



20th September, 2024

Founder's Day 2024 – Message to the People

On the 115th Anniversary of the birth of Ghana's Founder, Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah, of Blessed Memory, the Socialist Movement of Ghana salutes all Africans. We stand in solidarity with all who struggle militantly for African Sovereignty and Unification—pan-Africanists of all continents. We salute especially our comrades here in Ghana. On this occasion, we wish to offer perspectives on two related issues.

Victory for “Founder's Day”!

First, on this Founder's Day 2024, we congratulate the people of Ghana for roundly defeating the NPP's renewed attack on history. With its capture of state power in 2017, the NPP administration predictably moved to falsify the history of Ghana's independence struggles and the First Republic. They renewed the false narrative that seeks to diminish and dilute Kwame Nkrumah's role (and thus the role of the organised masses) in our liberation. They falsely elevated the role played by anti-people figures (and the colonial elite in general) in the Independence struggle, pushing the British colonial myth of the so-called “Big Six” that won independence for Ghana.

This attack on history has taken many forms – speeches, changes to school textbooks, alteration of guidebooks at museums and historical sites, and even the crass redevelopment of the Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum from a place of sober reflection to a gaudy entertainment centre. President Akufo-Addo has spared no opportunity to lionise, particularly, the middling role of his great-uncle and tribal icon, Dr. J.B. Danquah, in national history. Akufo-Addo falsely claimed that Dr Danquah originated the notion that the Gold Coast should be renamed “Ghana”. The record shows that Danquah favoured the name “Akanland” (reflecting his ethnic bias). Akufo-Addo also claimed that Danquah was the key driver in the campaign to establish the University of Ghana and that it would be fitting to rename the University after him. Fortunately, there are historical records of the relevant debates, which show that Danquah's role was modest at best.

However, the NPP's most profound attack on our history was the Public Holidays (Amendment) Act of 2019. This act sought to achieve several things.

- First, it sought to trivialise 21st September as a personalised celebration of Nkrumah's birthday – not in his historical role as “Founder” of Ghana (begging the question: why then do we celebrate Nkrumah?).
- Second, it designated the 4 August 1947 founding of the UGCC as “*Founders' Day*”. The founding of the UGCC was an important historical footnote in our long struggle against colonialism, but the UGCC did not play a decisive role in the struggle. Its historical significance is that it represents the only period (2 years) that the colonial elite dominated Indigenous politics in the ten years before the CPP won independence for us.
- Third, the Act “demoted “Republic Day” and “African Union Day” (itself a disrespectful re-naming of “African Liberation Day”) from “national holidays” to mere “commemorative” days. This is a subtle but dangerous institutional attack on our national identity and heritage as shaped by Osagyefo, an attack possible only by the most reactionary of political forces who do not appreciate the significance of achieving the status of a Republic or the continental adoption of a Unity agenda, however modest (or who reject these possibilities).

Fortunately, the NPP's attempt to rewrite history has backfired. The political descendants of the UP have once again been thwarted and rejected by the awareness and vigilance of ordinary Ghanaians. Nobody (except those that the State can compel) celebrates 4th August. The relentless (and unnecessary) promotion of Danquah as Nkrumah's equal and somehow a “co-founder” of Ghana has led to a widespread examination of the record and his rejection as a role model for Ghanaians. Public celebration of Nkrumah's visionary and capable leadership is now pervasive. Today, everyone celebrates the 21st of September as “Founder's Day”. More events

involving more people will celebrate Nkrumah's Birthday as "Founder's Day" in 2024 than when NPP enacted its pernicious Public Holidays (Amendment) Act.

This does not mean that the attacks will cease. They will continue and perhaps intensify this campaign in the approach to the December elections. Clearly, the NPP's vice presidential candidate considers has made disrespect for Nkrumah a central pillar of his campaign. But, as the disastrous Akufo-Addo administration grinds painfully towards its end, Ghanaians can hope that the next leadership will, in the context of a review of national history, heritage, and values that inure to our development as proud Africans, repeal this shameful legislation.

The Search for National Nkrumaist Leadership

Secondly, September 21, 2024, is 77 days to a general election. All Ghanaians must be thinking of societal leadership. SMG has already set out our views on the choices confronting us as a nation (web reference). We face a societal breakdown. Ghana today is firmly under the control of the international banking cartels. Accordingly, predatory foreign interests control our natural resources, energy, and modern manufacturing sectors. Agriculture is increasingly foreign-dominated, with the privatisation of communal lands, the exclusion of peasant food farmers, and the growing dominance of corporate-owned genetic material, inputs, and other technologies oriented towards commodity exports rather than local nutrition and manufacturing. The Ghana State is fully controlled by the same interests operating through the IMF, World Bank, and the International Aid agencies of our "Development Partners". These "Donors" increasingly control all areas of policymaking, with our elected governments acting merely as their PR firms and enforcers. Now, we garrison US troops that use our soil arrogantly as a base for attacking our neighbours and destabilising West Africa. That state is also near collapse because its structures have been coopted to serve personal and partisan agendas and have lost their non-partisan professionalism.

In short, we are back, in all but name, to the situation of the Gold Coast in 1949. We are no longer a sovereign nation. We are a "neo-colony". Nkrumah's genius was defeating colonial arrangements, building political sovereignty, driving economic independence, promoting social equality, laying the foundations for a genuinely democratic society, and making the case for a Union of African States. It is clear to most that Ghana, under Nkrumah, was on the right path. The CIA-orchestrated overthrow of the First Republic was proof of the correctness of Nkrumah's political vision, the implacable opposition of Imperialism to our liberation, and a disastrous setback for Africa. Our fourth Republican crisis today is not just a reflection of poor leadership. It is the inevitable unfolding of the counter-revolution and the utter domination of our economy and society by the profit-seeking agenda of multinational finance capital.

It should be clear to all, therefore, that our way forward today as a nation is to retrieve the fundamentals of Nkrumah's socialism and update its practice. We need leaders today who study Nkrumah and, like him, clarify problems honestly to the masses. We need leaders who can focus the nation's creativity on challenging, achievable goals. We need leaders who can mobilise our working people, especially our women and youth, to build national institutions that meet the struggle for change head-on - rather than promoting the illusion that individual leaders or Parties given state power will deliver juicy development handouts. The leadership we need must be capable of developing an egalitarian plan to share the pain of long-term development.

Electoral Choices – Your Vote is NOT your power!

We reject the position that all we can do as citizens is accept the options that the elite has placed before us, vote for one of them, and retire again into passivity while others destroy our lives. We reject the position that the citizen's vote is their power. Voting is just one "power" that we have as citizens. Elites promote electoralism because it is an individualistic and secret act that protects the status quo. Our real power lies in our ability to organise, mobilise, and control social decision-making to achieve what our communities need and aspire to. This is not a call to boycott or ignore elections. It is a call to go beyond electoralism. Our approach to elections should be to listen to what different candidates and parties are offering critically and collectively from the perspective of our various social class interests and put forward our demands for shaping the future. Of course, we must mobilise to protect our votes and prevent manipulation

or intimidation, especially by State officials under the control of the NPP. However the vote goes in December, our real responsibility as the People, must be to prepare to challenge our exploiters and impose our authority over whatever government takes office in January 2025.

We wish you all a joyous and reflective Founder's Day!



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