

Homage to Nkrumah

Amilcar Cabral

Excerpt from speech delivered by the Secretary-General of PAIGC, at Symposium in Conakry on Kwame Nkrumah Day, 13 May 1972.

We must remind ourselves at this time that all the coins of life have two sides. All realities have two aspects; the positive and the negative. To positive action, negative action has been and will always be opposed and vice versa. President Nkrumah will remain part of the history of Africa and the world because the sum total of his positive action is more than positive: it is the expression of his outstanding achievements, of his creative and fruitful practice in the service of the people of Africa and of Mankind.

We must however learn the lessons which events teach us and, even in these painful moments ask ourselves a few questions so that our understanding of the past, our experience of the present and our preparation for the future may be improved. For instance, which economic and political factors made it possible for betrayal to succeed in Ghana in spite of the personality, in spite of the courage, in spite of the positive action of Nkrumah?

Yes, imperialism is criminal and ruthless but we must not place the whole burden of blame on its broad back. For as the African people are known to say: 'Rice only cooks inside the pot.'

To what extent was the success or betrayal in Ghana linked or not to problems of class struggle, to contradictions in the social structure, to the role of the Party and of other institutions including the armed forces – all in the context of a newly independent state? We must ask ourselves to what extent the success of betrayal in Ghana was linked or not to the search for a correct definition of those historical makers of history – the People – and to their daily actions in defence of their own conquests during independence? Or to what extent might not the success of betrayal in Ghana be linked to the fundamental problem of the choice of men in the Revolution?

Meditation over such questions may perhaps lead us to a better understanding of the magnitude of Nkrumah's work, as well as the complexity of the problems he had to confront, so often alone. These problems will also undoubtedly lead us to the conclusion that as long as imperialism exists, *an independent state in Africa must be a liberation movement in power – or else it will not be.*