went on to state the UGCC's position at the time as articulated by the Leader of the Opposition, Danquah. Records of *Hansard* show that Danquah moved an amendment to Nkrumah's motion, calling instead for a "Declaration of Independence".

Danquah said, "Given the demand of the people for independence, the Legislative Assembly on its own should declare the country's independence on 6th March 1954 and the British Government should be requested to extend recognition to the new state. Independence is a God-given right and not a gift of the British Parliament."

This amendment was rejected by Nkrumah on the stated and recorded ground that the country would, by accepting the amendment, "forfeit our British goodwill." The result was that Independence was achieved four years later in 1957 instead of 6th March 1954 as proposed by Danquah, which, symbolically, would have been 110 years after the Bond of March 6, 1844. The only notable concession to Danquah's amendment was the Independence Day, 6th March.

This simple statement of fact, for some reason, did not sit down well with the NDC deputy minister who went on to described Danquah as a man undeserving of being added to any list of founders, repeating the charge that Richard Mahoney and declassified CIA files have exposed Danquah as a CIA agent. I said this was not true and, indeed, found it as arguably

stupid and deeply insulting to the memory of a patriot who made the ultimate sacrifice for his country by being left to die in a condemned cell as a prisoner of conscience.

While the host of the programme found my description of the tagging of the 'Doyen of Ghana' as a traitor or CIA agent as stupid, insulting and demanding a substantiation or withdrawal, to be a bad enough insult that demanded a retraction and an apology, his understanding of what constitutes an insult or offensive language could not be extended to what the deputy minister had said about that celebrated member of the Big Six.

I repeat below the "insulting" words I used as captured on the internet:

"This is stupidity...you consider a founder of Ghana as a CIA agent, what stupidity is this?
...this is pure stupidity."

When I was asked to retract and apologise to Omane, my response, again as captured, was:
"When you want us to have an intellectual programme like this, you don't bring people like this. I am not going to apologise, I can apologise to the viewers and listeners but not him. He insults J.B. Danquah and you want me to apologise to him? ...I am not going to do that. Why should I do that? ... If that is what you want I will walk out on your programme, I won't do it."

The host accepted the walk-out version. As I went to sit in my car, I was approached by the producers, Sedom Ofori and Kofi Ansah who pleaded with me to wait and that they were to resolve it. I agreed and they came back to me to say they would get Omane to retract, to which I would readily apologise to him. But, when I returned to the studio he said he would not retract. So, I also repeated my apology to both listeners and viewers and the discussion continued.

What is worrying for some of us is the deliberate propaganda scheme of the NDC, not only to distort our history but, also, to smear and sling mud at people of the opposition, both dead and alive.

It may be recalled that on Monday, 29th January 2007, the then NDC Presidential Candidate, Prof Mills, endorsed this falsehood strategy when, with no regard for the chronology of Ghana's historical events and the contributions of the leaders at the time state, "It is ironic that the NPP, being an offshoot of the Busia-Danquah [sic] tradition that opposed the 'Motion of Destiny' proposed by Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah in 1956 [sic] and which paved the way for independence, are today the political leaders of Ghana".

These "intrigues and jealousies, the vicious whispering campaigns and the rumour mongering, the deliberate name-smearing and wicked mud-slinging, the character assassination, the interminable inner party struggle, the incompetence and greed, the bribery and corruption" facts and allegations marking and marring the leadership of President Mills must give way to the kind of politics that will offer quality education to every Ghanaian child, good skills for decent jobs for decent pay for the growing number of young Ghanaians, who are currently in search of jobs and inspiration.

It is ironic that the son of the same William Mahoney who repeatedly lied to Nkrumah that the US had “no conceivable activity on our part to subvert or overthrow him, is now being used to portray one of Ghana’s foremost nationalist as a CIA spy.

I have provided below two such declassified CIA files and at the time that Danquah had died in prison, ironically coinciding with the unpopularity and imminent overthrow of Nkrumah:

US Ambassador to Ghana, **William P. Mahoney** was a participant or observer in the following events:

(3.00pm-3:30pm) March 11, 1965: US Ambassador to Ghana and CIA Director Discuss Upcoming Coup Attempt in Ghana



In Washington, D.C., US ambassador to Ghana William P. Mahoney meets with CIA Director John A. McCone and the deputy chief of the CIA’s Africa division [name unknown] to discuss a “Coup d’etat Plot” in Ghana. According to a CIA document summarizing the meeting, Mahoney says that he is uncertain whether the coup, being planned by Acting Police Commissioner Harlley and Generals “Otu” and “Ankrah,” will ever come to pass. Notwithstanding, he adds that he is confident that President Kwame Nkrumah will not make it another year, given his waning popularity and Ghana’s deteriorating economy. “In the interests of further weakening Nkrumah,” Mahoney recommends that the US deny Nkrumah’s forthcoming request for financial assistance, according to the CIA memo. He adds that by refusing the request it would make a “desirable impression on other countries in Africa,” the memo also says. In the event of a coup, Mahoney says a military junta would likely come to power. [CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, 3/11/1965; SEEINGBLACK (.COM), 6/7/2002]

Entity Tags: John A. McCone, William P. Mahoney

Timeline Tags: US-Ghana (1952-1966)

(3.00pm-3:30pm) March 22, 1965: President of Ghana Suspects US Behind Assassination Attempts



In a telegraph to the US Department of State, US ambassador to Ghana William P. Mahoney recounts a meeting he had that morning with President Kwame Nkrumah. He says he told the president that the US government resented the anti-US statements he had made in his March 22 speech (see (3.00pm-3:30pm) March 22, 1965), in which he had laid blame on the US for many of Africa’s problems. “I said I would never have believed that [a] man of his sophistication and refinement would use language like that against my country, and it shock[ed] [me] to hear him do so.” Mahoney says that Nkrumah conceded that the rhetoric in his speech was “loaded and slanted throughout,” but insisted that “he had special purpose in mind.” After Mahoney further criticized Nkrumah’s speech, defending US policy in Africa, he saw that the president was crying. “I looked up and I saw he was crying. With difficulty he said I could not understand [the] ordeal he had been through during [the] last month. [He [r]ecalled that there had been seven attempts on his life...]” In comments listed at the end of his telegraph, Mahoney says that Nkrumah seems “convinced as ever [that the] US is out to get him” and “still suspects US involvement” in the recent assassination attempts. He explains that Nkrumah appears to be a “badly frightened man” whose

“emotional resources seem [to] be running out” and predicts that there will be “more hysterical outbursts” from Nkrumah against the US. [US DEPARTMENT OF STATE, 4/2/1965; SEEINGBLACK (.COM), 6/7/2002]

Entity Tags: William P. Mahoney, Kwame Nkrumah

Timeline Tags: US-Ghana (1952-1966)

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