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COPY NO. 184

FOR THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR  
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53144

# THE CURRENT SITUATION IN BRITISH WEST AFRICA



CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM  
RELEASE IN FULL

ORE 46-50

Published 29 September 1950

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Document No. 001

NO CHANGE in Class.

DECLASSIFIED

Class. CHANGE TO: TS S (C)

DDA Memo, 4 Apr 77

Auth: DDA REG. 77/1763

Date: 19-01-78 By: 024

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## THE CURRENT SITUATION IN BRITISH WEST AFRICA

### SUMMARY

Current manifestations of native nationalist unrest in British West Africa constitute a potential threat to US interests, because the area: (1) furnishes over 90 percent of the US supply of columbite and some 80 percent of the US supply of battery grade manganese; (2) makes a major contribution to Britain's dollar balances; and (3) represents a potentially important source of wartime bases and manpower. Nevertheless, it appears unlikely that this threat will materialize in the next few years. Although the postwar emergence of political self-consciousness, notably in the Gold Coast and Nigeria, has already resulted in some violence (and will probably continue to do so), the continuing ignorance and apathy of the bulk of the population, existing divisions among politically active elements of the community, and the efforts being made by the British to speed up the extension of self-rule should suffice to avert any serious crisis in the short run. Communism has made

virtually no headway, although various nationalist leaders have maintained some contact with the British Communist Party and there are some indications that the USSR is beginning to take an increased interest in exploiting African unrest.

In the economic field, the British have since World War II had considerable success through the import limitations, production controls, and development programs, in building up British West Africa, both as a dollar earner and as a source of consumer goods for the British home market. One notable project is an irrigation and electric power scheme for the Gold Coast which calls for the construction of a large aluminum plant. British West Africa's most pressing economic problem is the control of swollen shoot disease, which is causing widespread damage among the cocoa trees which furnish the Gold Coast's principal export crop.

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Note: The intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, Army, Navy, and the Air Force have concurred in this report. It contains information available to CIA as of 14 September 1950.

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## THE CURRENT SITUATION IN BRITISH WEST AFRICA

### 1. General.

The four prosperous, heavily populated colonies which make up British West Africa—Nigeria, Gold Coast, Sierra Leone, and Gambia<sup>1</sup>—are of significance to the US as producers of strategic materials, as key elements in the British colonial system, and as potential wartime suppliers of military bases and manpower. British West Africa currently provides more than 90 percent of the US supply of columbite and 80 percent of its battery grade manganese, as well as a variety of other mineral and agricultural raw materials. The Gold Coast, the UK's most prosperous West African colony, is Britain's second largest net dollar earner. Also, British West Africa, though now garrisoned by a predominantly native force of only 15,000, might have considerable military value in the event of war, particularly if the Mediterranean supply line were unavailable to the Western Powers. There is a first-class international airport at Accra, in the Gold Coast, and large fields are being developed at Lagos and Kano in Nigeria. Major ports include Lagos, Nigeria, and Takoradi, Gold Coast, in both of which large-scale improvements are now going on, while small, deep-water quays are being built at Freetown, Sierra Leone (which has the best natural harbor on the African West coast) and at Bathurst, Gambia. More than 100,000 West African troops participated in World War II, notably in the Burma campaign.

British West Africa is currently in a state of political and economic change. All four colonies have been affected by the general, postwar stirring of political consciousness

<sup>1</sup> Also generally considered part of British West Africa are the UN trusteeship territories of British Cameroons and British Togoland, which are partially integrated with the adjacent colonies of Nigeria and Gold Coast respectively. Including these trusteeship areas, British West Africa has an area of about 500,000 square miles and a population of over 30 million.

among hitherto apathetic colonial peoples, and with frequent demands for self-government and "Africa for the Africans" now being made, the question of how to cope with native nationalism—in an area where not more than about 18,000 of the total population of 30 million are non-African—has become the UK's major problem in the region.

Bad communications, widespread illiteracy, and the continuation of local and tribal loyalties have handicapped the spread of unified, colony-wide nationalist movements, while Soviet Communism has thus far made little headway. Nevertheless, the emergent demand for self-government has already resulted in some violence, and the British, who have in the past stimulated political self-consciousness to only a limited extent, are now carrying out what is essentially an orderly retreat, although a strong effort is being made to retain sufficient authority to assure the continuation of effective government. Reforms are being granted piecemeal with the short-range hope of averting uprisings and with the long-range hope that eventually the West Africans will decide to remain in the Commonwealth under dominion status. In this, the UK is being watched closely and sometimes suspiciously by the other colonial powers, as well as by the Malan Government in South Africa, whose own policies contrast sharply with such British practices as the discouragement of permanent white settlement and general support of native paramountcy.

British West Africa also appears to be on the verge of a considerable economic transformation. Although a peasant-type economy continues to predominate throughout all four colonies, increasing attention is now being paid to the development of the area's mineral resources, which already play an important part in the annual contribution of \$100 million net which West Africa is currently making to the UK's dollar pool. ECA and the British Colonial Development Corporation have both shown interest in various long-range

development projects, while the colonies themselves have all laid out ten-year plans for the improvement of living conditions and output.

Although these political and economic trends are present throughout British West Africa to some degree, their impact has varied. The fact that the four colonies are geographically separate and, in all important respects, administered individually, has tended to create distinctive problems.

## 2. Nigeria.

### a. Political.

Nigeria, which accounts for more than three-quarters of the area and population of British West Africa,<sup>1</sup> is now at a critical point in its history. The nationalist movement, the main impetus for which has been provided by young, foreign-educated men with some civil service experience, has in a relatively short time spread to a point where its two major groups have at least nominal representation throughout the colony. The nationalists have been quick to appreciate the potential leverage to be obtained through the labor movement and have actively supported the trade unions, which now have a reported membership of about half a million, mainly among the dock workers and in the tin mines. The nationalists also exert great influence through the press; Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, or "Zik," a self-made, US-educated man in his middle forties, who has been the most prominent individual in the movement, is himself the owner of several newspapers. In an effort to increase receptivity to their agitation, the nationalists are also attacking illiteracy through such media as small "bush schools," conducted more or less informally with the idea of providing at least elementary education to a much broader segment of the population. Meanwhile, detribalization, particularly among the Ibos of the Eastern Provinces, and the general drift to the cities are providing the nationalists with new opportunities for gaining adherents.

<sup>1</sup> Nigeria, including the British Cameroons, has an area of 373,000 square miles and a population of about 25 million, of whom not more than 7,000 are non-Africans.

In 1946 the British granted the Nigerians some voice in their government through the so-called Richards Constitution. Although this contains such fairly liberal features as a greatly enlarged legislative council and African majority representation in all parliamentary bodies, the retention of detailed reserve powers by the Governor means that it does not give much real autonomy to the country, and steadily mounting opposition to this constitution, led by "Zik," finally convinced the UK in 1948 that a drastic review, originally not scheduled until 1956, should be made immediately. In 1949 a drafting procedure, involving progressive consultations at the district, provincial and regional levels, was set up. During January and February 1950, a General Conference attempted to draft proposals for submission to the regional houses of assembly, the Legislative Council, the Governor, and finally the Colonial Office.

One major difficulty facing the conference was the divergence in interest among the three major subdivisions of the colony. In the Northern Provinces, inhabited by Moslem Hausas, Fulanis, and other tribes with infusions of Mediterranean or Semitic blood, tribal loyalties are strong, and the northern leaders, who are inclined to a feeling of superiority and a reluctance to subordinate local interests to national ones, have even talked of returning to a system of separate colonies within Nigeria. Some differences also cropped up between Lagos and the Western Provinces, both inhabited mainly by Yorubas, and the Eastern Provinces, peopled by Ibos. Intensive debate produced no real agreement and only the exercise of great tact on the part of the presiding British official prevented an open break between the North and the South. In general, the North favored continuation of the present Legislative Council, with some regional autonomy; the West favored something close to dominion status, with a strong federal government; and the East and Lagos adopted a middle position. Further controversy arose over the method of apportioning representation and expenditure, with the North maintaining that its large population and revenue should entitle it to half the seats in the new legislative body and half of all development funds.

The Legislative Council, which took up the problem anew when it convened on 1 March, proved no more successful than the conference in arriving at a workable compromise, largely through the inability of the Northern delegates, already committed to a definite position, to concede even the smallest point. Thus the constitutional reform question remains unsettled. Further discussions were held by the three regional houses during August, and the matter will be discussed by the Legislative Council shortly. It seems likely that the North's demands for representation equal to that of the whole South will be met through the expedient of a bicameral legislature. At any rate, the discussions thus far have served to bring the question of constitutional reform out into the open, to delineate the fundamental regional differences which must be reconciled before any basic changes can be made. British approval of the work done so far, given formally in a recent despatch from the Colonial Office, indicates that regardless of how the details of the new governmental structure are worked out, it will certainly provide a much larger measure of self-government than was envisaged even three years ago and should thus satisfy all but the younger and more extreme nationalists.

Few problems are presented by the British Cameroons,<sup>1</sup> a narrow strip of territory along the eastern frontier of Nigeria, which was established as a British Mandate under the League of Nations, with the dissolution of Imperial Germany's overseas empire. The British have partially integrated its administration with that of Nigeria, but the UNGA will undoubtedly oppose any tendency toward complete absorption of the territory into Nigeria. A UN mission visiting the Cameroons late in 1949 reported that the British sector was not as well developed as that of the French Cameroons—a statement which probably has some basis in fact despite British denials. The UN Trusteeship Council has indicated its belief that more attention should be paid to developing the country, particularly its medical, educational, and transportation facilities,

<sup>1</sup> Total area, 34,000 square miles; population, just over one million, including approximately 400 non-natives.

to a point where some degree of self-government can be envisaged.

b. *Economic.*

Long one of the UK's most valuable colonial assets, Nigeria is currently a major contributor to the British economy, both as a producer of foreign exchange and as a supplier of such raw materials as peanuts, palm oil, and palm kernels for home consumption. Under the stress of the dollar problem, the British have made strenuous efforts to maximize Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings. Nigeria's purchases from the US, which represented about one-sixth of total imports during and immediately after World War II, before Britain's industrial plant returned to peacetime operation, had by 1949 been reduced to about \$10 million, or about four percent of total imports. At the same time, exports to the US steadily mounted, and in 1949, Nigeria was the sterling area's fifth ranking net dollar earner, with a net balance of about \$25 million.

Agricultural and forest products—notably cocoa, peanuts and palm kernels and oil, as well as timber, rubber, cotton, and hides—currently provide five-sixths of Nigeria's exports by value and are likely to assume even greater importance in the future. It is hoped that Nigeria's tin deposits will maintain their current output of 10 to 12,000 tons of tin and about 1,000 tons of columbite a year for another ten years, but depletion of ore reserves and increasing competition from the Far East may start reducing production at any time. Nigeria's coal output, used almost entirely in West Africa, was seriously threatened in November 1949, when an industrial dispute at the mines in Enugu developed into a riot in which over twenty miners were killed. A mixed British-African commission under the chairmanship of Sir William Fitzgerald, a noted jurist, was immediately appointed to investigate, and its report was finally published early in June, 1950.<sup>1</sup> It is probable that the affair, already overshadowed by more impor-

<sup>1</sup> Publication of the report was delayed by a dispute between the Colonial Office and the Governor, the latter claiming that its terms were so critical of his administration that he would have to resign if the report were accepted completely by the Colonial Office.

tant events, will soon cease to be a live political issue. Moreover, the appointment in mid-June 1950 of a group of experts to study the general labor and trade union situation in Nigeria raises the hope that long-term benefits may be realized from an incident which served to highlight the glaring deficiencies in the field of labor relations.

In their attempts to maximize yields and profits from agriculture, the authorities have gone in heavily for production controls. A marketing board for cocoa was set up during the war, and similar boards have since been established for palm oil, peanuts, and cottonseed. These boards follow the familiar stabilization practice of purchasing all crops from the growers at fixed prices, regardless of world market conditions, so as to provide funds for the payment of subsidies in bad years, for such development activities as the combatting of swollen shoot disease<sup>1</sup> in the case of cocoa, and for research and scholarships. Thus far all of the boards have operated at a profit; the cocoa board, following a series of good years, ended its 1948-49 season with a total capital of over \$50 million. The boards encountered considerable initial opposition from the farmers, who complained of getting less for their crops than they could get on the open market, and there was much talk to the effect that the British would never even the farmers' accounts. During part of 1949, however, the cocoa board actually paid more than the open market price—a fact which should do much to quiet the farmers' fears. Such an improvement in public acceptance of the boards should meanwhile help eliminate the remaining opposition to the cutting out of cocoa trees in the fight against swollen shoot.

Major efforts are also being made to raise the economic and social standard of the colony in general. In 1946 a ten-year development program, calling for a total expenditure of some \$150 million, was inaugurated. This program, one of the largest in the Empire, emphasizes such basic matters as the develop-

<sup>1</sup> A virus disease which is readily transmitted from tree to tree by insects and which kills the trees in from two to five years, over which period the yield gradually diminishes.

ment of water supplies, roads, medical services, and education but also includes projects in a variety of other fields, such as the partially mechanized 30,000-acre mixed farming venture which the Colonial Development Corporation (a government-owned organization) has recently put in operation. The program as a whole is at present considerably behind schedule but may be getting over its growing pains; while it is still handicapped by shortages of technically qualified personnel, the initial dearth of equipment is now decreasing. The program to date has been completely British-financed, though ECA has shown interest in a number of projects.

In the Cameroons, the principal postwar problem has been the restoration of the banana plantations which form the backbone of the economy. These plantations, badly neglected during the war, are just now reaching their prewar standards of productivity, under the direction of the government-owned Cameroons Development Corporation (CDC), which hopes to raise production from the present rate of about six million stems per year to eight million stems or about eight percent of world production, by 1951. CDC has also succeeded in stimulating production of cocoa and palm products, both on the plantations and on small native farms, but efforts to do as much for rubber have not been as successful.<sup>1</sup>

### 3. Gold Coast.

#### a. Political.

In the smaller and less densely populated Gold Coast,<sup>2</sup> agitation for self-government and progress toward sweeping constitutional change has developed even more rapidly than in Nigeria, in part because of the greater in-

<sup>1</sup> Accurate trade figures are hard to find since only bananas and cocoa are exported direct from Cameroons ports, with other exports and all imports moving on transshipment from Nigeria or through French territory. Trade with the US in any form is limited to small amounts of cocoa, perhaps three percent of the amount exported from Nigeria, and to the territory's share of the curtailed imports from the US.

<sup>2</sup> The Gold Coast, including British Togoland, with an area of 92,000 square miles, is about one-fourth the size of Nigeria and has a population of four million, including 6,700 non-Africans, or about one-sixth that of Nigeria.

telligence and aggressiveness of the Gold Coast natives and in part because they represent a less diversified population. Although the Gold Coast is divided into three distinct regions—the Colony, or coastal belt, with a concentrated and more or less detribalized population; the Alhanti Kingdom, inhabited mainly by farmers living under a strong tribal authority; and the arid and generally backward Northern Territories—regional interests and ways of life do not conflict to the extent that they do in Nigeria, and, in particular, there is no group which has even considered secession.

Returning veterans of World War II provided the impetus for the present nationalist movement, which has not only attacked the present system of non-elected African representation, but has also demanded a promise of full self-government within a foreseeable time. In February 1948, after more than two years of growing unrest, full-scale rioting and looting broke out in Accra and several other localities, ostensibly in protest against the increasing cost of living but in reality for political purposes, with the most prominent nationalist group, the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC), playing an important organizational role.

Although the immediate effect of the Accra affair was to stimulate racial animosity, it also led to a major move toward constitutional change, the appointment of an all-African investigating committee of 37, under the chairmanship of Judge James Coussey, which in October 1949 submitted a report suggesting sweeping changes in all phases of government and in particular calling for greatly increased authority and responsibility for the people of the colony. Specifically, the Coussey report recommended a broadening of the franchise and—although the British Governor would retain his reserve powers—a provision that eight of the twelve members of his Executive Council would be selected from the legislature and be responsible to it as well as to the Governor for the conduct of their departments.

The Coussey report was approved in general by the Colonial Office and by the majority of responsible Gold Coasters, and at first it appeared to offer a speedy solution to the problem of nationalist agitation. Opposition

quickly crystallized, however, particularly over the recommendations that the Governor retain his reserve powers and that he, not the legislature, have authority to appoint the legislature's representatives on the Executive Council. The principal leader of this opposition was Kwame Nkrumah, whose Convention Peoples Party (CPP), representing the most fanatically nationalistic element in the Gold Coast, had broken off from the UGCC in June 1949. Throughout the latter half of 1949, Nkrumah demanded the attainment of self-government before the end of the year, threatening "positive action" if his demands were not met. This threat finally materialized in the form of an abortive general strike on 8 January 1950, as a result of which Nkrumah and several of his more important followers were arrested, tried for inciting others to take part in an illegal strike, and sentenced to a year in prison.

With its founder-leader in jail, the CPP at first seemed to be going into a decline. By April 1950, however, it had rallied sufficiently to sweep the Accra Town Council election, a surprise victory which clearly demonstrated to the more moderate UGCC that it would have to take drastic action to avoid being shut out of the new government altogether. Nevertheless, work is actively going forward on implementation of the Coussey report, particularly the sections dealing with division of the country into electoral districts and with actual election procedures. It now seems certain that by next year the Gold Coast will have taken a long step toward internal self-government.

The Trust Territory of British Togoland,<sup>1</sup> a sparsely populated, land-locked territory lying between the Gold Coast and French Togoland, is at present concerned mainly with dissatisfaction of the Ewe tribe of some 800,000 persons at having its tribal area split up among French Togoland, British Togoland, and the Gold Coast proper. Many petitions, most of them demanding unification of the Ewes, have reached the UN, and the whole problem was taken up by the Trusteeship Council in June, although no results have as

<sup>1</sup>Total area: 13,000 square miles; population: 380,000, including 50 non-Africans.

yet been announced. It is doubtful whether much can be done except to minimize hardships and annoyances resulting from arbitrary division of land by immigration and customs barriers, double taxation, and disparity of educational policies, but the French and British have nevertheless recently agreed to enlarge the joint Standing Consultative Commission, at the same time broadening its authority, in an attempt to bring about some improvement. Replying to criticism in the UN that they seek to destroy the identity of Togoland, the British state that they have not gone further than the creation of an administrative union aimed at bettering the lot of the inhabitants. As a partial answer to internal complaints of lack of representation, a member of the Southern Togoland Council was admitted to the Gold Coast Legislative Council in February 1950.

*b. Economic.*

The Gold Coast's overriding economic problem is that of controlling swollen shoot disease,<sup>1</sup> whose destruction of cocoa trees seriously menaces what has always been the colony's most important export crop. It is estimated that one-eighth of the 400 million cocoa trees in the Gold Coast are infected and that 18 million additional trees are becoming infected every year. The cutting out of diseased trees, the only effective method of control discovered so far, is still not being carried out on a sufficiently large scale to match the spread of the disease; only about 10 million trees a year are being cut out at present. The government, however, has finally enacted legislation providing for compulsory cutting out as the only alternative to complete destruction of the cocoa industry within a period of fifteen to twenty years. There has also been some diminution of the opposition to cutting out on the part of the growers, many of whom failed to understand the necessity for the practice or were swayed by propaganda depicting it as an imperialistic method of holding the African down. Meanwhile the 1949-50 cocoa crop is up to the prewar level of about 250,000 tons. Up to 75 percent goes to the US, which relies on the Gold Coast for about one-third of its supply of cocoa.

<sup>1</sup> See footnote 1, first column, page 6.

The Gold Coast has a Cocoa Marketing Board, similar to the one in Nigeria, which regulates prices and production. The board currently has a surplus of several million dollars, which is used for cocoa research, rehabilitation expense and compensation grants for cut out trees. There are indications that the farmers are gradually acquiring some understanding of the problems they face, at least to the extent of accepting cutting out less unwillingly and of appreciating the Marketing Board's efforts to stabilize the industry.

Of the other principal Gold Coast exports—gold, manganese, mahogany, diamonds, and bauxite—manganese is currently the product of most direct importance to the US, although there is a possibility that relatively large quantities of bauxite may be imported for the US stockpile. With Soviet exports of manganese to the US greatly reduced, the Gold Coast is now supplying about one quarter of US needs (80 percent with respect to battery grade ore) and virtually all that the UK uses. On the financial level, Gold Coast exports to the US—principally cocoa, manganese, and mahogany—were by 1948 yielding some \$75 million in foreign exchange as against about \$8 million in purchases from the US. The Gold Coast's standing as one of the British Empire's largest net dollar earners may well be raised even higher as import control of goods from dollar areas stiffens and exports to dollar areas are pushed.

ECA is currently studying various projects aimed at stimulating development of the Gold Coast, notably an irrigation and hydroelectric power scheme calling for construction of a dam across the Volta River. This dam is expected to furnish power for an aluminum plant with an annual capacity of 150,000 tons, plans for which are currently being studied. Also being considered are measures to combat swollen shoot disease, railway improvements, the enlargement of Takoradi harbor, and urban electrification. The Colonial Development Corporation has not as yet embarked on any specific projects in the Gold Coast, but several are under consideration.

The economy of Togoland is closely integrated with that of the Gold Coast, although a considerable proportion of its exports are han-

dled through the port of Lome, French Togoland, owing to the existence of a railway in the latter colony. Principal products are the same as in the Gold Coast, except that there is no mining.

#### 4. Sierra Leone.

##### *a. Political.*

As in the cases of the larger colonies of Nigeria and the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone<sup>1</sup> had been moving gradually toward self-government since the end of World War II, although, because of Sierra Leone's general backwardness, demands for constitutional reform have been less vehement than in the other two colonies. A new constitution, under discussion for two years, has just been approved by the British Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Governor and will probably go into effect early in 1951. Its principal significance is that it allows Sierra Leone a degree of self-government comparable to that of the other British West African Colonies by providing a Legislative Council with a sizeable unofficial<sup>2</sup> majority and an Executive Council composed of half official and half unofficial members; it also opens the way for the later widening of eligibility for appointment to the Legislative Council, for combining the Colony and Protectorate into one unit, and for setting up ministerial portfolios for the unofficial Executive Council members.

Controversy still continues over the familiar question of how many seats should be allocated to the relatively advanced Colony, which includes the city of Freetown, as against the more primitive Protectorate, and even now all elements are not entirely satisfied. Opposition has also come from extreme nationalist organizations, such as the West African League and the West African Youth League, both under the leadership of Wallace Johnson, Sierra Leone's most ardent nationalist, who maintains some contact with Nkrumah in the Gold Coast and with the West African Nationalist Secretariat in London. These groups do not, however, appear strong enough to cause any serious trouble.

<sup>1</sup>Area, 28,000 square miles; population, 1,850,000, including 3,000 non-Africans.

<sup>2</sup>An unofficial member is an elected or appointed member who holds no other government office.

##### *b. Economic.*

Sierra Leone has been making good progress in reducing its prewar adverse balance of trade and in improving its dollar position. For the first five months of 1949, the latest period for which figures are available, its exports—notably palm kernels, diamonds (of which Sierra Leone produces about five percent of the world's supply), and iron ore<sup>1</sup>—were up 60 percent over the previous year's figures, while in the same period exports to the US were increased fivefold and the colony's already limited purchases from the US cut by 30 percent to produce a favorable dollar balance. Later figures are expected to show additional gains, and the colony's economic position should be further improved as a result of the ten-year development program which has been set up. ECA is currently considering projects totalling \$16 million, the largest of which call for improvements of the railway and construction of a deep-water quay at Freetown. The British have already started work on the quay, but rehabilitation of the railway, a light line of only 2'6" gauge which is in dire need of complete modernization, has still to be begun.

#### 5. Gambia.

##### *a. Political.*

The tiny territory of Gambia<sup>2</sup> continues to be one of Britain's most loyal and least troublesome possessions. Although there has never been any organized nationalist movement, slow progress is nevertheless being made in the direction of self-government. In 1948 the Legislative Council for the first time had a majority of unofficial members, and three out of the eight Executive Council members were unofficial. The Native Authorities are being given more responsibility, and many signs point to a steady handing over of administrative power to the Africans at a rate rapid enough to forestall any major civil disturbance.

<sup>1</sup>Sierra Leone also produces ginger (about half of which is sold to the US), kola nuts, peanuts, palm oil, cocoa, piassava, and chromite.

<sup>2</sup>Area, 4,000 square miles; population, approximately 250,000.

~~SECRET~~*b. Economic.*

The most significant development in Gambia is the trend toward economic diversification. In 1948 peanuts made up over 95 percent by value of total exports, with palm kernels, beeswax and hides being the only other exports. During 1949, however, the Colonial Development Corporation's 10,000-acre egg and poultry project gathered headway, and by June 1950 commercial shipments had begun which will ultimately attain the objective of supplying England with 20 million eggs and one million pounds of dressed poultry annually. Other new activities in the colony include experiments with rice growing in the interior, development of off-shore fishing and a general attempt to stimulate production of crops other than peanuts.

ECA has under consideration projects totaling \$7 million, including principally swamp reclamation in the Bathurst area and improvement of the medical service, while the Colony's own ten-year plan, under the Colonial Development and Welfare program, provides for various long-range projects, mainly in the fields of health and education. Gambia's trade with the US is negligible.

**6. Probable Future Developments.**

British West Africa is likely to grow in importance to the US, not only because of its value as a producer of strategic columbite and manganese but also because of the increasing dependence of the UK on the area. Britain is already relying heavily on West Africa for dollar exchange, and will undoubtedly make every effort to increase its dollar yield there. British plans for the economic development of the region are also notable for their emphasis on the production of foodstuffs and other basic commodities for the British market. Although these plans may well encounter some of the basic difficulties inherent in any African development scheme, West Africa's economic potential provides the UK with one of the comparatively few opportunities it has for reducing its dependence on non-sterling areas for the necessities of life.

The rising tide of West African nationalism presents a major long-range challenge to Western interests in the area, particularly in

the Gold Coast and, to a less extent, Nigeria. Demands for an increasing degree of self-government will undoubtedly continue until something at least comparable to dominion status is achieved, and the British will thus be saddled for a period of years with the difficult task of keeping the population reasonably satisfied without either unduly lowering the effectiveness of the colonial government by too rapid extension of native authority or threatening the UK's economic position in the area. This problem is complicated by indications that the USSR is beginning to take an increased interest in exploiting unrest in Africa. The British Communist Party has already established contacts with various Nigerian and Gold Coast nationalist and labor leaders and has penetrated the West African National Secretariat in London, of which the Gold Coast leader Nkrumah (who has reportedly been a member of the British Communist Party since 1935) was the first secretary.

In the short run, it appears unlikely that the situation will get out of hand. The British authorities appear to be well aware of the nature of their problem, and although riots and demonstrations can be expected to continue, the violently nationalistic element in British West Africa does not yet appear to have the strength needed to present any overwhelming threat to British control. Popular ignorance and apathy still inhibit the development of nationalism as a broad, mass movement, while attempts to unify the nationalist movements of the four colonies, notably on the part of Nkrumah, have so far failed.

The Communist danger also appears to be more potential than actual at present. Although a number of West African leaders are undoubtedly taking advantage of Communist sympathy, they are primarily dedicated to the elimination of any foreign control and have thus far been as unresponsive to Communist direction as to that of other outsiders. Even Nkrumah, who has been strongly affected by Communist ideology and has a plan for the unification of West Africa as a Soviet Socialist Republic called "Ghana," has proved by his actions that his Communist inclinations are more nationalist than Stalinist. Thus, the

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Communist potential in West Africa is not likely to be realized unless the nationalist leaders become convinced that they cannot eliminate British domination without accepting some degree of alliance with international Communism.

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