

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Brooklyn 1, New York

31 Grace Court

February 7, 1957

His Excellency, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah,

Prime Minister of the Gold Coast

My dear Dr. Nkrumah:

I have your kind invitation of January 22, 1957. In behalf of myself and of my wife, Shirley Graham, I thank you for it and want to say how great is our desire to accept it. But ~~because of the difficulty of obtaining passports and the cost of travel, we must with deep regret inform you of our inability to accept.~~ ^{Since the United States has refused to} I have recently ~~also been compelled to my sorrow to decline a trip to China for lectures and participation in the celebration of the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the birth of Benjamin Franklin.~~ ^{for the same reason}

However, because of the fact that I am ~~about to begin my~~ ^{now sixty} ninetieth year of life, and because of my acquaintanceship with you during the last twelve years, which cover the years of your imprisonment, vindication, and political triumph, I trust you will allow me a few words of advice for the future of Ghana and Africa.

I venture the more readily to do this because forty years ago at the end of the First World War, I tried to establish some means of co-operation between the peoples of African descent throughout the world. Since then five Pan-African Congresses have met and at the last one in England in 1945, I had the pleasure of meeting you.

In modern history, Ghana is first heard of at the time the Roman Empire was falling apart into Eastern and Western realms. At that time, Ghana stretching southward on the continent of Africa from opposite the Canaries Islands to the

valleys of the Senegal and Niger developed into a center of trade from below the Sahara to the shores of the Mediterranean. In the eleventh century it founded Timbuktu, and in the thirteenth century expanded east into the Kingdom of the Malles-tine and in the fourteenth into the Empire of the Songhay. Its power swept south to the Niger ^{della} desert and it met and mingled with the westward dominion of the Arabs.

Today when Ghana arises from the dead and faces a future in this modern world, it must no longer be merely a part of the British Commonwealth or a representative of the world of West Europe, Canada, and the United States. Ghana must on the contrary be the representative of Africa and not only that, but of Black Africa below the Sahara desert. As such her first duty should be to come into close acquaintance-ship and co-operation with her fellow areas of British West Africa and Liberia; with the great areas of black folk in French West ^{and} Equatorial Africa; with the Sudan, Ethiopia, and Somaliland; with Uganda, Kenya, and Tanganyika; with the Belgian Congo and all Portuguese Africa; with the Rhodesias and Bechuanaland; with Southwest Africa, the Union of South Africa and Madagascar and with all other parts of Africa, and with areas with peoples of African blood who want to co-operate. All the former barriers of language, culture, religion, and political control should fall before the essen-tial unity of race and descent, the common suffering of slavery and the slave trade and the modern color bar. In all these places today, Black Folk writhe under color tyranny and oppression.

Ignoring the old sources of division and lack of knowledge of and sympathy for each other, Ghana should lead a movement of black men for Pan-Africanism, including periodic conference and personal contacts of black men from the Sahara to the Indian Ocean. With a program of Peace and no thought of force, political control, or

underground subversion, a new series of Pan-African Congresses should be held; they should include delegates from all groups and especially from the African congresses which already exist in many parts of Africa and which got their inspiration in most cases from the first Pan-African Congress in Paris in 1919.

The new series of Pan-African Congresses would seek common aims of progress for Black Africa, including types of political control, economic co-operation, cultural development, universal education and freedom from religious dogma and dictation.

The consequent Pan-African, working together through its independent units, should seek to develop not as European nor American states, but as a new African economy and cultural center standing between Europe and Asia, taking from and contributing to both. It should stress Peace and join no military alliance and refuse to fight for settling European quarrels. It should avoid subjection to and ownership by foreign capital who seek to get rich on African labor and raw material, and try to build a Socialism founded on old African communal life; rejecting on the one hand the exaggerated private initiative of the West, and seeking to ally itself with the social program of the progressive nations: with British and Scandinavian Socialism, with the progress toward the welfare state in India, Germany, France, and the United States; and with the ^{Communal} Socialist states like the Soviet Union and China, in peaceful co-operation and without presuming to dictate as to how socialism must or can be attained at particular times and places.

Pan-African socialism seeks the Welfare State in Black Africa. It will refuse to be exploited by people of other continents for their own benefit and not for the benefit and progress of the peoples of Africa. It will no longer consent to permitting the African majority of any African country to be governed against its will by a minority of invaders who claim racial superiority or the right to get rich at African expense. It will seek not only to raise but to process its raw material and to trade it freely with all the world on just and equal terms and prices;

Pan-Africa will seek to preserve and ~~write~~ its own past history, and write the present account, erasing from literature the lies and distortions about black folk which have disgraced the last centuries of European and American literature; above all the new Pan-Africa will seek the education of all its youth on the broadest possible basis without religious dogma and in all hospitable lands as well as in Africa and for the end of making Africans not simply profitable workers for industry nor stool-pigeons for propaganda, but for making them modern, intelligent, responsible men of vision and character.

I pray you, my dear Mr. Nkrumah, to use all your power to put a Pan-Africa along these lines into working order at the earliest possible date. Seek to save the great cultural past of the Ashanti and Fanti peoples, not by inner division but by outer cultural and economic expansion toward the outmost bounds of the great African peoples so that they may be free to live, grow, and expand; and to teach mankind what non-violence and courtesy, literature and art, music and dancing, can do for this greedy, selfish, and war-stricken world.

I hereby put into your hands, Mr. Prime Minister, my empty but still significant title of "President of the Pan-African Congress," to be bestowed on my duly elected successor who will preside over a Pan-African Congress due, I trust, to meet soon and for the first time on African soil, at the call of the independent state of Ghana.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

W. E. BURCHARDT Du BOIS

Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science,

Member of the National Institute of Arts and Letters,

President of the Pan-African Congress,

Prize man, World Council of Peace, 1955

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