

Notes on the life of George Padmore

by

C. L. R. James

FOR

Dorothy Padmore

and

Kwame Nkrumah

## FOREWORD

On the evening of the day that he received the news, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, then Prime Minister of Ghana, broadcast to the nation on the death of George Padmore. He said:

"George Padmore was, in my view, one of the greatest fighters against colonialism of our modern times.... One day, the whole of Africa will surely be free and united and when the final tale is told, the significance of George Padmore's work will be revealed."

The future will do its work. Meanwhile we have to do ours.

This brief memoir will give some connected account of Padmore's

life and work to the many people in four continents who, whether personally or indirectly, knew and appreciated him; it will introduce others, I hope, to the extraordinary life of one of the men who has left a benificent mark upon the troubled history of our time.

C. L. R. James

The Times of London, September 25, 1959, carried the following obituary notice.

Mr. George Padmore, political adviser to Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, Prime Minister of Ghana, died on Wednesday in a London Hospital after a short illness. He was 56.

He was born in Trinidad, British West Indies, and, after studying at an American university, devoted his whole life to the cause of the freedom of Africa. He collected an enormous library of books on Africa. After carefully studying and marking them and drawing on his huge collection of newspaper cuttings he wrote a series of books on Africa. He had a thorough knowledge of Marxism and with his detailed knowledge of African affairs he was able to write perceptively and provocatively. His last book was Africa, Britain's Third Empire. In 1945 he resuscitated the Pan-African Congress and arranged a conference in the United Kingdom of which the secretary was none other than Dr. Nkrumah.

When Dr. Nkrumah returned to Accra in 1947 he became the accepted leader in the struggle for independence in Ghana and after the declaration of independence in 1957 Padmore was appointed political adviser to the Prime Minister and went to live in Ghana. From there he helped to organize the conference of the independent African states in 1958, the conference in Guinea with President Sekou-Toure in May 1959, and the recent conference in Liberia. He also accompanied the Prime Minister of Ghana on his tour of African states in 1958 visiting Ethiopia, Egypt, Tunis, and Morocco. He was an indefatigable worker and there is little doubt that this accelerated his death. He was fortunate in living to see the spread of independence among the now rapidly developing new countries and he was able to assist in laying the foundations of independent Ghana and to guide some of the changes in every section of life in that country.

George Padmore had a great appreciation of beautiful things and love of English literature. He was a good friend and lovable companion.

All things considered such a notice in such a place was adequate. In New York, however, one of the great national stations televised the burial of his ashes in Christiansborg Castle, <sup>(Accra, Ghana)</sup> under the title: George Padmore, the Father of African Emancipation.

Yet widely as his name was known, his life was so varied that few of his friends had any connected idea of it.

Padmore in the thirties was an active Communist in the United States.

For years Padmore had an office in the Kremlin as the Chief of the Negro Department of the Profintern, the Red Trade Union Organization.

For years his small flat in Mornington Crescent was the acknowledged centre of fighters for the emancipation and independence of Africans and people of African descent <sup>from</sup> ~~all~~ over the world.

His books on Africa were not written out of other books.

In his Kremlin days he had travelled extensively over Africa. When in 1957 Dr. Nkrumah invited him to become his Adviser on African Affairs, Padmore had more knowledge of African political movements and personal contact and relations with African politicians and national leaders than any man living. He was a Marxist and a revolutionary but few were the African politicians who ~~consulted him~~ did not consult Padmore before their visits to the Colonial Office and check with him afterwards. For thirty years this West Indian had one main purpose in life, the emancipation of Africa from foreign domination. He organized the All-African People's Conference in Accra. It was from this conference that Dr. Banda went to Nyasaland and Lumumba to the Belgian Congo. In his Kremlin days Padmore had participated in a gun-running expedition into the Belgian Congo to help a native revolt there. Among African politicians, public men, and students <sup>and people</sup> ~~his name~~ already counts for much more than Lugard and Lyantey.

It is because this extraordinary life should be better known, and its influence in modern politics better understood, that I have written these Notes. His wife and close fellow-worker, Dorothy Padmore, is already at work on a full-length biography. But that will take years. As ~~was~~ <sup>it is</sup> some of his closest friends including his wife have agreed that my personal relations with Padmore, which began over fifty

years ago, and my partial collaboration and unbroken interest in his work during the last <sup>(twenty-five)</sup> years, make me the fittest person to write this badly needed brief memoir.

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Padmore's real name was Malcolm Nurse, but as is the custom with revolutionaries he early adopted a pseudonym - George Padmore. (This was the name of one of his closest friends when he was in Trinidad. The real George Padmore died some years ago.) Nevertheless, all of us knew him as George, it is as George that he lived the important years of his life, and it is as George that he will be remembered.

He was born in Trinidad, West Indies, in 1904. His father was Hubert Alphonse Nurse, a rather unusual figure in his day. He was a good friend of my father's and I saw him fairly often. What distinguished him was this; he was a black man but had gained a post in the Department of Education as an Agricultural Adviser, a distinction which did not often in those days fall to men who were not white or at least light in complexion - I am speaking of the first ten years of the century. The career and personality of Padmore's father will help to throw light on the son's. Nurse Senior was an elementary school teacher at the time when the local Department of Education decided to add agriculture to the curriculum. A series of special courses was improvised for the teachers. Nurse took the courses and mastered <sup>them</sup> fully that he was given the job of instructing teachers in the subject. His ability got him into trouble. He prepared a brilliant paper for some official meeting and had the temerity to sign it. This drew down on him the wrath of Professor C---, the head of his department. After continuous friction, Nurse was either dismissed or left. He was an adventurous man. He became a Moslem, a most unusual step for a West Indian Negro. I remember him living in a small room, almost entirely surrounded by books

from floor to ceiling. He gave lessons there, and more than once I visited him with my father and heard him hold forth.

I had never seen so many books before in <sup>a private house,</sup> ~~the house.~~ That was about 1910\*. At that time George did not live with his father.

Shortly after we moved to Arima and George either lived or spent his vacations there. At any rate during vacation time we spent long hours together with a crew of other boys. Our chief recreation was going day after day to ~~the river~~ swim in the Arima River. I do not remember that books played any special role with George though some of us were already omnivorous readers.

I had won a scholarship to the Queen's Royal College, a Government secular institution. George went, I believe, to St. Mary's College, a Catholic school, ~~not on~~ not on account of religion but probably because the St. Mary's priests, though subsidised by Government, controlled their own finances and were always ready to lower fees for bright boys or deserving parents. I do not think he did very much there but his general bent was shown by the fact that in his early twenties he became a reporter on the Trinidad Guardian. A Mr. Partridge, an Englishman, was then the Editor and Mr. Jones, a black local man, was the Assistant Editor, as he and his friends liked to call him, or the Chief Reporter or some other denigratory title which was officially given to him. Padmore worked there for some years and then left to go to the United States. His reason he told me afterwards in one of the many long conversations on which much of these biographical notes will be built.

Mr. \* I have wondered if the following characteristic of Padmore's father will be of interest to psychologists. He had an almost infallible sense of time. As both my father and he lived near the Queen's Park Savannah, they met periodically to watch the horses in training in the early morning or late afternoon. Without a watch, Nurse would say 1.16 1/5 or 2.38 or some figure of the kind. My father would be sceptical and more than once I ran down to the grandstand to check with the reporters. Next morning the newspapers printed the times of the most important gallops. I used to check and Mr. Nurse was rarely more than one-fifth of a second out.

He described the manner in which Mr. Jones used to go into Mr. Partridge's room and the manner in which he used to leave it. The subordination, almost humiliation, to which in George's eyes Mr. Jones was subjected, more than anything else made him feel that if this was to be his own future then that was no future for him. Naturally there were many other impulses driving an active, intelligent and proud young man of dark skin to shake the dust of the Trinidad of those days from off his feet. But this, the relation between Jones and Partridge, was what seemed to him in after years to crystallize his general feeling of revolt. I didn't see much of him in those days and after he left I heard very little. It was only when I went to England in 1932 and afterwards to America in 1938 that I heard some of the details of George's career in the United States.

But first I should say a few words about the Trinidad of those days. Political activity there was little, nationalist agitation there was none. The young men of our class were highly literate and vocal, but not in such matters as politics and unionism. It was only in 1923 that the first elections were held for a small minority of the Legislative Council. In 1920 Captain Cipriani, a French creole, started a combined labour and political mass organization but it was not very effective at the beginning. The influential ideas in the island came from the United States, books by Booker T. Washington and Dr. Du Bois, and later Marcus Garvey's paper, The Negro World. The paper was banned but all of us read it.

Socially racial lines were clear. The whites, the browns and the blacks each kept their own company. The best positions were <sup>(very unequally)</sup> shared by the first two, but there was no official segregation though certain hotels ~~were reserved for whites~~ were reserved for whites. It was on the black as opposed to the brown middle class that the discrimination fell hardest and George was a member of that class. <sup>(white, brown and black)</sup> But we had all gone to school together, <sup>(in our separate clubs)</sup> we played



games in the public competitions together and somehow there was a sense of accommodation on all sides. A race riot was unthinkable. Yet a proud and sensitive black man could feel a sense of intolerable restriction, particularly because you were powerless to do anything about ~~what~~ a situation that all classes seemed to accept as the natural order. This was the background of the young man who left Trinidad for the United States in the middle twenties.

He went first to Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, to further his study. I ~~visited~~<sup>visited</sup> Fisk in 1938 and ~~visited~~ once or twice during the next ~~two~~<sup>fifteen</sup> years I visited Nashville. The University was an island of well paid and comfortable professors (mainly Negro) who lived with their Negro students surrounded by a sea of anti-Negro prejudice and restrictions. Nashville is not in the deep South. The University escaped the surrounding prejudice to the degree that it confined its activities to the campus, or some carefully chosen excursions to carefully chosen elements in the hostile world outside. I did not know what <sup>was</sup> George's reaction to the time he spent at Fisk. I do not remember his speaking of it, but this dominating racial prejudice would hit a black West Indian hard. You lived in a sort of dream-like prison safe as long as you did not venture outside. George

<sup>all</sup> <sup>but</sup> It is not surprising that ~~George~~<sup>(he)</sup> left, ~~his~~ his course unfinished. ~~From~~ <sup>(From)</sup> Fisk he went to Howard, the Negro University in Washington, DC., to study law, following the practice which seemed inevitable for all ambitious young West Indians of the day. It was either law or medicine. By this time, George had become a militant revolutionary. One day Sir Esmé Howard, the British Ambassador, was due to pay a visit to Howard University. In those days that was a great event and the Negro professors prepared a distinguished welcome for their distinguished visitor. George, however, had <sup>had</sup> printed a set of leaflets which described in fierce terms the oppression of British imperialism in Africa.

The story is that when the procession of Ambassador and professorial dignitaries was at its most impressive George suddenly stepped out from among the students and threw the leaflets in front of the British Ambassador, some say into his face. *Negroes in the United States are ambivalent, and George would expect.* ~~was not expelled for it, as one~~. Anyway he abandoned his academic career and we see him next as a paid functionary in the American Communist Party.

In those days the American Communist Party was still permeated with race prejudice, despite the valiant efforts that the party leaders were making to expel this curse from their ranks. George adopted the Communist doctrine completely and became very expert in it. But there were practical problems. Harlem where he worked for the most part was, as now, then an active centre of Negro life and political activity. The Negroes in Harlem were not interested in Communism but they were interested in Negroes wherever they were, and they were on the alert to see that a Negro whatever party he was in did not suffer from race prejudice. This (as George used to relate with glee) if he was fighting for some policy or action inside the Communist Party and the Communist Party either could not or would not see the necessity for it, he would go around to his Negro friends in the journalistic world or ~~in the Negro~~ <sup>in</sup> politics. These, being briefed, would immediately accuse the Communist Party of hypocrisy in protesting friendship for Negroes and freedom from racial prejudice. They would give as an example the racial animosity ~~in the party~~ which prevented George Padmore and other Negroes in the party from carrying out policies beneficial to the Negro people, etc., etc. Whereupon the Communist Party in Harlem, sensitive to Negro opinion, would reconsider the position and George and his Negro colleagues would have their way.

People who knew him in his Communist Party days in the United States ~~agreed~~ <sup>agree</sup> that George was a great militant, active, devoted and fearless, but that he had certain Negro

chauvinist tendencies which were contrary to the strict Communist doctrine. The complaint of George and most of the other Negroes in the Communist Party in America and elsewhere in those days was that the Communist leaders never seemed to understand that the Negro Question had racial connotations which demanded special consideration by a political organization, however much this organization might aim to work for the equality of all mankind. This was the problem which formed the axis of George's career as a Marxist and a few words about it are

Chauvinism is excessive admiration of one's own race or one's country. Thus a white man who continually boasted of the superiority of the white race was guilty, in political doctrine, of white chauvinism. It would seem to appear logically that if a black man was guilty of praising excessively or in any other way of ~~exaggerating~~ <sup>emphasizing</sup> the ~~merits~~ <sup>virtues</sup> of black people, he too would be guilty of racial chauvinism. In the minds of many good Communists, and liberals too, both brands of chauvinism were equally to be condemned. But the matter was not so simple. Lenin and Trotsky had been clear that if a white man boasted about the white race he usually had in mind the maintenance of white superiority. But that when a black man did the same about his own race he was not seeking to establish a Negro superiority. His aim was in reality to establish equality, to make up for the humiliation and historical degradation which his race had suffered. This is putting the question in the simplest terms. Hidden in it is the great question of the attitude to be taken to nationalism in an advanced country and to nationalism in an underdeveloped country. The word is the same in each case. The two things which they represent are entirely different...

These disputes are by no means settled up to this day. They never can be settled absolutely, and, in any case, George was in my opinion ~~absolutely~~ right and the Communist Party hierarchy wrong. Nevertheless, whatever the doubts about George's orthodoxy as a strict Communist ~~doctrine~~ on the Negro

Question, by 1930 he was created head of the Negro department of the Profintern with his headquarters in the Kremlin. He held that post until 1935 and if he had never done anything else his place in Negro history would still be safe.

Let us get very clear at once what it was that the George Padmore of the Kremlin did. Up to 1918 Negroes as a whole played a particular role in world politics. The world was not conscious of them except as objects. They were not conscious of themselves. A spirit of frustration, of humiliation, of rebellion is not political consciousness.

The man who first made Negroes conscious of themselves and made the world conscious of Negroes as a force to be reckoned with in world politics was Marcus Garvey, <sup>a)</sup> ~~the~~ Jamaican. By 1925 or 1926 Garveyism as a force was finished, but the political problem represented by the Negro people had been placed before the world once and for all. Henceforth it had to be taken into consideration in all calculations on a national as well as international scale.

It is a most extraordinary thing that the next great step in the international organization and mobilization of the Negro people was taken by yet another West Indian, George Padmore. What Padmore did between 1930 and 1935 was to organize and educate the Negro masses on a world scale in the theory and practice of modern political parties and modern trade unionism. Up to 1945, the end of the war, there was hardly a single African leader still active who had not passed through the school of thought and organization which George directed from Moscow. Tens of thousands of Negro workers in various parts of the world received their first political education from the paper he edited, The Negro Worker.

Since then a new generation has risen who were educated and organized in another way, and very much by George also. But the foundations of the approach to politics of all the budding leaders in the African and other <sup>Negro</sup> colonial territories between 1930 and 1938 were laid by George Padmore. And those who came after stood upon the shoulders of those who had preceded them.

It was not only Africa. The West Indies, Haiti, were also included as well as the United States, although the work in the United States was more directly under the control and direction of the United States Communist Party.

George got his opportunity from the following special circumstances. Between 1924 and 1928, the Communist International, following of course the directions of the Moscow Government, had preached and followed a doctrine of collaboration with Labour parties and the international trade union movement. In 1928, however, at the Sixth International Conference of the Communist International, Stalin and his followers proclaimed a doctrine that the world revolution was now near at hand. They declared war on behalf of all the Communist organizations against the Labour parties and the trade unions of Britain, Germany, etc. They established Communist unions of their own, thereby splitting the trade union movement wherever possible. Whereas formerly, in various countries, there had only been Communist Parties opposed to the local Labour Parties, there were now Communist unions opposed to the local unions. The Communists called this new organization "the Red International of Labour Unions (R.I.L.U.). This Red International of Labour Unions was called the Profintern and one of its sections was a Negro department for the organization of Negro workers all over the world. That the Negro work was placed in the trade union section of Communism testified to its backwardness. George had to begin from the ground up.

The first great achievement of the new organization was an international conference of revolutionary Negro workers held in Hamburg in 1930. It was the first such conference which had ever been convened. To get the delegates together George travelled personally over half the globe, at times disguising himself as various kinds of African, including the Moslem, the adopted religion of his father. He arranged for passages, sometimes for passports, sometimes for illegal exit: some of the delegates had to run the gauntlet of police and soldiers from countries like South Africa. (They went across the veldt and took a boat in Lourenco Marques.) The conference was truly a world conference. As George wrote in his first book, The Life and Struggles of Negro Toilers:

At this conference Negro delegates from different parts of Africa, the United States, West Indies and Latin America not only discussed trade union questions, but dealt with the most vital problems affecting their social and political conditions, as for example the expropriation of land by the imperialist robbers in Africa; the enslaving of ~~tilers~~ <sup>workers</sup> through Pass laws and other anti-labour and racial legislation in Africa; lynching, peonage and segregation in the United States; as well as unemployment, which has thrown millions of these black toilers on the streets, faced with the spectre of starvation and death.

Everybody says these things nowadays. They are a commonplace in the United States. They play a role in British elections. In 1930 George was giving <sup>them</sup> currency.

If it is true that he had the power and the money of the powerful Russian state behind him, in some of the places he had to go and the things he had to do, nothing, not even Russia could protect him. Even today I still marvel at the courage, the worldwide historical vision, the political knowledge and the organizational skill which moved in George, <sup>at</sup> ~~that time~~ <sup>only</sup> ~~then~~ <sup>at that time</sup> 26 years old.

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^ Marcus Garvey, the Jamaican, and George Padmore <sup>(the Trinidadian)</sup> One of

the reasons why Garvey was so unceremoniously bundled out of the United States in 1926 was the fact that the Japanese Government had been trying to make arrangements to finance (and doubtless also to control) his Back to Africa movement. They wanted to embarrass and disrupt the imperialist empires in Africa. In 1935 when Anthony Eden visited Moscow to discuss a rapprochement between Great Britain and Russia, we were reliably informed that one of the conditions he laid down was the cessation of anti-imperialist propaganda in Africa. That was the work of George.

I went to England in 1932, knowing little or nothing of all this. I spent three months in London, and then I went to stay with Learie and Norma Constantine in Nelson until the following spring when I went to London to live. I lived by reporting cricket for the Manchester Guardian, while I educated myself politically. One day a friend told me that there was a

meeting in Gray's Inn Road and a great Negro Communist had come from Europe to speak. I was going to every meeting those days and the Negro aspect of the matter was an added attraction. I went and found about 50 people in a small hall, most of them Negroes. We waited for some time and then in stepped Malcolm Nurse, accompanied by one or two of his associates. I was amazed and delighted.

He spoke to the audience about Negro struggles all over the world. George was a very good speaker, but not a great orator. What he had was authority. I was struck by the admiration and the awe with which the whole audience listened to him and looked at him. He had just been lucky enough to get out of the prison into which the Nazis had put him as soon as they came to power. Many of his audience knew the risks he took daily in his hazardous life. I heard about all this afterwards - he rarely spoke about it and always briefly. It was part of his profession - that was all.

Yet one of the reasons for the impression he made was that without the slightest trace of bravado, he was utterly fearless. Sometime in 1937 when he was living in London, he was invited to Scandinavia to speak. To get there he had to take a train which passed through Nazi Germany to get to Denmark where he would take the boat. By that time the Nazi Gestapo patrolled all trains ~~and boats~~. They knew George from old, and furthermore they had agents who used to take photographs of all of us who spoke in Hyde Park. They were preparing to arrest us as soon as they had conquered England. I begged George not to go. As a Negro he would be a marked man, there would be investigations and if the Gestapo found out that he was Padmore God knows what would happen. George pooh-poohed the idea of danger, told me how he would handle it and went off. I was sick with anxiety for days until he returned and with the grim humour which distinguished him told me briefly how he had bamboozled the Gestapo agents.

That night after the meeting he and I had a reunion. I went to his room and we talked till late. Life is much stranger than fiction. He told me that he had been in London, either in February 1932 or May, just before I arrived in London or just after I left for Welton. He had been looking for likely recruits to take to Moscow to be trained and he said that if he had met me he would most certainly have asked me. I did not tell him that if he had asked me in 1932 I would most certainly have gone with him. In 1932 I knew nothing of Communism, but if Malcolm Nurse had offered to take me to Moscow, I would not have missed the opportunity to see something of that strange new world. But by 1933 things were different. I was speaking a great deal on the case for West Indian self-government and similar matters, but I had not entered politics as yet. Nevertheless I was reading hard and I was already a long way towards becoming a Trotskyist. George was the leading Negro Communist of the time. Before three years had passed, I was considered by many to be one of the leading Trotskyists in Great Britain. Between Communism and Trotskyism there was a line of antagonism and conflict stained with blood, incredible cruelties, murders and death. We were swimmers in waters deeper and more turbulent than the Blue Basin of Arima River. But though powerful currents were driving us apart, the early days home and our common interest in African emancipation kept us together. George and I never once quarrelled.

After that night I <sup>did</sup> not see him again until one day, early in 1935, he came unexpectedly to my flat, pale and drawn, to tell me that he had broken with the Kremlin and would henceforth be living in London. From that time on we worked closely together, seeing one another at least once and often three or four times a week. I learnt from his own lips the story of his life and work in the Kremlin, and how the break came.

Until George Padmore ~~died~~, he enjoyed the unusual distinction of being one of the few men alive who had lived and worked



intimately with the men of the Kremlin before the great purges took place. After World War II I asked him periodically to write down his reminiscences of this period in his life. With so many of the people of those days murdered, his record would have had a rare historical value. George demurred. He told me once (or his wife Dorothy told my wife, I cannot remember exactly) that he actually had begun it once ~~but~~ <sup>but</sup> gave it up. I think I understand why. This much can be said. George was a man of great personal dignity and sensitivity. And he recoiled from the idea that what he had to write about the Kremlin would be used as evidence against them by people whom he had fought all his life and for whom he had the greatest contempt. There was a long list of ~~men~~ <sup>men</sup> who had broken away from Communism, had given up everything that they had ~~once~~ <sup>once</sup> stood for, and were enemies of the revolution. George did not wish to be included with these. If I understand his motives, I nevertheless regret that the book was never written. It might have been written and a suitable time chosen for publication. On the other hand, George did not have time to write books which would be published in future years....

Let me give some idea of the kind of thing that George would tell, with dramatic humour that was inimitable. (And nevertheless there was always a trace of sadness and regret that so great an adventure in the development of human society could result in such absurd and pitiable manoeuvres.)

George is sitting in his office one day in the Kremlin when Manuilsky, a functionary of the Communist International, comes in to see him. Manuilsky is a very pleasant, ~~well-meaning~~ <sup>well-meaning</sup> old man, to which perhaps he owes the fact that he escaped liquidation for many years. For all I know, he may be still alive. He tells George that he wants him to run for the Moscow Soviet (corresponding roughly to a city municipality). George is immediately on the defensive. He tells Manuilsky that he

does not wish to be bothered. He knows nothing about the Moscow Soviet, he does not speak Russian, he has enough work to do. And George, who knows the manoeuvres of Russian bureaucrats very well, is very suspicious that he is being drawn into some political intrigue. He wants to have no part in it.

Manuilsky, however, is a very nice old man. He tells George that nothing is intended. He would not be called upon to do anything. He would not have to attend the Moscow Soviet. He is to be a candidate for the Moscow Ballbearing Factory. He tells George that the other two candidates are Stalin and Kaganovich, two of the most powerful men in Russia at the time. George is to be the third. This makes George more suspicious than ever. Manuilsky is insistent that George will have no duties to perform; ~~with the exception of attending the Moscow Soviet~~ *he will not have to campaign as he* ~~is certain to be elected.~~ *is* certain to be elected. Padmore finally allows himself to be persuaded on the express condition that he is not to be bothered. This satisfies Manuilsky. Some time later George is informed that the Moscow Ballbearing Factory has elected Stalin, Kaganovich and Padmore (or whatever George's name might be at the time) to the Moscow Soviet. George does not care. He attends no meetings, he has nothing whatever to do with it.

Time passes and George Bernard Shaw and a party of English people pay a visit to Russia. George is at work in his office one day when Manuilsky comes in, taking round these distinguished visitors. He introduces them to George, and George, who is always extremely polite, plays his part.

Then Manuilsky announces, "You see Padmore, a Negro. He's a member of the Moscow Soviet."

The visitors are startled. They ask George if he is a member of the Moscow Soviet. George says yes, which he undoubtedly is. Manuilsky holds forth. Moscow Ballbearing Factory, —

Other representatives are Stalin and Kaganovich; and more of the same kind. The visitors swallow it all. Wisdom is breaking into George's mind but of course he says nothing. Then Manuilsky plays his trump card.

"Now look at you all," he says. "You have the British Empire there for so many years. You never had a Negro as a Member of Parliament. Look at us. He is not even a Russian. He is a member of the Moscow Soviet. You see the difference between our system and yours."

The visitors were silent. (I think but I am not sure that Lady Astor was one.) They went away obviously very much impressed. And that was the last that George ever heard of his membership in the Moscow Soviet as representative of the Moscow Ball-bearing Factory along with Stalin and Kaganovich.

George, when in the mood, could tell similar stories by the hour. — He knew the political ~~crises and conflicts raging around~~ *crises and conflicts raging around* him. He knew the participants personally but he kept studiously aloof ~~and did his work.~~ *and did his work.*

# # #  
This was his work in those years.

1) He published The Negro Worker, a periodical which took to Negro people all over the world and to those who were interested in information, advice, guidance, ideas about Negro struggles on every continent. It needs an effort to visualise the significance of this work. A movement, and there were scores of movements all over the world, needs an ideology. It needs a body of ideas and information to which its own efforts can be related, ideas and information in the light of which the daily grind can have some significance beyond that which is immediately visible. There is not a single movement in the world of which we have knowledge, from the struggle of the Greeks and Romans, through the early days of Christianity, which has not needed some general conception of society to which it can relate its own efforts. This The Negro Worker gave to the hundreds of thousands of active Negroes and the millions whom they represented. While the

educated in Trinidad, to take an immediate example, were sunk in the acceptance of the ideas inculcated by British imperialism. <sup>Trinidad,</sup> Urish Butler and the workers in the oil fields were nourishing themselves on illicit copies of The Negro Worker, and preparing the great outburst which was to launch the new West Indies upon the paths of nationalism and democracy. Friendly seamen distributed the copies all over the world.

2) Along with an ideology, a struggle needs the consciousness that it is not alone, that there are others all over the world who are moved by the same aspirations and are undergoing the same trials, borne, and indeed endured, because of the consciousness that this is part of a worldwide movement and an effort to lift humanity to a new stage. Communism in theory and the concrete idea of Russia as a great power which was on the side of the oppressed, this is what The Negro Worker gave to the sweating and struggling thousands in the West Indies, in Nigeria,

in South Africa, The regular Communist journals, parcels of works by Lenin and other Communist writings, manuals of organization,

had  
cent.

3) It was necessary also to keep the Communist International informed of the struggles of the Negroes. This task was performed by George and his staff. In those days the Communist International had not entirely degenerated into accepting itself as a mere arm of Moscow diplomacy. <sup>(Communists and)</sup> To the militants in Germany, in France, in the United States, the vanquish of the hope for world revolution, the Negro struggle was a part of their worldwide effort. George and his staff kept them informed, made the efforts of Negroes a constituent part of the worldwide view upon which they based their strategy and tactics.

4) There was the gathering together in Moscow of militant Negroes from all over the world and giving them training in the theory of Communism and the preparation for practical tasks. George assembled them from all parts and was responsible not only for their training but for their personal well-being and comfort in Moscow. This was a difficult business because <sup>some</sup> of the very different Africans in particular came from a ~~very different~~ environment and it

was not easy to get them accommodated to the peculiar conditions of life in the Russian capital. <sup>(Sverd)</sup> K<sup>(P)</sup>ids, as we shall see later, was not the main difficulty. The fundamental problem was political. Nevertheless the simple circumstances of daily existence presented a problem for the solution of which George was responsible.

5) Finally, there was the correspondence and communication with the trade unions and political parties <sup>(and groups)</sup> that were striving to establish themselves all over the world. George himself travelled and there were agents and representatives from various units with whom he was in constant communication. Nevertheless there were difficulties to be smoothed out, advice to be given, programmes and policies to be outlined, very often from units whose circumstances were only vaguely known. With problems of this kind there is brought to bear not only your own theoretical and practical knowledge, but also sympathetic imagination and intuitive understanding of circumstances the reality of which was known to you only in uncoordinated scraps of news and information. It must be remembered that men in Mombasa, in Lagos, in Port of Spain, in Port au Prince, in Dakar, struggling to establish a trade union or political organization, most often under illegal conditions and under heavy persecution, read and followed with exceptional concern the directives which came <sup>from</sup> the revered and trusted centre in Moscow. George acquired an extraordinary skill, of which I was often the witness in later times, of understanding a situation from the slenderest data and writing a programme, outlining a policy and indicating a line of action by which untaught and inexperienced Negroes in a particular situation could direct themselves.

This was the work. His European centre <sup>(until Hitler came in)</sup> was Hamburg, then a great revolutionary city, ~~in the city of Hamburg~~. He moved between Moscow and Hamburg. At the same time, as was common to the Communists of those days, he took a profound interest in the

development of ~~the~~ revolutionary struggles (<sup>everywhere</sup> ~~in the world~~).

In Moscow George had high status. On May Day he had his place on the platform of the Russian dignitaries and foreign

ambassadors who watched the Russian military parades (being very often the object of curious scrutiny by the British Ambassador).

He had all the privileges of a Kremlin bureaucrat. On cold ~~winter~~ nights, when he wanted to get home early, he had a pass which enabled him to walk to the head of a line of people waiting for transport and be immediately ushered respectfully to a seat in a Moscow tramcar. He bought his food at the Torgsin, a shop within the Kremlin which catered to the needs of the Kremlin magistrates. There, in the midst of the Russian famine of the early thirties, you could buy the finest food at the cheapest prices. The Torgsin was subsidised by the Russian bureaucracy so that the salaries of the ~~high~~ bureaucrats could appear to be moderate while in reality they enjoyed the privileges of an aristocracy.

It was a hard life for a man of George's temperament and outlook. He turned a blind eye for the sake of the world that he was doing.

One of the strangest of his experiences was that in Moscow in 1933, at the height of the great famine in the Ukraine, he was so isolated from the Russian people as a whole that he had no idea at all of what was happening. One of his first glimpses of the terrible reality was his experience with a Russian friend of his, a girl who visited his apartment in the Kremlin. After tea one afternoon, George who was the tidiest of human beings got out a brush and started to dust away pieces of bread from the table. The girl saw that he was about to throw them in a waste paper basket and stopped him. From her George learnt to his astonishment that neither she nor her family had seen white bread for months. Two afterwards, whenever she came, George was careful to collect white bread and other pieces of food which were of no significance to him and give them to her. At times he would take the risk of speaking to Russian workers and ask them

If they were not aware of the privileges the Russian bureaucracy was arrogating to itself. They told him that they saw what was happening but they were afraid to start anything because they were afraid of Germany on the one hand and Japan on the other....

This was the life George lived until early 1935, when <sup>(an abrupt and startling change brought)</sup> ~~it~~ <sup>(violent)</sup> ~~came to an end.~~

Between 1928 and 1935 the whole policy of the Russian state and the Communist International which it controlled was based on the theory of imminent world revolution. George was aware of the struggle between the Stalinists and the Trotskyists and the Bucharinists over policy, both internal and external. ~~It didn't seem to affect him and his work in any way.~~ ~~He was not interested in the internal work of the party.~~ His main targets were Britain, France, ~~and~~ <sup>(and Italy as</sup> Belgium <sup>as</sup> the leading imperialist powers in Africa. All his propaganda <sup>(in</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>harmony with)</sup> policy of the Communist International as a whole) was directed against them as the chief oppressors of the Africans in Africa and elsewhere. But by the beginning of 1935 Stalin was presenting Russian foreign policy and the policy of the Communist International which he kept subordinated to it, in a new direction.

In the summer of 1935 a pact was arranged between France and Russia. But long before that the new orientation had been established. Russia ~~was~~ <sup>(aimed to)</sup> form some sort of alliance with Britain and France in particular against Germany, Japan and Italy. Part of the price Russia had to pay was the cessation of anti-imperialist propaganda in Africa. Stalin and the Russian rulers informed the Communist International and in particular George Padmore who was in ~~charge~~ <sup>(charge)</sup> of Communist operations in Africa that henceforth the policy was to be changed. The Negro Worker and the propaganda of the Negro department of the Profintern was to preach that the main enemy of the African and of democratic and progressive societies in the world were the Fascists and in particular Germany and Japan. <sup>(Germany and Japan were)</sup> ~~the most immediate enemies of Russia~~ <sup>(they)</sup> had no colonies in Africa. To preach to

Africans that their main enemies were Germany and Japan and that Britain, France and Belgium were henceforth to be looked upon as friends of democracy was to make nonsense not only of all that George had been preaching for years but of <sup>the</sup> actual situation in Africa at the time. Many Communists <sup>(functionaries, the vast majority)</sup> made the change and followed the new Kremlin orientation. George did not hesitate. He ~~refused point blank to~~ do it. To him, to ask Africans in particular to support Britain, France and Belgium and shove all in Africa was an unspeakable betrayal. He walked out and that is how he turned up in my flat in London in the early months of 1935 to tell me that he was finished with them. As a Trotskyist, full-fledged by this time, the Kremlin betrayal was no surprise to me. But I listened with a great deal of sympathy to all that George had to say.

For some months he had a very hard time. The Communists persecuted him and vilified him with great bitterness. Once I saw him practically in tears. They made overtures to him to come back. He refused to have anything more to do with them. Precisely this experience had broken and ruined many famous Communists in the past. Within a few months, George had reoriented himself and set out upon a new career of struggle against imperialism. The period immediately following George's break with the Kremlin was a brief one. In three or four months he had made up his mind what he wanted to do (if he had ever been in doubt) and he never swerved from it. That, however, must wait. What happened in those three or four months is of such absorbing interest and, I believe, had so much influence on the rest of George's life <sup>(and African politics)</sup> that I shall spend some time on it. Among other reasons they were of such interest to me because they gave me a first-hand insight into the rise of Stalinism.

The Stalinists began by trying to ruin George. If they can manage to do otherwise they never let anybody leave or resign from them or be expelled from them for purely political reasons.



Whoever leaves the Stalinists or is expelled from them has always, according to their propaganda, committed some severely immoral and detestable crime. He has stolen money, or he is a sexual pervert or he has been an imperialist spy in the Communist ranks. They will claim that they have at last discovered him and that is why he has manufactured political differences.

They said that George had been an agent of the German Police, working on their behalf in the ranks of Communism. It was on this occasion that when George was speaking to me I am pretty sure I saw the tears in his eyes that such a thing should be said about him. Perhaps he was so deeply moved because he knew the power of the Stalinist machine and the helplessness of the average individual before it. Such an accusation was not easy to refute for this reason. ~~George was not a Communist.~~

~~George was not a Communist.~~ It must be remembered that the German Communist Party and the German Social-Democratic Party between them had the majority of the German people behind them. Hitler was able to come into power only because of the suicidal disputes between these two organizations. When a country has reached that ditch, it means that the army and the police force are permeated with revolutionaries. The ~~Police Force~~ <sup>of Hamburg, where George had</sup> Police Force had <sup>in his</sup> a large percentage of Communists. These Communists naturally fraternized with their fellow Communists outside the force, giving them secret information and helping them to avoid ~~the~~ attacks and arrests. ~~George was not a Communist.~~ The police officials were always trying to raid George's office from which he distributed the Negro Worker. When a raid was coming the Communists in the force always told George. George would pack up his books, leave a few absurd and useless papers behind him and he for somewhere else. The police would come, find nothing and report accordingly. Some time later another raid would be carded, George would be informed and the same thing would take place. It was not George alone.

The whole Communist Party in Germany had these connections. The point was that this was nothing that could be published at the time. The result was that the Communists could produce some sort of evidence that George had been in contact with the police force in Germany. And George knew them well enough to recognize the danger this attack represented.

The Stalinists made desperate attempts to discredit George completely with the Negro people. This was obviously a necessity for them. Padmore's reputation was so high among Negroes all over the world and they themselves had so helped to build ~~him~~<sup>it</sup> that for him to be an avowed enemy of their imperialist ed the whole structure that they had built. They spared no pains to destroy him. They lost, and this is evidence that a single principle individual need never be afraid to stand up for his principles even though against the most powerful state and party organization that the world has ever known.

There is another of the methods that they tried.

George had brought a number of Africans to Moscow to be trained in Communist theory and practice. The conflicts between them and the Communists were endless. In general they revolved around the ~~central~~<sup>(central)</sup> issue of the relation between ~~the~~<sup>(Nationalist)</sup> Negro struggles and international Stalinism.

The Africans had come to Moscow seeking help for the freedom of Africa. The Communists were ready, according to their lights, to help in freeing Africa because of the service this would ~~bring~~<sup>bring</sup> be to Communism. ~~It might seem that here was a basic community of interest, in reality conflicts were endless and endemic.~~  
~~It might seem that here was a basic community of interest, in reality conflicts were endless and endemic.~~

In those days in particular the Communist had theories which saw the revolution in Africa in much the same terms as the revolution in advanced countries, that is to say, they saw it as led by the working class/organized in its trade unions and its parties. They preached a militant hostility to those local Africans who belonged to the feudal

aristocracy or the small mercant class. They wanted to organize and lead according to a certain pattern. The African leaders in Moscow fought them all the way. They ~~felt~~ <sup>claimed</sup> that they knew the conditions in Africa. They said that the policies which the Communists were trying to impose upon them were wrong. The Communists accused them of Negro chauvinism. The Africans countered with charges of white chauvinism.

In addition to conflict over policy, there was racial prejudice of a particularly dangerous and subtle kind. The Russian Revolution of 1917 had wiped away any gross forms of prejudice against colour, and it was not of this that the Africans complained. But there was in the Russia of George's time another form of prejudice. The Communists, like Communists everywhere else, believed themselves to be the chosen leaders. They thought they were the chosen leaders in Moscow, in London and in New York. This was a substantial part of their political philosophy. It could be imagined then with what impatience they listened to the protests of Africans, whom they were educating in Marxism, against the policies they were seeking to impose.

Communists do not allow protests too long especially when they have the power. Jomo Kenyatta once told me of a conference in Moscow in the depth of winter over policy for African territories. He mentioned in particular an African whose name I forget, but whom Kenyatta and his friends always remembered as the greatest African they had ever known, such a man as you meet once in a lifetime. He led the attack against the Communists and though he was ill he was holding his own. As the conference continued, his strength began to give way (Kenyatta did not seem to know that this was probably deliberately engineered by the Communists). At last, coughing and spitting blood, he could keep up no longer. The Africans said that they would take him away. The Communists said no, they would see after him. The Africans were suspicious but in that situation helpless. Their leader was taken away and they did not see him for two or three days. They were told that he was under special care and should not be disturbed by visitors. At

last the Africans could bear, it no longer and instituted a search of their own. They found him lying on the floor in an unheated room in the Moscow winter and he died soon after.\*

George never spoke too much about these conflicts. I would suspect that he acted to a substantial degree as intermediary. You will remember that even in his early days in New York his Communism was suspected of chauvinist tendencies. George must have known all the time that the Africans were right, but he had great power to help and no one could throw that aside lightly. He held on but it could not have been easy.

At any rate the break came and George left Moscow. He left behind him these Africans, many of whom had left their country illegally and had no passports. The large majority of them wanted to get home now that George was gone and their suspicions that the Communists had only been using them seemed justified by the new line. They could not get away so easily. The Communists brought to them letters which accused George of having committed innumerable crimes against Communism and against his own African comrades. As is usual with them, they would probably have inserted into these letters many of the scandals which were known but hushed up and placed the responsibility for them on George. The Africans were then informed that if they signed these letters they would be allowed to leave Moscow. If they did not, they would leave their bones there. Some of them signed. So it was that Party groups and members all over the world received letters from Moscow signed by people whom they knew, denouncing George as a traitor to Communism and a habitual criminal in his dealings with the Negro people. I knew all about this in the rewriting of the history of the Russian Revolution to exclude and vilify Trotsky. Here was the process at work and George fighting it alone, sometimes in my apartment.

In time some of the Africans did get away. After 1933 George had transferred his headquarters for a time at least to Copenhagen and was often in Paris. He used to say with a wry smile that his friends in Copenhagen and in Paris would every now and then tell him of Negroes travel-worn and destitute who walked about these cities asking people where they could find Mr. Padmore. Yet, and this is one of the most remarkable historical

\* Kenyatta always spoke of his political experiences in Russia with great bitterness. He seemed, however, to have been a close friend of Levnevsky, the great Russian filer, and whenever he spoke of him and the flight from which he never returned, Kenyatta's face and manner betrayed an emotion which I never otherwise saw in him. Of the Russians of that period not many remain and now that George is gone, the story of those first contacts between Africans and the Kremlin is not likely to be told. It is a pity.

events I have ever read or heard of, despite the fact that the whole Stalinist machine was put in motion, not only George's reputation but his political standing remained firm. Single-handed he fought them and beat them. Stalinism never shook the confidence in him of the Negro people as a whole. What was shaken was the confidence of the Negro in Communism. George lived to become an even more powerful enemy of imperialism than when he had at his disposal the immense resources of the Russian state and the Communist International. He fought the Stalinist attempt to influence the African movement and defeated them wherever he met them, in Britain and in Africa. That was to come. So powerful was his counterattack, so successful was he in persuading the people who came to see him and wrote to him that he was right, that the Communists tried a last desperate manoeuvre. Stalin invited George to return to Moscow to discuss the matter. I have no doubt that if he had gone, he would never have returned.

George knew this and refused to go. But the refusal was not a blank negative. He said in effect and made it public: "If you want me to come to Moscow to discuss the Negro policy, you have to put the invitation in the public journals of the Communist International. You have to invite a Chinese comrade, an Indian comrade, a British comrade, an American comrade, a French comrade and a Japanese comrade. Their names and the invitation to them must also be published in the journals of the Communist International. When you do that I will be prepared to come to Moscow. Unless you do that I will not come." Politically the reply was a masterpiece. The Communists dared not accept it. And George's prestige remained untarnished.

This was not merely a matter of George's reputation. Centred in London, George swung the leadership of national struggles in British Africa away from Stalinism. That is why Communism has so far played no particular role in these territories. On the other hand it has dominated much of the leadership in the French African territories. This task was performed practically single-handed by George; no one else could have done it for no one else had the personal knowledge, the personal connections and the personal

George was perhaps the solitary Communist who broke with the Kremlin and used against them so effectively all he had got from them without abandoning the revolution. And this he did without resources of any kind. He saved millions of Africans from having to contend with Stalinism, and through this was not his purpose, saved the Colonial Office a million headaches.

George came to London to live some time in the spring or summer of 1935. He started then his career as a journalist for Negro newspapers as a means of earning his living. He had connections or acquaintances with Negro newspapers in the United States, in East Africa, in West Africa, in South Africa, and he pertinaciously wrote his articles on all new developments in the life of the Negro people and on metropolitan politics which would interest them. He concentrated on Africa, but inasmuch as he had ~~lived~~ lived in America and the West Indies ~~and was always reading~~ their newspapers, or talking to people who came from there, the moment anything unusual happened anywhere, he was able to pound out his articles on his typewriter, do several carbon copies and send them off to various parts of the world. I am told by the Editor of a now defunct Trinidad magazine, The Caribbean, that he used to publish in it George's articles, particularly on Africa, and paid him \$ 40(BWT) a month for them. I would suspect that if this sum were received by George with any regularity, it represented a high peak of his income from these sources. The newspapers paid irregularly, often they didn't pay at all. But George kept on writing his articles and sending them off. Money or no money, he just couldn't help doing it.

He had come to England just at the time when the Ethiopian crisis was beginning. He was immediately in the thick of it. Our close association from this time on needs careful explanation not to be misunderstood.

I was at that time a full-fledged Trotskyist, writing and speaking on the theory, and active in the practical work of the British section of the Trotskyite organization. But for me, according to the doctrine as I had learnt it, the whole colonial question and the emancipation of the colonies were but a section of the worldwide international struggle against capitalists and

Imperialism. Unlike George, I had had no cause as yet to question the premises of the organization to which I belonged. That was to come later. I therefore worked as a Trotskyist but at the same time took a very close interest <sup>(in a general way)</sup> in the Colonial Question, and particularly the Negro Question <sup>(with which)</sup> which I was personally very ~~concerned~~ I had long intended to write a biography of

Toussaint L'Ouverture as a study in colonial revolution. I had contracted to write this book some time in 1935. But that very change in Communist doctrine which had caused George's break with the Kremlin had created a tremendous stir all over the world.

Perhaps for the first time people began to realize that the Russian Revolution might be a reactionary force in world politics. I therefore cancelled the contract for the biography of Toussaint L'Ouverture and wrote instead World Revolution: The Rise and Fall of the Communist International which was a full study of the rise of Leninism and its decline into Stalinism. Stalinist support of the democracies seemed to us the final degradation of the revolution. The book was the first of its kind anywhere, either in Europe or the United States, and was recognized as such at the time. Meanwhile, having had to put off the biography, I put the basic ideas in a play <sup>by the Stage Society</sup> Toussaint L'Ouverture, which was produced in 1936 with Paul Robeson in the leading part. So there was I, moving pretty easily and comfortably between one section of Marxism as an international organization and with George and other colonials on the struggle of the colonial peoples. As I have said, though there were difficult moments we never had any serious disagreements.

The play about a successful Negro revolution, the full-scale attack on Stalinism, must have been very helpful to George. However I believe that practically from the time of his break he made up his mind to continue his efforts on behalf of colonial emancipation with specific concentration on Africa, but that under no circumstances would he ever again join any European or worldwide organization in which Negroes or colonial peoples did not have the dominant and controlling role. As time went on, I saw this more in his

actions than in his words. He never said a word to me about my Trotskyism. I would write or hold meetings. He would read, he would come to the meetings. We would spend time ferreting out and denouncing the perpetual treachery of the Stalinists. In time we learnt to go to all conferences sympathetic to the colonial peoples or which were dealing with colonial matters. It didn't matter who organized them. If they were organized by friendly organizations, we went and contributed our ideas and our forces such as they were. If the Stalinists organized a conference, or some reactionary section of the labour movement came forward with some milk and water proposals about the colonies, we went and exposed them and denounced them in their own conference. But it was some time before I understood the political conclusions to which George's experience had led him. <sup>African</sup>

George, by the way, was no ~~colonial~~ specialist in the sense that he concerned himself only with colonial ~~or~~ African or affairs. He read and studied everything political, China, India, Russia, Guatemala, everything. And he was as interested and as familiar with the politics and the political literature of Great Britain as most people practising in British politics. In time he might even participate in an election to the extent of trying to help any particular Labour friend of his who was contesting a seat in Parliament. But he would not join anything. Instead he formed organizations of his own. Some of our friends attacked me for not devoting all my time and attention to the Negro movement. "We are few. There are enough white people to be Trotskyists. Look at all the time you spend on them." They could not get very far with that. As I have indicated I was doing as much work as any of them. Soon after George came, however, he took over and established an organization.

The first organization, however, in which he began to function on his arrival in London was one which I organized, the International African Friends of Ethiopia. It was the response of Africans and people of African descent in England to the rape of Ethiopia by Mussolini. For the first and last time I was the chairman of a colonial organization in London. Ever afterwards any such organization dealing with African affairs saw George as chairman as of right. I got into a certain amount of trouble with my Trotskyite comrades for the militant nationalism of ~~the~~



the International African Friends of Ethiopia. They accused me also, ~~if~~ not in so many words, of Negro chauvinism. I did not let them bother me because theoretically I was certain that I was right. A close study of the writings of Lenin and Trotsky on this and similar subjects showed that their views were very close to what the Negroes and Africans were saying and I had my final education when I discussed this question with Trotsky in Mexico. I could hardly believe my ears when over and over again he sounded like the most extreme of the Africans. He and George would never have had any disputes on Negro chauvinism.

The organization had as its leading members Jomo Kenyatta; Wallace Johnson, who is now a Member of the Legislative Council in Sierra Leone, and has a long record as a fighter against imperialism; There was a Nigerian named Willide and others including Amv Garvey, the former wife of Marcus Garvey. I cannot stop to tell the story of that organization except that it created a tremendous stir and almost at once George began his life-long work of going round to labour organizations, semi-revolutionary groups, trade union conferences or groups of citizens who wanted to hear about a particular colonial question from persons who knew something about it; and the tireless correspondence with all the people and organizations he knew abroad.

At an exciting meeting which we held in Central London, attended by a dozen reporters, George came and spoke. He was a little subdued, but it must have meant much to him that he could once more get into action so quickly after the bitter Kremlin disappointment.

George was invaluable. The thing that I remember most about him during that time was the way in which he used to handle people like Kenyatta. Kenyatta was, I believe, the second African who had come out of Kenya. He had been bitterly disappointed by the Communists and ~~As a result~~ <sup>as a result</sup> he was very suspicious of any kind

of Communist or Marxist organization. He had had his' experience 3/ with them and he did not take it as philosophically as George did. Nevertheless I was a Negro and obviously devoted to the emancipation of colonials and of Africans in particular. Jomo and I were good friends. But in argument and particularly in committee he was always vigilant for any suspicion that the African cause might be contaminated or manipulated by a Marxist, even though that Marxist was a Negro. In some respects he was very trying, especially to a novice in political organizations as I was at the time. I would go through an argument or a proposal with him stage by stage, from the first premise to the last conclusion. He would agree to every new step, agree to the conclusion, and as soon as that was finished and I tried to move on, I would find Kenyatta exactly where he was at the beginning. Then George used to take over.

"Jomo," he would say, "listen." He would then in some homely phrasing and some nicely simplified examples, put the matter to Kenyatta, and in two minutes Jomo would be nodding his head as if he had always agreed with the policy. I saw George do it over and over again. With the more untutored Africans he had a way with him that never failed. When the Ethiopian question subsided, the organization would have fallen apart. George took it over and transformed it into the African Bureau.

It was the Ethiopian question which sent us speaking together in Lyda Park. In time, the African Bureau ran a platform of its

own. So that on a Sunday afternoon, I would speak first on the Trotskyist platform (usually denouncing Stalinism) and then go over to where George and the others were holding forth on the colonial question. Only those who have experience of Marxist organizations can appreciate the fact that George and I never quarrelled. There would arise difficulties over policy. We always worked out something in the early days in particular.

George attended all the Trotskyist meetings, clearing up his mind on Stalinism I suppose. He never said anything and never uttered a word about my Trotskyism.

We had a unique experience with Marcus Garvey. Garvey had turned conservative, was trying to join the Conservative Party and get a seat in Parliament, and used to be praising British imperialism for its civilising of the natives in Africa. George and I made it a point always to go round to his meetings, heckle him and generally expose him, particularly to people who might have been misled by his great reputation. It has its significance, Padmore and I, two West Indians and unquestionably the leaders of the struggle against imperialism in London on behalf of the African people and people of African descent, heckling and denouncing another West Indian, Marcus Garvey, who had a worldwide reputation as a leader in the struggle for the emancipation of Africa.

We had little African support and but for George's contacts we would have been in a bad way. What was worse, the Negroes in London were divided. The West Africans were for the most part students. They took little part in political activity but remained sulky and suspicious in their West African Students' Union, better known as WASU. The West Indian students were very much more at home in London and with English people. They had no nationalist ambitions to be frustrated. They suffered also from the education they received in British secondary schools and in the unritical reproduction in local newspapers

of the prejudice-ridden attitude of many sections of the British press to Africans. The average West Indian in London did believe, or at any rate came to London believing that Africans were no more than savages. He swallowed whole all of the stuff about the inability of Africans to create a culture, their childish mentality, all that imperialist compound of ignorance and lies which is now being blown sky-high by events and historical investigations. The West Indian in London might have an emotional sense of kinship with the African but the African, sensitive to attitudes towards him and his civilization, soon discovered what were the ideas that the West Indians held. They called the West Indians "black white men," and by 1935 there was a definite cleavage between the two groups in London. No one should pass hasty judgment on these undoubted facts, for facts they were in the thirties.

I can say with truth that from the very start I was never the typical West Indian in the minds of the Africans in London. Almost automatically I sensed the enormous importance of Africa in my conception of world politics and this was the tie which bound George and me so closely for so long. I had been reading on Africa before I went to England. The Africans accepted me completely and at their functions, meetings, etc., I was often a speaker and sometimes the main speaker. George would not miss the significance of this. But that was not serious politics. The International African Friends of Ethiopia was. We were in close contact with the Ethiopian Embassy in London, we punctured nonsense and made imperialism real to thousands of English people. We were approached by a gentleman who had diplomatic official written all over him: we sent him about his business... This drew all of us together, Africans and West Indians, for a time at least. But from the moment George transformed the International African Friends of Ethiopia into a permanent organization, the African Bureau, the Bureau and George at once became the centre of

anti-imperialism and the struggle for African emancipation in London. George was chairman and I was Editor of the journal we printed, distributed in England and sent everywhere to every address we could find.

~~It might seem that we were chiefly negative, anti-Stalinist. We had our work cut out, in London itself.~~  
# # # Propagandists for remote regions.

Our meetings of protest, our resolutions which we took or sent to British organizations and abroad had this virtue: they prevented anyone being able to say that people were "battled" with the colonial situation, or "apathetic". George's articles for his newspapers and his correspondence kept every situation alive.

We wrote letters to the press and were on the alert to feed information to Members of Parliament who were willing to ask questions in the House. I remember how a Secretary of State for the Colonies visited Kenya and on his return claimed that if he had not met any Africans it was because none had asked to see him. That very day Kenyatta turned up with a letter from Kenya, with copies

of requests for a meeting and copies of the refusal, in such a case there was Frankie scurrying around to get an M.P. to ask a question, or to get a letter published, usually we tried either the New Statesman or the Manchester Guardian. If we were lucky we got one in about five published. There was always Fenner Brockway editing the New

Leader of the Independent Labour Party to give us a helping hand. and remained very close to the I.L.P. George became  
We had one direct clash with the Colonial Office.

That body had no trouble with the weak mice who were the majority of West Indian students in those days. It was very concerned about the African students. That it was badly worried. The Africans were not politically active, but it was clear that they were rebellious in spirit and resented the whole British regime which they

identified with the maintenance of colonialism. The Colonial Office wanted first of all to Keep an eye on what they were doing and also to dis-  
rupt as far as possible the menacing isolation which the Africans

so carefully preserved.

*Somehow there began to float around*

*(talk of)*

~~was~~ a scheme to help coloured students in London. *Colonial Office*

*They proposed*

to build a hostel, equip it with social amenities and, of course, establish as warden and other officials a trustworthy Englishman or

two and some Africans or West Indians whom they could depend on, for there are always such. We knew what they were up to and on

behalf of the Africans we put forward a counter proposal. Why build a new hostel? There was the WASU hostel. Subsidise that. Improve

it and leave it under the control of the African students. The

Colonial Office was having none of that. A fierce battle began. The

Colonial Office got together a committee consisting chiefly of reputable West Indians. We gave them no peace. They called the

new Hostel Aggrey House after the great African, Dr. Aggrey, to the intense anger of the African students. Those of us who took the

African side met the committee once or twice. We could come to no agreement. Finally we decided to boycott Aggrey House. I don't

know what happened during or after the war because I was not in England. But I know that up to 1938 when I left for the United

States, a great number of African students and others, and George, a few other West Indians and myself never put a foot in there and

denounced it on every possible occasion. The attempt to corral the African students was a total failure.

I do not remember if George was in England yet. In any case that conflict over Aggrey House was symbolical. ~~There was a~~

~~series of events which culminated in the~~

*The Guardians etc*

~~of the~~ Imperialism, either directly or indirectly, always had people

moving about among the coloured residents and organizations in London seeking to win them over *for their fall in them in Colonial Affairs*

But we were there on guard, ~~and~~ coloured people in London found it difficult to be openly pro-

imperialist among other coloured people, and as we were always

armed with facts and documents, we exercised a sort of moral terror over the feeble-minded.

Thus rapidly, George ~~made~~ made the African Bureau into a genuine political force. On every issue The Times and the big Conservative press, the Colonial Office, the St-Linists, the Labour Party put forward their side, and we saw to it that the anti-imperialist case was put forward. In time Leftists Labour Parties and unions would write to us for speakers.

How did we manage financially and organizationally?

~~As I have said, we held meetings - Society - the Upper floor of South East London, which was run by a young man from British Guiana who called himself Makonnen. There we held our committee meetings. There were rooms for strangers, Africans and others, who wanted somewhere to stay in London for a day or two. Despite the fact that the Bureau was an African bureau, there was not the slightest tinge of colour prejudice in the way the Bureau was conducted. All were welcome, and various English people came there to help or to stay and fraternise as circumstances offered. That kind of prejudice George did not have and would not have tolerated in anything with which he was connected. Makonnen was the same. So was I. Maramah in his autobiography has recorded how English women of the middle class came and helped, asking nothing in return. It was the same with us.~~

All this cost money. We dug into our own shallow pockets. But it was ~~Makonnen~~ who got most of the money. How he managed to maintain an establishment of this kind is still beyond my comprehension, but he took that on his shoulder and he did a colossal job. He cooked, and cleaned the place himself, washing out the toilet bowls. ~~Misgrove~~ <sup>McGowan</sup> ~~delight~~ <sup>aside for himself</sup> was to stand in the audience and listen to George or myself holding forth. Two other active

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members of the committee were also West Indians, Barbadians. One was a slow speaking working class type who called himself Ward. In the West Indies he would have been the founder of some sort of non-conformist sect. He was an ordinary working man, utterly devoted to the cause. He had strong Communist leanings, but he followed George. Another valiant soldier was Chris Brathwaite. Chris had a useful job. He used to collect West Indian sailors on the docks to man boats and was thus well pleased for getting literature into territories where they were banned. Chris was, unlike the show-speaking Ward, a man of fiery temperament and loud voice. At the shortest notice, he could generate indignation at the crimes of imperialism and the betrayals of the Stalinists as to shock into awed silence hundreds of British people in the audience. Jomo Kenyatta was always there. But Jomo was not suited to that type of organization. I was sometimes impatient with him. I did not know that the fury which burned in his eyes could never properly express itself until he was at home among his own people. Later when the organization had grown, its patron and financial supporter was another West Indian, Dr. Millard from British Guiana who had lived in the United States and Panama and was practising medicine in Manchester. Wallace Johnson and Willde worked with us, but the main burden of the organization in theoretical and practical matters was carried by the West Indians. To this day I am not altogether clear as to why this should have been so.

This state of affairs continued until Mervin came to London in 1945. The directing and controlling impetus towards Africa was the work of George. People who mention my name on a par with his on this question do not know what they are talking about. The fact remains that it was the West Indians who made the African question a live question in British politics. In these years, even in Africa itself, while individuals worked in isolation usually at the working class level, only Azikiwe and Wallace Johnson, when he went back home, seemed to be actively occupied with mobilising Africans. Africans have told us that the movement was kept alive and its continuity was maintained by the work that we did in London and distributed to the African territories.



We wrote books and got them published. George had published How Britain Rules Africa. Now he wrote Africa and World Peace, with an introduction by Sir Stafford Cripps. It was a blast at all imperialism in Africa and at the new Stalinist thesis of support for the "democratic imperialists". Sir Stafford at that time had broken with the Labour Party and was advocating resistance to all imperialisms, fascist or democratic.

I completed The Black Jacobins, my book on Toussaint L'Ouverture. Kenyatta wrote Facing Mount Kenya. In his autobiography, An Occupation for Gentlemen, Mr. Fredric Warburg has shown how it was that his firm, Secker & Warburg, published all these books and the attempts of the Stalinists to dissuade him from publishing these and similar books, or to ruin him. Typical of our status and our work was the fact that Raymond Postgate, then editing the ~~series~~ <sup>series</sup>, wanted a HISTORY OF NEGRO REVOLT, ~~as he called it~~, "the first ever." He <sup>naturally</sup> asked George to write it. George was otherwise occupied so he recommended me to Postgate. I wrote the book, George bringing his great knowledge of Africa to bear. We had a marvellous time putting in a number of provocative statements which we knew Postgate would object to. But by putting in those and <sup>them</sup> agreeing to take them out, much really good stuff was sure to get in.

The Bureau was a success and George lived for the Bureau. His capacity for work was of the highest, and this kind of work made severe demands. In addition to the responsibility for the Bureau as I have described it, and earning a precarious living by his articles and books, he spent countless hours talking to people from Africa and all over the world. His encyclopaedic knowledge, his enthusiasm, his <sup>earnestness</sup> ~~earnestness~~ to explain, his hospitality, drew them like a magnet. He initiated his colonial visitors into the intricacies of British politics. He taught and he learnt. He talked like a torrent, but always to an end, an article, a resolution, a manoeuvre with the Colonial Office, an approach to a Labour Member of Parliament, an avenue for some propaganda in the British press.

In these Notes I come now to one of the great political achievements of our time, the working out of the theory which <sup>shaped</sup> the revolution in the Gold Coast, <sup>(1946)</sup> achievement of independence under the name of Ghana and with this the total rout of all imperialist pretensions to continue to rule in Africa. This is, Padmore's greatest theoretical contribution to the politics of our times. Few know anything about it, far less understanding where it came from and where it leads.

*Before the war,* *and endless discussions*  
In meetings, articles, ~~the~~ books we were steadily working out a theory for colonial emancipation: We were solving a problem which to this day eludes the revolutionary proletariat of great countries like France and Germany. They are caught in a trap between the Second International and the Third. When they move in a revolutionary direction, they are swallowed up by Stalinism. Disillusioned and defeated, they slip back to the Second International. ~~Reformism~~ <sup>(see)</sup> aimed at preserving the Marxist approach, keeping far away from the reformism of the Second International, but at the same time fighting and venting against the Communist International. This determination never to submit himself or his ideas to any European-dominated organization was <sup>(as usual denounced)</sup> black chauvinism. It was <sup>in reality George's</sup> refusal to be in any way caught again by what had happened to him in the Kremlin. As a good Trotskyist who had repudiated the Second and was for a Fourth International instead of the Stalinist Third, I was an invaluable ally. Up to 1939 George was merely working in the traditional Marxist mode which he had learnt with the Stalinists. By 1945 he had broken new ground.

Readers of this autobiography of the then Prime Minister of Ghana, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, will remember the following passage. Shortly \*

after Merumeh landed in the Gold Coast in 1947, alone and fearful  
of arrest, he drafted the following plan of action for the achieve-  
ment of Gold Coast independence:\*

#### Shadow Cabinet

The formation of a Shadow Cabinet should engage the serious attention of the Working Committee as early as possible. Membership is to be composed of individuals selected ad hoc to study the jobs of the various ministries that would be decided upon in advance for the country when we achieve our independence. This Cabinet will forestall any unpreparedness on our part in the exigency of Self-Government being thrust upon us before the expected time.

#### Organizational Work

The organizational work of implementing the platform of the Convention will fall into three periods:

#### First Period

- (a) Co-ordination of all the various organizations under the United Gold Coast Convention: i.e. apart from individual Membership of the various Political, Social, Educational, Farmers' and Women's Organizations as well as Native Societies, Trade Unions, Co-operatives Societies, etc., should be asked to affiliate to the Convention.
- (b) The consolidation of branches already formed and the establishment of branches in every town and village of the country will form another major field of action during the first period.
- (c) Convention Branches should be set up in each town and village throughout the Colony, Ashanti, the Northern Territories and Togoland. The chief or Oba of each town or village should be persuaded to become the Patron of the Branch.
- (d) Vigorous Convention weekend schools should be opened wherever there is a branch of the Convention. The political mass education of the country for Self-Government should begin at these weekend schools.

\* Reprinted from Autobiography of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah.  
Ghana.

Second Period:

To be marked by constant demonstrations throughout the country to test our organizational strength, making use of political crises.

Third Period:

- (a) The convening of a Constitutional Assembly of the Gold Coast people to draw up the Constitution for Self-Government or National Independence.
- (b) Organized demonstration, boycott and strike ~~our only weapons to support our pressure for~~ Self-Government.

This methodical statement reads like a curriculum of a school/ teacher or a chart by some thimstastic sales promoter. The astonishing thing about it is that, written when Nkrumah had no ~~organizers~~ <sup>organizers</sup> supporters whatever, in two years time he had carried it out to the last comma. I have spent a great deal of my life in the last quarter of a century reading and studying the history of revolution. This achievement by Nkrumah remains the most systematically planned and executed revolutionary strategy that I ever read or heard of. In the preparation for this, George Padmore's work achieved ~~the same~~ perhaps its greatest victory.

Between 1930 and 1945 ~~all of us~~ <sup>we</sup> saw African emancipation as dependent upon the breakdown of imperialist power in Europe. Armed rebellion was sure to be crushed unless the imperialist powers were impotent, and this could only be the result of revolutions within the metropolitan powers themselves. The ~~theory is~~ <sup>most remarkably easily</sup> theory is ~~not only~~ <sup>stated</sup> in my book, The Black Jacobins, ~~which~~ <sup>which</sup> ~~not only~~ <sup>not only</sup> ~~influenced~~ <sup>influenced</sup> ~~but was very much~~ <sup>by the work</sup> ~~It should be noted that among the many reviews of that~~ <sup>on the</sup> ~~book~~ <sup>Bureau.</sup> in responsible journals both in England and the U.S.A., ~~the~~ <sup>few</sup> challenged the theory. Everyone, revolutionaries and conservatives, expected the war, and out of the war revolutionary upheavals. We in the Bureau based our calculations on this, and in all our work had this in mind.

The Bureau ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> reinforced ~~in~~ <sup>in</sup> 1943 by Nkrumah, I had met him in New York and I had seen a lot of him there. Nkrumah at that time was busy absorbing all America had to give him, but was consumed by one passion, the emancipation

of Africa. When he left for England in 1945 I gave him a letter to George. It is a very interesting letter, Makonnen reminded me of it the other day, and I dare say it will come to light among the papers of the methodical George.

Murmah therefore walked into a political milieu which for nearly ten years had been devoted to the unremitting study and documentation of the question of African emancipation in itself and in relation to world politics. There was George's uninterrupted contacts with every politically-minded African who came to London. There was behind him his years as a Communist organizer in the United States and his unique experience as organizer on a world scale in the Kremlin, his personal acquaintance (it was before the great purges) with the great men of the Russian Revolution in whom, <sup>as</sup> there still lived some of the great traditions of Bolshevism, ~~in~~ <sup>like</sup> the Stalinist degeneration, George embodied in his person theoretical and practical Marxism for Africa, a Marxism purged of the contemporary corruption.

Murmah on the other hand brought an ~~invaluable~~ equipment for political action on the grand scale which, time has shown, is second to none in our generation. The one place where everything he needed could be found was in the milieu of the Bureau. Apart from his own personal qualities Murmah brought something else which the Bureau had lacked. He began the organization of coloured workers in Britain, a task which the Bureau had never undertaken. Murmah in fact was active in organizing the students, in organizing ~~the~~ workers and in making contacts with Africans in Paris or laying the foundation of a future United Socialist States of West Africa. From an organization of theory, propaganda and agitation, the Bureau had become the theoretical centre of organizations active among the African people. <sup>practices</sup> ~~Research~~ was now allied to <sup>theory</sup> ~~research~~.

It is out of this combination of theory and practice, of George and Murmah, that there emerged a new theory and programme of action for the emancipation of Africa. I was in the United States

at the time and took no part in this so that I cannot say who was responsible for what, nor does it really matter.

The need for a reappraisal arose from the fact that, contrary to our pre-war expectations, nowhere had the proletariat of the metropolitan powers overthrown the imperialist state. The <sup>actual</sup> struggle of the Africans now had to depend on themselves ~~alone~~ <sup>unshakable</sup> alone.

The Marxist Foundation of the Bureau remained <sup>unshakable</sup> ~~unshakable~~ <sup>however, in</sup> ~~however, in~~ <sup>his theory of</sup> ~~his theory of~~ <sup>passive resistance,</sup> ~~passive resistance,~~ and out of all this he and George worked out a policy which, whatever its origins, was new. The full responsibility was placed upon the African population. The <sup>plan now was to</sup> ~~plan now was to~~ stretch the constitutional declarations of the European governments to the limit. ~~There was~~

First and foremost a party had to be organized and in the plans for this party the Marxist influence is very clear. ~~Nevertheless~~ <sup>Under the pervading influence of the party, the</sup> ~~Under the pervading influence of the party, the~~ political leaders, without ever doing anything against the law, would work with and help to strengthen trade unions, co-operatives, peasant associations, other progressive political parties, cyclists' associations, bridge clubs, literary societies, every kind of African organization, and mobilise them all under the banner of national independence. If and when this was done, the movement would on a certain day call a general strike and face the colonial government with the population embattled but peaceful. The calculation was that if the organization was comprehensive enough and solid enough, the government would be paralysed, and even if it wanted to, would not have the forces to undertake bloody repression. The demonstration would be internationally publicised and continued government by the colonial power would become impossible. Armed insurrection was not entirely repudiated. It was held in reserve, but only if the new orientation failed.

I was in the United States at the time, so that all this went on without my participation. But George and Makonnen regularly

went me the documents and needless to say if I had disagreed with anything important, I would have written at once to say so.

There was another political current which contributed. Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois, the famous American writer, had for years worked tirelessly on Africa. His aim was the unity of all African peoples and people of African descent. The political method he advocated was that of passive resistance. By 1945 a great conference was organized in Manchester. There were nearly 300 delegates mainly from African political parties and unions. Du Bois came from America, Dr. Millward of British Guiana and Panama was chairman. He and Malcolm X from British Guiana financed the operation - Malcolm X had made some money during the war by running restaurants, and he poured it into the cause. George was the moving spirit and Nkrumah moved the political resolution. The theoretical ideas were now rooted and nourished in predominantly African personalities, active in unions and other forms of struggle in Africa itself and <sup>participated now by</sup> ~~known~~ <sup>African leaders</sup> Kwame Nkrumah.

Let me, even at the cost of repetition, sum up what is one of the most far-reaching political currents of our time. Marxism, the theoretical and organizational experiences which have dominated the revolutionary and radical thought of our time, was absorbed by West Indians living in London. That West Indians would do this so rapidly was ~~made~~ most probably to our Europeanized education and background. <sup>(Marxist)</sup> ~~George~~ <sup>in his break with Stalinism and I with my</sup> rejection of Stalinism and affiliation to Trotskyism (a powerful school of Marxist education <sup>and eradication</sup> of little else), this precious heritage ensured that Marxism, unadulterated, uncorrupted, would be applied to the African political scene. Nowhere else could Nkrumah have found such a combination of information and theory, general and specialised, personnel and method, as he could find around Padmore, all centred on African emancipation. At a critical moment, when the premises of our theory (the proletarian revolution in Europe) had broken down, there arrived in London from the United States

*most gifted)*

~~an~~ African who in addition to his academic studies and personal experience in American labor, had absorbed into his predominantly African consciousness, all that America and particularly American Negro struggles for equality had had to teach. To what had been sifted and accumulated in England he brought the ideas of another most powerful revolutionary school of thought and action - the militant passive resistance of Gandhi. He rapidly transformed the African centre into a network of active organization among African students and workers in England. To this was added the profound knowledge of history and of Africa and years of propagandist experience of Dr. Du Bois, one of the most gifted intellectuals of his time. All this came to a head in the Manchester Pan-African Conference in 1945, which had the benefit of the experience of hundreds of African participants in the actual struggles of Africans. So it was that when Nkrumah returned home in 1947 after twelve years abroad, he embodied in himself a great heritage of political and social experience from Europe, the United States and, through Gandhiism, from Asia. Few modern statesmen have had this thorough international education and training, at the centre of which, in the crucial years, crystallised and transmitted, was George Padmore. The African revolution was on its way, repudiating the Labour Party with its doctrine of economic development before political freedom, and proudly insulated against being used by Stalinism for its own purposes. There are few post-war movements which have had so clear and so logical and development. This is how self-government and independence began in Africa. The legend that the British Colonial Office patiently "taught" the Africans of the Gold Coast to govern themselves is a bubble which badly needs pricking.

Two years after the Manchester conference Nkrumah, armed with the theory and practical experience, went to the Gold Coast, wrote out his plan and ~~started to organize~~ began to organize.

There is no need to ~~fill in~~ ~~the~~ ~~story~~ here on the Gold Coast Revolution. The whole plan depended upon the completeness with which the mass movement was organized. Sufficient to say that when ~~Nkrumah~~ <sup>in 1948</sup> called his own Constituent Assembly, of some 75 organizations of all kinds in



the country, 73 were represented. The Assembly was a public meeting in the Arena of Accra, and there were 90,000 people present.

Shortly after this Constituent Assembly, Maramba declared what he called Positive Action. A general strike paralysed all economic and social life for a week. Then Maramba called it off. From start to finish he had perfect control of this vast movement. The Government never had the opportunity to use violence except against individuals here and there. Everything was strictly constitutional, and yet devastatingly revolutionary. The colonial Government put Maramba in gaol but they were beaten. They had to take him out again and make him the Head of the Government.

It is impossible here to deal with all the ramifications of this magnificent political conception and its masterly execution. One part of it was the international publicity. This was for from the Gold Coast itself, but George in London was its agent, its correspondent and its representative. Some day, I hope, some of the correspondence between him and Maramba and his party will be published; also the stream of articles by which the British and the world public was kept informed, and the articles in the Gold Coast press which kept the people informed about political developments in Britain. But if George had done nothing after the 1945 conference in Manchester, he had done enough.

What he meant to the people of the Gold Coast can best be illustrated by two stories. Before Maramba became Prime Minister, if George had landed in the Gold Coast he would have gone straight to gaol. But at last the day came when he was able

to go. A few days before, <sup>Sir Charles</sup> Arden-Clarke, the Governor, returned from holiday in England, Mcrumah and the Cabinet dressed up in their official robes and went to meet him. Nobody else went. <sup>(a week or so)</sup> George came, and 10,000 people came to the airport to greet him.

The other <sup>episode</sup> concerns myself. On the night of the independence a few old friends and I drove with Mcrumah in his big Daimler (maybe it was a Cadillac) to the Parliament where Mcrumah, dressed in what he called his uniform (Kimon clothes worn by all who had been in prison) delivered an address before the hundreds of guests from all over the world. George was ~~not in the party.~~ <sup>(too)</sup> well ~~but I remember~~ <sup>(and)</sup> was

Anyway we had arranged to go to the arena and pick up Mcrumah after ~~with his Cabinet in attendance,~~ <sup>he</sup> had addressed the people on this historic occasion. As the big car drove slowly through the packed crowds, people recognised it as the Prime Minister's and pressed close to greet <sup>him</sup>. They saw me sitting in the front and one after another they began to say "Hello, Mr. Padmore!" "How are you, Mr. Padmore," "Good Evening, Mr. Padmore." If <sup>back</sup> a stranger was in the Prime Minister's car <sup>at night like this</sup> then it was Mr. Padmore. I had neither the heart nor the courage to disappoint them. So I accepted the greetings and smiled and shook hands on behalf of George. ~~It was~~

~~It was~~ I think that I should give some picture of George Padmore as a human being. He was above all, as the illustrations show clearly, a great gentleman, a British West Indian of the old school. During these same Ghana celebrations there was a Durbar of the chiefs and all the names attended. George had a seat just behind a very distinguished official group and one of them knew all about George, though he didn't know him personally. When our man came in he and his party found themselves short of a seat. George, always polite, rose and in his courtly old-fashioned manner offered his own, which

was as graciously accepted. When the show was over the official (He was a very high official indeed) turned, thanked George once more, and George bowed his acknowledgements. Then George saw a friend of his approaching, hand outstretched, about to shout a resounding "Hello! Padmore." By frantic signals George managed to silence him. As he explained afterwards, "If Sir--- had heard my name and learnt that he had sat in the seat of George Padmore and had been exchanging compliments with him, it would have ruined his day."

That was George all over. ~~As a~~ revolutionary, but personally almost fastidious in his manner and style; always kind, yet with a satirical humour which was never grim except where his politics was concerned.

George Padmore was a black ~~man~~, not brown or brownish but black. He was a very handsome man with a striking head and a mouth broad and generous but finely modelled. He was perhaps just under medium height, slender, quick in his movements but not fussy, one of the most naturally graceful men you would find in any company, however large, however select. He was a model of neatness in his dress. Revolutionaries live a hard life. Even when you are making money every penny you make is needed for the job in hand. I have never once seen George when he was not spick and span, never once. One day we have the praise for this to Dorothy, the remarkable woman who was his wife. She said no, George did it all himself and would even wash his own clothes. He was no dandy. When in 1954 we saw him in the fashionable Georgian waistcoat, we made a song and dance over it. I think Dorothy took the blame (or praise) for this. If you dropped in at George's flat and found him in his slippers he was as neat as ever, his books every one of them in place, his papers to hand when he wanted them.

He was immensely kind and generous. When he went to Ghana in 1957, the Primuses, West Indians, occupied the flat in which he

and Dorothy had lived for many years. After his death they testified to the esteem in which he was held by his neighbours.

"Mr. Padmore was such a good man." Once I wanted £60 and wrote to George. I didn't hear from him for some days and then one afternoon he came running in. "I just got £60 from my publisher. Here is £59. I left one pound in the bank." I know he lent £12 here, £25 there when there was little chance of his getting it back. He would say, "That fooler's young man -" and shrug his shoulders. He was always ready to do something for you. When I landed in London in 1953, lodgings were hard to get. George hustled himself and got some for me in a few days. He would take a long journey alone to meet you at the airport or see you off.

By 1953 I had broken with Trotskyism and as is our habit had written and explained my reasons and published it. George, as many other intellectuals, was then very much interested in Mao-Tse-Tung. George would send me pamphlets by Mao, with passages marked.

When the Hungarian Revolution broke out I saw it as the beginning of a new era and poured scorn on all those who had believed that Stalinism could mould even children to its will, that the totalitarian era would descend upon us all in "1984", all the demoralisation of the time. I in my turn sent George what I had written with passages marked. But we would meet and spend hours and have dinner at home or in town and never say a word about the writings we had sent through the post. We saw eye to eye on too many things, and had too much fun together, and had too many memories in common to risk all this by abstract disputes about politics. It would have taken a lot to make me quarrel with George and I am glad ~~xxxxx~~ he felt the same about me. Politics, and above all revolutionary politics frequently makes men hardened and indifferent to normal human relations and even the elements of civilized intercourse. There was never a trace of that in George, despite all he had been through and all he had seen. He could be harsh, and even brutal, particularly at political trenchery, and

he could not furious at the mere idea of certain socialist ideas. But indifference, cruelty, ingratitude, betrayal, I never saw a trace of it in him, despite the fact that in his active days as an organizer he had seen and known brutality and cruelty such as few men in Britain had actually experienced. One May Day, during the Popular Front period, he spoke with nostalgia of the days when he and his colleagues used to be at the head of militant demonstrations battling with the police. After a brief silence he rose and gave a diverting illustration of how they used to prepare for these demonstrations by wearing big hats stuffed with newspaper so as to soften the blows of police batons on their heads.

Nevertheless, behind his natural elegance, his generosity, his good nature, his sensitiveness and the general modesty of his demeanour, there dwelt to the end a most formidable and ~~unbreakable~~ <sup>implacable</sup> ~~Revolutionary~~ <sup>Revolutionary</sup>. In 1939 the British Government called upon everyone of suitable age in England to come up for military service. George at once wrote a letter to Ernest Bevin the Minister of Labour. In it he said exactly what he thought about the British Empire. Bevin, he wrote, could imprison him or put him up against a wall and shoot him but he would never put on a British uniform and he more than implied that Bevin had a hell of a nerve even to suggest that George Padmore should join the British Army.

The British in Britain are a very tolerant people. Bevin would respect this uncompromising adherence to principle. Furthermore he knew or would be told that whatever he did to George would ring around the world. ~~Whatever the reason, George was~~ <sup>alone</sup>. ~~What was wrong with the British Government that needed someone to give as liaison officer to all the Negro war correspondents in London.~~ They offered George the job, he took it and went through the war that way. I believe he even wore some sort of semi-military badge: the whole thing would have amused him greatly. He told me about this and I remember, though it had happened some fifteen years before, his indignation at the very thought of putting on a British military uniform, ~~to him the very symbol of British imperialism,~~ <sup>He would have died first. Yet George refused and</sup>

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During the war George became correspondent to the American Negro newspapers; the Pittsburgh Courier and the Chicago Defender. As such, like all other newspaper correspondents in London, he was provided with a desk in the Press Room of the British Ministry of Information. For the first time in England George had, for a time, ~~some~~ some financial security. George was in the position of being able to use the facilities provided by Imperialism to continue his never-ceasing attacks on it. I have no doubt whatever that George would have rapidly become the foyen of all correspondents from overseas interested in the colonial and African questions. Wherever he was he automatically became a magnet for people who were not only working at the subjects he had made his own. Imperialism, ~~itself~~ and particularly British imperialism, was George's unrelenting target. Yet George admired and respected and loved the British people.

"These people," he would say to me. "You are in a bus and suddenly a German plane is overhead, dropping bombs all over the place. Nobody says anything, nobody does anything. The driver goes on just as usual. Then he says, as if to himself, 'It's getting a bit warm, isn't it?' I think we had better go aside.' He turns the bus into a narrow side street, or into some passage. After a time he says, 'I think we can go on now.' Nobody has said anything. He goes back into the main street and the bus goes on its way."

"You know," George continues, "if you felt like jumping out or shouting what to do, you just couldn't, as long as they were all behaving that way." This, coming from a man with <sup>his</sup> past, was a tribute indeed. He went on to make ~~some~~ <sup>Comic comparisons with</sup> the behaviour under similar circumstances of other nationalities,

<sup>large</sup> London at the time <sup>what</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>is</sup> full of them. He described to me with <sup>is of</sup> great vividness how, after bombing, water mains and other pipes in his neighbourhood would be all wrecked and broken, and the speed and energy with which tired British workmen would repair them so that life might go on again. His admiration for the workers was very great. Once he said what I had never heard before, "They were tiring. If the bombing had gone on, I doubt if these men would have been able to keep it up. And if they had failed, then everything was over." It was characteristic of his training and outlook that it was the work and unspectacular heroism of these workmen that interested him most.

Nevertheless, isolated as he might appear to be in his little flat in Mornington Crescent, it was as a man of political affairs that George made his impact upon all old friends and strangers. On <sup>one holiday occasion</sup> ~~one~~ he and his wife were to <sup>celebrate</sup> ~~celebrate~~ with

us. Dorothy turned up alone: George had had a sudden engagement. It turned out that an African whom George had not seen for many years had turned up in transit on his way to Africa. George I

knew did not have a very high opinion politically of his visitor, who in fact had not been politically active for years. But he was going home, he had passed in to see George to find out what he thought about things. George <sup>stayed</sup> <sup>at home to</sup> ~~at~~ ~~elaborate~~ for him a policy statement and programme for action and so could not come to us

~~He did not come until very late.~~

Though so long removed from the practical centre of affairs, his whole habit of mind was the translation of theory into practice. He was a man of detailed correspondence, readiness at all times to meet people and discuss, tireless at <sup>concretising</sup> ~~concretising~~ ideas in memoranda, documents and resolutions. If he was not a great orator, he was a most competent speaker. His writing was not noticeable for style; it was usually a remorseless compilation of the facts of tyranny and oppression and the struggle against them. He was at his best as a journalist, knocking off at short notice an article on a remote African problem with a clear orientation and bristling with detail. <sup>Two or three days after</sup> ~~The crisis over the Kabaka broke out~~ ~~George had written and published in the I.L.P. paper a masterly survey of the whole problem. It was long months after~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~serious press bumbled and stumbled on to the realities that underlay the lies and half-truths that filled press and Parliament.~~

I have said how many an African politician arriving in London depended on George for briefing on the general political situation, and the political attitudes of parties and personnel to colonial problems. He <sup>could give advice on</sup> ~~generally~~ <sup>who should be approached.</sup> He knew details of all sorts of people including colonial officials, what had been their education, what social status they belonged to, with what business firms or families they were connected. He gathered this information from the press, reading reports of companies doing business with the colonies, and <sup>devising</sup> ~~devising~~ political biographies and memoirs. He would cut a discussion short by saying savagely:

"What is all this talk about policy and paramount interest of the natives? His paramount interest is in his wife's family. They hold the largest shares in ---- company."



During the seven year interlude in the Gold Coast many attempts were made by Murchiah's enemies to smear him as personally corrupt. On one occasion a witness in the box mentioned the name of George Padmore as having <sup>received bribes for helping to work out an arrangement between</sup> ~~been~~ <sup>the Gold Coast and</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>a European firm.</sup> The bold statement of the innuendo appeared in the British press. George at once wrote to the presiding judge offering to come and take his stand in the witness box. The judge, however, publicly made it clear that this was not in any way necessary as no accusation of any substance had been made. George now called upon the press agency and the newspapers which had printed the original statement to make public the judge's repudiation. They didn't want to and finally did it only upon receipt of a letter from George's solicitors threatening legal action. When the matter was finally settled to his satisfaction, George told me:

"They weren't going to get away with that. I had taken part in some business negotiations with that company, a Dutch company dealing in tobacco. When everything was over, the company officials were very pleased and as we were <sup>on our way to the airport</sup> ~~leaving~~ (one of them said to me:

'Mr. Padmore, we would like to give you a little box of our cigars.' (The little box was worth something like ~~one~~ half-a-crown.) I told them, 'Thanks very much and I highly appreciate your kindness. But I cannot accept even this because I have to guard ~~myself~~ against anyone being able to say that in discussing this matter with you I accepted any gifts.'"

It was years after that the accusation came up in court. But if need be George would have got affidavits from the persons present and pursued his slanderers through every possible court.

~~George was already dead when I came into my office in the West Indies one day and saw a parcel on my desk, carefully wrapped and carefully addressed. A man had brought it from Ghana saying that it was from ~~Mr. Padmore~~ <sup>Mr. Padmore</sup> ~~sent~~ <sup>sent</sup> ~~me~~ <sup>me</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~parcels~~ <sup>parcels</sup>. When I opened it, there were all the resolutions and speeches of the conference of African states and~~

received a mimeographed memorandum in the next post. It is so characteristic of him that I reproduce it in full. I think he had five hundred copies done and as usual he would have sent them all over the world. The memorandum is important for another reason which will appear.

~~Mr. Justice Koraal~~  
~~Chairman, Commission of Inquiry,~~  
~~Acera, Gold Coast.~~  
22, Cranleigh House,  
Cranleigh Street,  
London, N.W.1.

January 3rd, 1954

The Honourable Mr. Justice Koraal,  
Chairman: Commission of Inquiry,  
Acera. GOLD COAST.

My Lord:

I have just returned to London from abroad and have had my attention drawn to certain aspersions which have been made about me before your Lordship's Commission, and I am accordingly compelled to address this letter to you.

In a hooter's despatch from Acera published in The Times of December 30, 1953 and other British newspapers, the following statement appears:

"Mr. Koi Larbi, Mr. Ibrahim's counsel, asked if it were true that a Mr. George Padmore, in London, had negotiated a contract with a Dutch housing firm at 5 per cent commission and then offered to split the commission with Dr. Nkrumah's Corporation People's Party. The Prime Minister denied this."

1. I wish to state quite categorically that this is a malicious and wicked innuendo, and a baseless lie.

2. That my name should be drawn at all into this inquiry with its implications of bribery and corruption, can have only one interpretation. As a close friend of Dr. Nkrumah and supporter of his cause for Gold Coast Independence, it is an attempt to smear my name and reputation and, by association, to besmirch the honour and reputation of the Prime Minister.

3. That Mr. Larbi, a member of what is supposed to be an honourable Profession, should use his privileged position as Counsel for Mr. Ibrahim to cast aspersions upon the character and reputation of others, is disgraceful. It is particularly reprehensible in the actual context of the terms of reference of the Inquiry, and I am forced to interpret Mr. Larbi's innuendo as a political manoeuvre.

4. I want to state that if your Lordship's Commission thinks it will serve any useful purpose, I am prepared to present myself before the Commission.

5. In view of the fact that Mr. Larbi's innuendo has been distributed throughout the world by Hooter's News Agency, I reserve the right to publish this statement in the Press.

In attending upon your reply,

I have the honour to be, My Lord,

Yours respectfully,

Signed: George Padmore.

Reply to George Padmore's letter to the Gold Const Commission

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Office of the Brinmah  
Enquiry Commission,  
c/o, Private Post Bag,  
Accra.

No. BE/S/3/15

12th January, 1954

Sir,

BRINMAH ENQUIRY COMMISSION.

I am directed by Mr. Justice Korsah, Chairman of the Commission of Enquiry into Mr. Brinmah's resignation, to acknowledge your letter of January 3rd 1954, the contents of which have been noted by the Commissioners.

2. I am to inform you that no affirmative evidence has been adduced before the Commission in support of any allegations made against you; it is not therefore the view of the Commissioners that they would be justified in calling upon you to present yourself before the Commission.

3. A further communication will be addressed to you should these circumstances alter to any material extent.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

F.B.S. ALTON.

SECRETARY TO THE COMMISSION.

G. PADMORE, ESQ.,  
22, GRANLEIGH HOUSE,  
GRANLEIGH SQUARE,  
London, N.W.1.

51c

7th January, 1954

Dear Mr. Editor,

Will you kindly ask your Advertising Manager to insert the following advertisement in your paper? I only desire one such insertion. Please send me your bill and I shall immediately remit the amount,

PADMORE CHALLENGE TO GOLD COAST PRESS

I, George Padmore, author and journalist, residing in the United Kingdom, hereby challenge any minor woman in the Gold Coast to publicly state that I have at any time accepted money or gifts from ~~any person~~ a person or a person - from any foreign firm or company doing business with the Gold Coast Government. Anyone making such an allegation will be immediately sued for libel and slander. This challenge remains open during the duration of the Commission of Inquiry.

I take this opportunity of also letting it be known that apart from a few trifles presented to me as personal gifts, and a cheque of £50 given to me as a farewell party organised by the C.F.P. on the eve of my departure on a visit to the Gold Coast in 1951, I have at no time ever accepted one penny from any man or woman in the Gold Coast for any services rendered.

Thanking you in advance for your kind favour,

I am,

Yours respectfully,

George Padmore.

The Editor,  
Gold Coast Graphic,  
P.O. Box,  
Accra.

*Handwritten notes and signatures:*  
I am...  
George has...  
The Editor...  
George Padmore...  
28

51d

To learn that George had never accepted one penny for any services rendered was a shock even to me who thought

I knew as well as any the circumstances of his life. His strictness may have been due in part to personal pride - I have little interest in these subterranean searchings. I mention it because that would come immediately to the mind of those who didn't know him. I, however, believe that his motive was political: by refusing to accept any money for what he was doing he kept his hands free and could propose or reject; agree or disagree with any matter that came before him. He could see this after nineteen years of precarious living in London. He was a genuinely heroic character and this I am sure, in addition to his ability and devotion, is what commanded the respect of all who knew him.

George was already dead when I came into my office in the West Indies one day and saw a parcel on my desk, carefully wrapped and carefully addressed. A man had brought it from Ghana saying that it was from Mr. Padmore. When I opened it, there were all the resolutions and speeches of the Conference of African States and

the All-African People's Conference. They had come to me piece-meal before, but George had seized the opportunity to send me a complete collection. How like him! In 1957 Dr. Du Bois was prevented from attending the celebrations of independence by the United States Government. When everything was over and a number of us were waiting for the plane at the airport George came hurrying in with a large parcel ~~in~~ in his hand, carefully wrapped and carefully addressed to Dr. Dubois. He had made a collection of documents and newspapers dealing with the celebrations to send to the old man.

"As soon as you get to England, you mail them," he said to me. He had probably done the same for half-a-dozen people. He was one of the most tireless talkers I ever knew, but he always supplemented his words with a pamphlet, a resolution, an article, a letter, a <sup>(newspaper or a clipping)</sup> reference, <sup>or to be done. If what he heard was new, and</sup> something to do ~~with~~ interesting, "That is valuable material" he would say, and take a note to follow it up. "Valuable material." He was either gathering it up or passing it on.

He never lost his razor-sharp political edge, but over the years he mellowed in certain directions, particularly in his judgment of individual members of the Labour Party. "He is doing his best. What more can you expect of him?" *New*

~~he spoke~~ <sup>ironically</sup> of ~~the~~ of nationalist politicians who were satisfied with ~~the~~ flag and a national anthem." He reserved his most scathing <sup>Sarcasms</sup> for African politicians staying at the Dorchester in rooms costing

"Fifteen guineas" a day. African independence did not mean for him a mere repetition of the European experience. If he had lived he would have had plenty to say on this.

One curious trait will need examination and analysis such as I shall not attempt here. He was familiar with Asian nationalist and socialist politics and its personnel. When he died, Krishna Menon, Minister of Defence for India, and an old friend of the hard-inter-war years, sent a most moving telegram. George had a special

regard for the Sudanese and the Sudanese for him: if he hadn't gone to Ghana, he would most probably have gone to the Sudan to work. He had reserves in regard to one people, his own in the West Indies. George wrote, sent his documents, discussed in his habitual manner with West Indian politicians. Yet although his wife Dorothy visited the West Indies, he himself would never go home. From our earliest association, I could see that he viewed West Indian politics more in sorrow than in anger. After World War II he took more interest, discussed with more animation. But he hadn't really changed. Rather stupidly, I tried to account for this on personal grounds, his rejection of his early life there. After having spent nearly three of the last years in the West Indies, I think I understand George's attitude better. I never accepted his attitude as valid, and in any case it was little more than an attitude. What is far more important is that I know now he had very solid grounds for it. That, however, will have to wait for another work devoted exclusively to that subject.\*

After the war, Africa had become front page news, and some of the most powerful and by no means reactionary British newspapers sought out George to write for them and give his comments on ~~events~~ by this ~~time~~ time his reputation as an authority on African affairs was well established. He wrote a few articles, was well paid for them, and the money was welcome. But as he said, "I somehow couldn't make it with those people." That "somehow" said a great deal. His quick responses and insights, his almost automatic concentration on the point of conflict between African aspiration and imperialist domination, unfitted him for the type of writing which even sympathetic newspapers or periodicals required. He and they soon parted.

\* My Own, My Native Land: Warning to the West Indies by G.L.R. James

Recovering from the war, George and Dorothy took a trip to Europe, visiting Italy. It was their first holiday for years.

George was an omnivorous reader of all novels dealing with the colonial or the Negro Question. You could find them on his shelves.

But he always affected a certain amused contempt for discussions about Shakespeare and other aspects of what he called "you and your culture," giving an emphasis to the word "culture" <sup>(which was too marked to usually give in)</sup>. It was a

heritage from his Communist past but it was never ill-natured, nor did he pursue it. His wife and I <sup>would have been</sup> too strong for him if he had.

Dorothy Padmore is an English woman whom I first met going

around with George in the late thirties. She had a Marxist past before she met him and from the beginning she was one of us. Dorothy ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> well read, with admirable

taste in clothes and an interest in what George called "culture".

She mastered the politics and personalities of Africa and helped George with his books. Despite his wide contacts George knew no foreign languages (to the end of his days he referred to Nkrumah as Nun-Krumah when he did not call him Kwame). Dorothy not only read but spoke French with a good accent. One of George's books, on the way in which Russia had developed her colonial territories, was written in collaboration with Dorothy. For years she worked as a secretary so that the household might have a steady income. Her employer would travel for months leaving her in charge of all his affairs, and was heartbroken when she finally left, though Dorothy never took the slightest pains to disguise her political opinions.

No writing can do justice to the daily strains under which revolutionaries live. Your reading of the daily press, your most casual sessions with radio and television are an uninterrupted process of disconcertment, often rising to fury and, where you have no knowledge, suspicion. Dorothy's felix <sup>ovis</sup> employees, bubbling over with excitement at "doing something to help" come to her with a subscription list for Hungarian refugees. Dorothy they know as a leftist. Dorothy tells them: "When you all circulate a list for



the victims of the terror in Kenya, I shall subscribe to your 14th for Hungarian refugees." These things are not easy to do. There are times when to do them is a tactical mistake; they do harm to the cause. You have to decide on the spot without notice. George and Dorothy did as well as anybody I have known and <sup>(despite the strain of their lives)</sup> maintained a large humanity.

The Padmore hospitality was famous. The constant stream of visitors stayed to lunch or to tea or to dinner, sometimes to all three. Dorothy, a fine cook, bore this burden (George washed up, the discussion for the time being moving into the kitchen).

Dorothy was constantly on the move between the kitchen and the ~~excitement~~ <sup>(unusual)</sup> in the living room. A woman of capacity, a Londoner of sophistication, she had ambitions of her own both in literature and business. She suppressed them in the interests of African emancipation, ~~to stand with the movement~~ <sup>more concretely</sup> helping George. I would say that by 1957, next to George, she was on terms of personal acquaintance, sometimes friendship, with more African politicians and politicians of African descent than anyone in England. Dorothy is now working in Ghana without George. It is not pleasant to envisage George without Dorothy. It is to be hoped that nothing will stand in the way of the biography of her husband which she and she alone is fully able to write. These Notes give some indication of what a full-length biography of George Padmore (with his meticulous filing of correspondence) will contribute to the history of African emancipation between 1930 and the present day.

I met George in Ghana at <sup>(independence)</sup> the celebration. He wasn't feeling very well, in fact at one time he thought of not doing. A peremptory message from Mahmud refusing to accept any excuse whatever made ~~George~~ <sup>him</sup> change his mind.

The night of the state ball George, dressed in a kente (he loved to wear African clothes) was very quiet. After years of effort a goal achieved frequently leaves you with a feeling of

temporary emptiness. I had an idea that George maybe was feeling that way. We sat together in the open while the dancing went on inside. After a while he began to talk.

"Kwame is going to give a party for the women at the Castle," he said, "for all the women including the market women."

He pointed to the crowd of sight-seers.

"You see all those people watching the distinguished guests come in? Some of them lost their jobs, were persecuted and prosecuted, beaten up, gaoled by many of those who are here, dancing, with special invitations."

The contrast between the realities of the struggle and the celebrations obviously affected him.

"Can't be helped," I said. "It is so after every revolution." I didn't believe that what I said was the whole truth but it contained enough of the truth to pass.

"Have to work out something, some medal or something to give them to show that they took part in the struggle...At any rate Kwame gave them all back their jobs as soon as he came to power."

I mentioned the Opposition. George was contemptuous.

"What Opposition!" he said. "There are only two parties in Ghana. Nkrumah's party and Arden-Clarke's party." This was the sort of thing he was always saying, brushing aside all that he considered subordinate or intermediary.

Later he brightened up, but on the whole during the celebrations his mood was sombre. However, as soon as the celebrations were over, he was immediately his old self, staying on in Ghana, attending meetings of the Central Committee where he was a welcome collaborator busily examining the economic situation, probing into political problems, and teaching socialism to the party youth. I badly wanted to stay, but I had an engagement in London which I could break only to my own cost. Anyway George told us all about everything as soon as he came back. He was more alive than I had ever seen him.

George and Dorothy had had a hard time between 1950 and 1957, waiting for the independence. The trouble was this. When Nkrumah came out of gaol in 1950 and became Head of the Government, he was

told the writer that he was not at all sure that he had been correct in waiting for seven years and not driving straight ahead, even if such a course had demanded armed insurrection. (When asked, he said that he could most certainly be quoted.) George and Dorothy were concerned that the aim of the revolution would be lost. There was much work ahead. People are at last beginning to understand that when Nkrumah says that for him the independence of Ghana is without meaning unless it is the prelude to the independence of the whole of Africa, he means exactly that.

The transformation of Ghana into a republic with a socialist pattern as its economic structure; the aim of working (as the programme of the Constitution of the Convention People's Party put it) "with other nationalist democratic and socialist movements in Africa and other continents, with a view to abolishing imperialism, colonialism, racialism, tribalism, and all forms of national and racial oppression and economic inequality among nations, races and peoples and to support all action for World Peace"; the organization of a West African Federation and ultimately the union of all African states, all this in which Ghana is <sup>so</sup> vigorously active today had been the moving ideas of the Manchester Pan-African Conference in 1945. Nkrumah had drawn up a document known as the Circle whose aim was stated as the union of African Socialist Republics. Independence in Ghana was a beginning, no more. The full programme could not yet be under way <sup>independence</sup> until it was settled.

It is of Retreat! Now than racial and what was Nkrumah or man to go to make it

The rights and wrongs of the seven year wait is not a matter to be put into here. no sooner had the independence been achieved than Nkrumah, his hands freed, set out systematically to initiate and carry through the policies of the Manchester Conference on the most expansive scale. Whereas people still continue to see Africa as in everything backward, it is in Ghana ~~now~~ since 1947 that there is being worked out and practised the most systematic policy, internal and external, of our age. <sup>the</sup> With the most progressive force in Africa today and all it means for the future, the name of

George Padmore will forever be associated.

*Before the end of 1957, the year of independ-*

*ence, The news I talked to* that George was going to Ghana as Adviser on

African Affairs. David Pitt (already hard at work as prospective

Labour candidate for Hampstead) and ~~we~~ decided that we would organize

a party to give George a formal farewell. The party was held at

Pitt's house and it was a memorable occasion. What <sup>(particularly)</sup> made it so was

the number and variety of the people who came; Africans from West

and <sup>(from)</sup> East Africa, old campalmers and students, West Indians, English

people, men and women. For us who had known the thirties, the

fathering had a more than personal or social significance.

We presented George with a leather brief case on which was

engraved a map showing the East Coast of the United States; the

West Indies and Trinidad; England and London; the West Coast of

Africa and Accra, Ghana.

George was delighted - more than once he said to me that in all his years in London he had never seen a more representative gathering. He and I more than all the others would appreciate the change.

Some things to remember were said that night. George said two.

"I am going to Ghana to give my advice, when it is asked for

...." This was characteristic of him and of Dorothy. They expressed

their political views of policy in Ghana freely enough but always

with a proper respect for the Government as a Government.

And later:

"In those days, we had a hard struggle, meeting with hostility

from some of the very people we were trying to serve...." It

was a backward view, significant because so rarely indulged.

~~There was~~ Dr. Jantush, then acting as High Commissioner for

Ghana in London (and now Ghana Ambassador in Paris), ~~was~~ brought

down the house when he said: "George has been given that post not

as a reward for past services but because he was the best man for

the job."

Jantush spoke most feelingly of how he would miss George. I had been talking to him that morning and it was not difficult to divine that George had been someone he could turn to in difficult <sup>(moments)</sup> moments.

George, scrupulous in the performance of his social responsibilities, walked round in his Georgian waistcoat, talking to everyone in turn. A few of us went to the airport a few days later to wish him bon voyage. He and I said a simple but poignant farewell. I wonder how many people, even as late as December 1957, envisaged the tumultuous rush to independence of African states after African state.

There is, however, one episode during these last days that should not be omitted. George has been accused of not understanding the African people and of writing about them in his books as economic and political abstractions. In between the party for him and his leaving for Ghana he and Dorothy took my wife and me out to dinner. It was a moment of relaxation and suddenly George began to talk about the African people among whom he was at last going to live and work. He talked about his cook, his driver and about the rank and file Africans with whom he had come into contact during his previous times in Africa. He spoke with intimacy and without prejudice either way of African outlook and behaviour in day-to-day matters. Now he had often spoken about Russians in that way and it was a commonplace between us to speak also about our day-to-day experiences with English people. But never before had George indicated particular knowledge or interest in these aspects of African life. It was thus late, the last time we spoke together, that I first recognised that George had been as observant and discerning in his views of African manners and customs as anyone else. Yet he had never put one comma about this in any of his books. I am not so sure that I agree with the policy. But I think I know why George kept away from it so rigidly. He was not going to give the slightest opportunity to anybody to discuss the personal ways and attitudes of Africans and so open up avenues of escape from the economic and political realities which in his opinion overshadowed everything else.

I was the only member present at the party of the Inter-war contingent and the work on the Bureau. Twenty-two years before he had come to my flat in London to tell me he had broken with the Kremlin, and here he was setting out for the last stage. Few of us including myself ever saw him again. He returned to London on holiday and for medical care in September 1959. He took in a few days after he landed in London. He was taken to hospital, passed into a coma from which he never awoke.

Here are some extracts from a letter written by Dorothy from Ghana to my wife some months after George's death. All of George and much of Dorothy is in it.

Dear Selma:

The handwriting looked familiar but I couldn't place it, especially coming from Poland, but I was delighted when I opened the letter to find it was from you. I haven't really had any personal communication from either of you since the one written following George's death, which is many experiences away: the fact I can and frequently do close my eyes and see him with his worn face fallen in, breathing labouredly in that hospital bed, and the ripe thrower which they were trying to infuse life into him hanging from the bottle with the yellow liquid. And then the pleasant vision when they had prepared him and he looked like George about to waken from sleep at any time and ready with a quizzical question as to what all the fuss was about, and didn't we know that it wasn't a bad thing to lay one's burden down.

I hardly had time to cry because everybody else did and wondered what they would do now and needed comforting. Good for me, but it's now when there is no-one to whom to exchange one's ideas that I feel all alone. The house is still as pleasant and I like it, but it's empty. The job does not require much of me and I doubt that it will - at least for a good time to come. I was hoping that I might be given the opportunity to edit and bring out a monthly Co-operative newspaper but they haven't started the thing going yet... and I haven't got material enough even to start on the biography of George.

This is something on which you may be able to help me while you are in New York. A.J. Hutch was here on two occasions. On the first I talked with him and he told me he worked with George in the late twenties and that he would reminisce with one or two other friends and send me the results. Could you dig him out, do you think, and see whether he could get around to this? Maida Springer also suggested Ted Poston on the New York Post (I think) could also help. Could you approach him, do you think? George Schwuler, I thought, might also send some material. Could you perhaps remind him? I'm trying the Russians but they are proving a dead-end, resting on the excuse that the war destroyed their archives and so many of the people with whom he worked are not there any more. I've asked the Ghana ambassador in Moscow to see if he can get at any-

think, but people are not reliable - not even those who say they  
care.

Nello's notes will be so helpful. I showed Kwame the news-  
paper and he says he will write direct to Nello and also find  
out whether he can get copies of the Notes for here. I hope  
he does this, but he is always so busy... It is incredible what  
vision (George) had and how he saw into the elements of things.  
He could have saved so many mistakes, and he asked only five  
years more to help lay solid foundations...

The letter speaks for itself, of George as politician and as  
human being. Only one piece of clarification is needed. When  
George spoke of five years and solid foundations he had in mind,  
as always, the whole of Africa. George was by temperament and long  
hard experience not given to extravagant prophecy. With this view  
of his, and knowing what he had in mind, I agree absolutely. That,  
however, is too complicated a subject to discuss here.

The last period of George's life in Ghana as Adviser on  
African Affairs is a story-book ending to a wonderful career. Once  
more George sat in an office with adequate resources, doing the  
work he had done in the Kremlin, and in his little London flat.

of the Bureau of African Affairs which he administered  
The first duty was to organize a Conference of Independent African  
States. The second was, I should think, nearer to his heart, the  
organization of an All-African People's Conference. Once more

George travelled over Africa. <sup>Once more, as in 1929,</sup> The fighters for African freedom

came from all over the continent, only this time, in independent  
Ghana, they were honoured guests of the Government and not as in

1930 hunted fugitives. Reporters from Trent newspapers flocked to  
Accra to report. The proceedings are familiar to all readers of  
the daily press and need not be gone into here. I was away in the  
West Indies and I had time for reflection at the long road George  
had travelled, his eyes glued for over thirty years on one single  
objective - the emancipation of Africa from foreign domination. By  
September 1959 when he died, the whole world knew that African free-  
dom was assured. He left behind him an unfinished work - The  
Origins of Socialism, intended for the use of the socialist youth  
of Ghana.

\* Nello. That is myself. C.L.R.J.

have sought to live only the broad outline of a remarkable life, in its own way one of the most remarkable of our time. If I were to make a political summary I would say the following. His greatest gift was tenacity of purpose. Nothing ever stilled him from his objective and if Nkrumah and Ghana hadn't given him an opportunity he would have continued as he had begun, doing what he could with whatever resources and persons to hand.

His ashes were interred in Christiansborg Castle, today a symbol of the grandeur and decadence of imperialism in Africa. As soon as you enter the gate you see the urn and the inscription. In placing George's ashes here, Nkrumah, as so often in the past, shows his unerring political instinct.

But his memory is engraved in what is more endurable than stone. When I visited Ghana in 1960 I was told by many people that even in that country of great demonstrations, no one had ever seen such a demonstration as attended George's obsequies. Politicians and public, chiefs and villagers, they came from all over the country to pay their homage. No one dreamed that what George stood for had penetrated so deeply into the people; he is already a tradition. As independence comes to state after state in Africa that tradition grows. His place in the history of Africa is already safe. When African independence is complete, it will relieve not only Africans but the rest of the world from the curse of racial domination which it has borne for four centuries. The name of George Padmore will then be added to the list of those who, irrespective of their time, place and race, have made great clearings in the forest of human abuses. Not only what he did but how he did it will be an inspiration to succeeding generations.



Two examples of George Padmore's style, which should complete this sketch of the type of man he was, both from Africa, Britain's Third Empire, which he published in 1948 with the Firm of Dennis Dobson, Ltd.

The first shows the ironic attitude which was more characteristic of him in life and in speech than in his writing.

1.

Religious Wars in Uganda

Across the other side of Lake Victoria to the north of Kenya lies the Protectorate of Uganda, whose boundary, contiguous with that of Tanganyika, runs through the lake. The technique by which this country was conquered illustrates the role of misadventures in the service of Imperialism. Unlike the annexation of Kenya, where the Sword of the Imperial British East Africa Company hewed the way, in Uganda the Cross preceded the Flag.

First of the white men to penetrate into Uganda were the British explorers, J.A. Grant and John Speke, members of Richard Burton's expedition of 1862, who were followed by Dr Livingstone and Henry M. Stanley in 1875. These early travellers were surprised to discover the high degree of economic and cultural development which the people had reached, and the highly efficient political forms of government in Buganda, Bunyoro and Toro, the principal states forming the empire of Uganda. These semi-feudal states and the others, Ankole and Busoga, are inhabited by a Bantu-Hamitic people together with a Nilotic aristocracy of remarkable intelligence, as attested by John Roscoe, the eminent anthropologist, who described them as the 'Japanese of Africa'.

Two years after the visit of Stanley to the court of Mutesa, the then Kabaka (King) of Buganda, Protestant missionaries from

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