



**SOCIALIST FORUM OF GHANA (SFG)**

June 11, 2021

**STATEMENT OF SALUTATION ON THE 72ND ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
FORMATION OF THE CONVENTION PEOPLES' PARTY**

On the 72nd anniversary of the formation of the dynamic Convention Peoples' Party (CPP) which spearheaded the struggle for national independence from 1949 to 1957, the Socialist Forum of Ghana (SFG) pays glowing tribute to Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah and all the gallant men and women who made tremendous sacrifices for our freedom from colonial rule. These men and women from all walks of life denied themselves material and other benefits in the heroic struggle to gain and assert the liberty of the people of Ghana.

It is significant to note that resistance to foreign (European) domination and exploitation began manifesting when the very first European adventurer set foot on Edina (Elmina). Their unequal engagements with the African feudal elite involving trade in slaves, gold, spices, food, firearms and consumer items and political interference inevitably led to antagonism and contradictions in the relations they sought to establish with the African people.

After the demise of the inhuman Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, the European powers imposed colonial rule to monopolise markets for their goods, control sources of raw materials, establish centres for the investment of surplus capital and to obtain cheap labour to enable them accumulate super profits. In the Gold Coast, effective British colonial rule started in 1879 in the South and gradually spread all over with the final conquest of Asante in 1900. Resistance continued with the short-lived Fante Confederation, the Aborigines Rights Protection Society which fought against foreign intrusion on indigenous lands.

Resistance continued with the formation of the National Council for British West Africa by Archie Casely Hayford, Herbert McCauley and other nationalists from the Gold Coast, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and the Gambia, who had a radical programme of merging the struggle in the four British colonies into one. They were actually opposed by the Chiefs who had been inducted as part of the Colonial system of 'Indirect Rule'. Other forms of resistance crystallized around the West African Students Union (WASU) led by Wallace Johnson and biting editorials of the 'African Post' by Nnamdi Azikwe, whose editorial, 'Has the African a God' raised awareness against the political, cultural and religious domination of the British and caused considerable consternation against the colonial establishment.

This coupled with the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War and the great but unsung role by Africans including soldiers from the Gold Coast and with the increased exploitation occasioned by the colonial power to raise additional revenue to finance their war effort and rebuild their war shattered economies created untold economic difficulties in the colonies and led to high inflation, raising of taxes and general economic crises.

The elite sensing this crisis, formed the United Gold Coast Convention on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1947, a group consisting of timber merchants, lawyers and the local elite of the Gold Coast colony. Indeed, it hardly included anyone from Ashanti, Trans-Volta-Togoland and Northern Territories. It had 3 branches in Jamestown in Accra, Saltpond where it was formed and in Sekondi. It was organizationally weak, its motto of 'self-government in the shortest possible

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time' was quite nebulous and did not catch on with the mass of the people. It was indeed disconnected with the people it purported to represent.

It took the appointment of Kwame Nkrumah an ardent Pan-Africanist, an organizer and a political activist as General Secretary to start making a difference. Kwame Nkrumah and his comrades turned the UGCC into a nationalist movement within a space of 1 year by opening up 500 branches all over the country, personally visiting these branches and organizing branches amongst the ex-service men, railway workers, Post Office workers, market women, miners, fishermen, farmers, the Youth, etc. Politics became vibrant amongst the people, everywhere people gathered especially under trees in the village or town square, the main topic of discussion was centered on national affairs and the need for radical change.

The Osagyefo and his comrades founded newspapers and used its medium for agitation propaganda, and awareness creation and information dissemination.

These organizational tactics of mobilizing the people to be at the center of political change did not go on well with the leadership of the UGCC and the Chiefs. As a result of the increased involvement and activity of the Masses in the politics of the country, the class struggle sharpened with the contradictions between the people and the elite especially within the UGCC. The elites including the chiefs could not accept the active political engagements by the youth, the market women, the ex-servicemen, and the workers who engaged in political activities, meetings, demonstrations and strikes and this is what led to the crises in the UGCC and their attempt to stabilize the situation by removing Kwame Nkrumah as the General Secretary of the UGCC and disbandment of the Committee of Youth Organisation. The colonial authorities had exacerbated the situation in the bloody suppression of agitation, demonstrations etc., the shooting of unarmed demonstrators foremost among them the 3 ex-servicemen, declaration of state of emergency and incarceration of the nationalists.

On the historic day of 12<sup>th</sup> June 1949, 72 years ago, the die was cast and the people led by the Committee of Youth Organization (CYO), the Ghana Representative Council and other organizations gathered in Saltpond and demanded a new organization of a new type, one they controlled and which represented their aspirations, a party of the masses, one which will enter into no compromise with the enemy and with the slogan 'We prefer self-government with danger to servitude in tranquility'. The dream of the stalwarts of the 5<sup>th</sup> Pan African Congress and of the gallant men and women who resisted foreign rule, the farmers, workers and the youth was realized with the formation of the party of the oppressed and downtrodden. The impact of the formation of the CPP was worldwide as it changed the method of organization of political parties engaged in the national liberation struggle in Africa and especially in the Caribbean and to a certain extent South East Asia.

The lengthy resistance and attempts at national liberation from foreign subjugation through the ages got a new impetus and was elevated to a new level and renewed on that day of 12<sup>th</sup> June with the historic formation of the CPP. A party that was able to galvanize the people and put out a vision of 'self-government now' challenging the orthodoxy of colonialism and their appendages, the elite and the feudal order.

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A new type of confrontation faced the colonialist, this phase was encapsulated in the total mobilization of the mass of the people; the real owners of the land. It was this party which was to open a new chapter in the liberation struggle and led the Gold Coast to independence on the 6<sup>th</sup> of March 1957 and opened the floodgates for independence for over 20 African countries over a spate of 3 years. The CPP in addition to mobilizing the people for national independence also embarked on a development effort the likes which was in complete contrast to the colonial type of development. It invested heavily in linking the various parts of the country, in mass education, health and in the creation of a modern state with the appropriate institutional infrastructure. Indeed, we have no hesitation in declaring that the Convention People's Party led by the Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah founded Modern Ghana.

On the 72nd anniversary of the founding of the CPP, the Socialist Forum of Ghana (SFG) rededicates itself to the objectives of the independence movement, to work for the right of the people of Ghana to choose their own leaders and to determine their political and economic destiny. We insist on the right of the people of Ghana to own all their resources and to exploit them not for enlarging the bank accounts of multi-national corporations from the colonial metropolis but to promote their own interests. We will uphold the ideals of Osagyefo and the working people of Ghana.

Long live the memory of the founding members of the CPP!

Nkrumah never dies!

Long live the unfinished African Revolution!

**Blaise Tulo**

For Convener