The ‘Cat’s Paw of Dictatorship': State Security and Self-Rule in the Gold Coast, 1948 to 1957

By

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Abstract

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On February 28th, 1948, a deadly police shooting at a veteran’s demonstration in the Gold Coast sparked three days of rioting in the capital city of Accra and surrounding communities. It was the first crisis of its kind for the British colony and a clear indication of the shifting political realities of the post-war era. Though colonial rule had been in place for several generations, the people of the Gold Coast would increasingly balk at an imperial system that denied them a voice in their own government. The following nine years would witness the Gold Coast’s extraordinary transition from British colony, to self-ruled territory, and eventually an independent state that renamed itself the Republic of Ghana.

In the more than sixty years since Ghana’s independence in 1957, scholars and commentators alike have recognized the February riots as a turning point in Ghanaian and imperial history, signaling the new wave of decolonization that would sweep across sub-Saharan Africa in the years to follow. What has remained unknown and relatively unstudied is the fact that the riots also compelled the development of a government intelligence network in the Gold Coast. Before British officials accepted that colonial rule was as its end in West Africa, they sought to safeguard the state by providing it a domestic intelligence organization. This organization operated throughout the terminal years of British rule in the Gold Coast and succeeded in both altering the nature of the colonial state and the process of decolonization in unexpected ways.

This dissertation interrogates the role of government intelligence in the Gold Coast between the years of 1948 and 1957. By examining police superintendents, Security Service officers, and colonial administrators, it reconstructs the establishment and application of intelligence resources to better understand the process and politics of decolonization in the Britain’s West African empire.

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This project would likewise have been impossible without the assistance of countless staff and archivists at the British National Archives and PRAAD. I would also like to extend special thanks to the Managing Director at PRAAD, Botwe Bright. He had an exhaustive knowledge of his archive's holdings and repeatedly provided helpful leads for uncovering the unique set of actors and institutions that were purposefully erased from colonial records.

I would like to extend special thanks to the academic community and advisors who helped me to realize this project. Professor Tabitha Kanogo has overseen the entirety of my doctorate degree and has always offered the support and opportunities to expand my capabilities as an instructor, researcher, and scholar. I likewise owe special thanks to Professor Bruce Hall who joined my dissertation committee well after it was underway. His comments on draft chapters challenged me to consider how this esoteric corner of colonial history might have greater value to a larger community of Africanist. Professors Daniel Sargent and Leo Arriola likewise served in refining this project and providing helpful feedback on the research itself and my direction as an academic.

Finally, I am indebted to my family and their unflagging support throughout these last several years and beyond.

Introduction: Colonial Rule and Intelligence Work

In December 1942, the Omega Psi Phi fraternity of the University of Philadelphia held its annual Achievement Week program at Houston Hall. As a predominantly African American fraternity, Omega Psi Phi used Achievement Week to highlight the accomplishments of African American men and women in the hopes of inspiring similar greatness in the generation to follow. 1942's program was no different and the organizers hoped to highlight the strides made by members of the Black community and to emphasize their role in answering the pressing issues of the day. In 1942, the chief concern for the university's students (if not all Americans) was the United States' position in the Second World War. Reading the times, the fraternity invited four distinguished speakers to address the "Role of the Negro in the War Effort". They included William H. Hastie, the first African American to sit as a federal judge and a civilian aide to the Secretary of War; William J. Thompkins, the Recorder of Deeds for the District of Columbia; and Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., a charismatic Harlem pastor and the first African American elected to the New York City Council. The fourth panelist, by comparison, was an unusual choice. He was a local lecturer in "Negro Studies" from British West Africa; presumably some in the fraternity were his students and appreciated his capacity to expand Black issues beyond American contexts.

Despite its seemingly innocuous topic, this panel and its presenters became the subject of an intelligence report distributed between American and British officials in the weeks before New Year's Eve. It expressed some apprehension with Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., erroneously labeling him a Communist leader, but it was primarily focused on the West African scholar. As might have been expected, he challenged the panel's limited scope of the war, the United States, and the African American community. Instead his comments focused on how the war itself was changing the youth of Africa and what that change might mean for the future of European imperialism. "He declared that a change was necessary," read the report, "that the youth of Africa refuses to be exploited by outsiders, and that they will not sit by after the war and allow territories to be allocated [without] the natives being permitted a share in government." The U.S. Army deemed this a "very anti-British speech" and sought to warn their counterparts in the United Kingdom by sharing a copy of this report. It was an act of good faith and prudent precaution - this lecturer might become a problem for British authorities but for the time being, he was actively engaged in American circles. This report was eventually delivered to the Security Service, Britain's domestic intelligence agency also known as MI5. They likely had no information to provide the US Army but they still properly categorized and filed away the report for future reference. Though his name meant nothing to American or British authorities in 1942, this West African lecturer was Kwame Nkrumah, one of the icons of African nationalism in the post-war era and the future president of an independent Ghana.[1]

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[1] The National Archives of the United Kingdom [TNA] KV 2/1847, 1a.

This document was likely the first intelligence report ever prepared on Nkrumah and it would not be the last. The American report on Nkrumah's speech in fact became the first document in his personal MI5 file, an expansive set of folders that traced his personal and political lives from 1942 until 1953.[2] These records were declassified in 2005 and moved to the public holdings of the British National Archives. They were released alongside a set of similar, security files prepared by the Security Service on several African nationalists during the post-war era.[3] In most cases, these reports had been closed for more than fifty years due to considerations of national security and the obvious reticence of any intelligence organization to disclosure its records, and yet their release provided a unique resource for historical scholarship. In the first place, intelligence documents contained in these folders provided an additional portrait of the leading nationalist figures of the late colonial era. In Nkrumah's case, his file contains a record of his international correspondences, ranging from his romantic endeavors to his political musings with trusted friends and confidantes. These documents, selected and preserved by cautious authorities defending a state facing the untold consequences at empire's end, may not entirely reorient our understanding of these men and their politics but they still provide new windows into the thoughts and objectives of some of the most influential figures in twentieth century African history, showing the cautious consideration and debates that preceded their political actions.

These records also present an untold component to colonial histories - the role of intelligence institutions in the post-war empire. Again in the case of Nkrumah's file, the bulk of the Security Service's reporting comes from the period between 1947 and 1953. These were the years immediately following Nkrumah's return to the Gold Coast and the launching of his political career as a critic of the colonial administration. Although the Security Service was expectedly focused on the British Isles, these records show that MI5 was also intimately engaged with affairs in West Africa and the larger empire. Not only did MI5 maintain several channels for collecting information from the Gold Coast but they indeed had one or even several of their own officers stationed in Accra as advisors to the local administration. MI5's involvement with West African affairs aligns perfectly with the first challenges to colonial rule in the post-war era and continues through the Gold Coast's first steps toward self-rule and independence. In this way, the Security Service played a role in the maintenance (and dissolution) of British rule in the Gold Coast, a role that by the early 2000s had not yet been exposed or examined.

While the disclosure of Security Service records on African nationalists had presented new questions for considering the late colonial empire, they did little else. The security files on selected individuals did not sufficiently describe British intelligence channels in West Africa

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[2] The abrupt ending of this file in 1953 is not explained by the files themselves and seems an unusual date for the Security Service to cease reporting on Nkrumah. The Gold Coast was four years from independence and Nkrumah had served as the colony's de facto Prime Minister since 1951. It seems likely that investigations did continue but the Security Service has not released their later files on Nkrumah.

[3] There is clear evidence among these records that several files dealing with other anti-colonial activists have still been withheld. One clear example is George Padmore, a Trinidadian activist who collaborated frequently with Nkrumah throughout the 1940's and 1950's and relocated to Accra to help him realize his vision for an independent African state. Nkrumah's file show that Padmore was also under MI5 investigation and yet his file has not been released. This may simply require time - MI5's records on Padmore's wife (Dorothy Pizer Padmore) were released in 2014.

beyond indicating that they existed. For example, the records prepared on activists in the Gold Coast indicated that the Security Service received the bulk of their intelligence in the colony through the local administration and its police force. Specifically, the Security Service relied on the Special Branch unit of the Gold Coast Police Force for regular intelligence reporting. This Special Branch was responsible for developing intelligence sources and analyzing the material they collected; Security Service officers in Accra merely offered their occasional perspective on these sources to the local administration and forwarded select information to their superiors in London. In other words, the foundation of the colonial intelligence work in the Gold Coast was not the Security Service but the local Special Branch. MI5's records on Nkrumah and other leaders, based on Special Branch's reporting, could only provide glimpses into that organization. More importantly, while the Security Service sampled from and preserved elements of Special Branch's reporting, their files did not include records of Special Branch's interactions with the administration in Accra. They revealed nothing of how local officials directed Special Branch, what value was placed on the intelligence it produced, and what influence (if any) intelligence reporting had on the administration's approach to the challenges raised by nationalist politics. Understanding the role of intelligence work in the late-colonial empire would require a dedicated focus on Special Branch, something Security Service files alone could simply not provide.

Colonial records would prove equally unhelpful in studying Special Branch. In 2005, when MI5 released its files on Nkrumah, there were no substantive records on Special Branch in colonial archives in either the United Kingdom or Ghana. Special Branch was mentioned in documents reviewing or detailing the larger police force, but these references were consistently vague.[4] There was also no indication that Special Branch's own records had been preserved. As an intelligence institution, partially overseen by the Security Service, Special Branch would have developed their institutional value by building up and maintaining their own catalog of records from which to reference and inform additional information. None of these records seemed to have been preserved, although the Security Service frequently referenced them in their own files.

An explanation for this absence became available in 2007. Following the Security Service's example, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office released a number of security and intelligence files from its Colonial Office holdings. These records were taken from the Intelligence and Security Department, the bureaucratic link between the Colonial Office and the Security Service that was also responsible for overseeing civil security projects, such as Police Special Branch units, throughout the empire. These files, once again, had little concrete information on these individual projects, but they did allude to the fate of their records. For example, from a report prepared on the Gold Coast in 1955, an advisor from the Intelligence and Security Department observed that "it is clear that Special Branch records will have to be 'weeded' before the achievement of full self-government". He mentioned that similar work had been done in India before its independence in 1947 and the experience had shown that "many files will inevitably have to be destroyed" although some could be transferred to the Security Service.[5] It appeared then that the Gold Coast Special Branch had been purposefully erased from the colonial archive and that this had been a general policy for each territory approaching

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[4] *See* Sir Colonel Arthur Young's report of the Gold Coast Police Force made in 1951, Public Records and Archives Department of Ghana [PRAAD] ADM 5/3/84.

[5] TNA CO 1035/95, A.M. McDonald's Report on the Gold Coast.

independence. Whatever research could be done on colonial intelligence networks, it seemed, would have to rely on fragments, and there was simply not enough of them to understand this peculiar aspect of the colonial state.

This situation drastically changed in 2011. In connection to a lawsuit brought against the government, the Foreign and Commonwealth was forced to disclose the existence of an enormous collection of archival records inherited from the Colonial Office. This lawsuit had been launched by a group of elderly Kenyans, all survivors of the British detention program implemented to break the Mau Mau Emergency among the Kikuyu. The plaintiffs claimed that they had suffered brutal atrocities at the hand of colonial officials and while there was no direct evidence in British or Kenyan archives to validate these charges, there was sufficient proof indicating that the records had once existed and been meticulously removed but such documents from Kenya and withheld from the British National Archives. These claims were all proven true and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office acknowledged that colonial archives had indeed been purged of all records that might later "embarrass" Her Majesty's Government. Those files that had not been destroyed in individual territories had been removed to a facility operated by Britain's three chief intelligence agencies at Hanslope Park in Milton Keynes. They had effectively been buried there in direct contravention of the Public Records Act of 1960. This revelation ultimately moved the lawsuit in the plaintiffs' favor and compelled the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to begin the lengthy process of reviewing and declassifying approximately 8,800 records.[6]

Hanslope Park would prove to be the final destination of the many security and intelligence documents that had been "weeded" from colonial territories more than a half century earlier. In the case of the Gold Coast, these disclosed records provided the necessary archival material for studying the operation of intelligence work in the post-war era. They included Special Branch's monthly intelligence reports, security assessment from the administration's Local Intelligence Committee, and the reams of correspondences produced between the various agencies and individuals responsible for state security in the Gold Coast.
In connection with the other security files declassified in the previous decade, it was finally possible to study colonial intelligence networks at every level of local and metropolitan government.

This dissertation is the first study of its kind, directed towards reconstructing the role of intelligence work in late colonial Ghana through these declassified records. These security and intelligence institutions played an unusual role in the terminal years of British rule in the Gold Coast. They were established to protect a colonial system that was already well on its way to obsolescence. Later, as the colony was on the cusp of independence, these organizations were expected to transform into national institutions, providing the Ghanaian state the protections deemed essential for modern governments faced with the uncertainties of the Cold War. Securing colonial rule in the Gold Coast was undeniably a political project that elicited all of the conflicting expectations for the future of British rule and an independent Ghanaian state. In

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[6] Anthony Cary, "Cary Report on release of the colonial administration files," 24 February 2011, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cary-report-on-release-of-the-colonial-administration-files

other words, government intelligence is not just an oddity of the late-colonial state but an avenue for studying the complex processes of decolonization in the Gold Coast.

This approach was the framing adopted by Richard Rathbone, the only scholar to previously study the history of police intelligence in colonial Ghana. In 1966, he located the last surviving cache of Special Branch records. They were in a pitiable state but provided enough context to understand Special Branch's opinion of the colony's nationalist movement and some of the intelligence sources they developed. Rathbone notes that Special Branch could be interpreted as the administration's attempt to maintain a degree of hegemony while the colony increasingly adopted self-rule. The fact that Special Branch remained a secret to elected Ghanaian officials and the blatant antagonism for nationalist politicians that suffused their reports both support this argument. But more importantly, Rathbone argues that police intelligence had the peculiar quality of eliciting the diverging views within the colonial administration over the implementation of self-rule and the process of decolonization generally. In other words, as much as Special Branch could be understood as an attempt to maintain British authority, it also reveals the stark divisions between colonial officials. He wrote, "data of this kind contribute to the destruction of any persistent, simple mythology of monolithic colonial attitudes and establishments. Special Branch were, not least, playing institutional politics within a profoundly divided service."[7]

Though no additional Special Branch papers have been located in Ghana, similar arguments have been made about colonial intelligence institutions in Britain's other African territories. Notably, Philip Murphy has repeatedly examined police intelligence matters in the Central African Federation in the 1950's and 60's. Like Rathbone, Murphy's work highlights how police intelligence became a site of confrontation for the various political questions that faced the federation, especially where the concerns of colonial rule were further complicated by the priorities of a white minority government intent on protecting the political and economic privileges of European settlers. The chief contributions of Murphy's work, particularly evident because of his focus on central Arica, is to show how police intelligence served as an avenue for metropolitan officials to question and challenges the objectives of the Rhodesian state. Local Special Branch units in the Federation, as throughout the empire, were expected to collaborate with the Security Service in London, and metropolitan officials used these channels of security liaison to dispute characterization of local affairs offered by government officials in Salisbury. Officials in the Rhodesian government would likewise influence intelligence reporting in deliberate ways so as to validate their policies to metropolitan critics. As Murphy shows, the value of intelligence history is its ability to reveal political conflicts within the colonial state at its several levels.[8]

This dissertation will replicate this approach to colonial intelligence history but challenge it in several ways. In both Rathbone and Murphy's studies, there was not sufficient documentation to examine the shifting political perspectives informing intelligence work across

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[7] Richard Rathbone, "Police Intelligence in Ghana in the Late 1940s and 1950s," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 21, no. 3 (September 1993): 125.

[8] Philip Murphy, "Creating a Commonwealth Intelligence Culture: The View from Central Africa 1945-1965," *Intelligence and National Security* 17, no. 3 (2002): 131–62; Phillip Murphy, "A Police State? The Nyasaland Emergency and Colonial Intelligence," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 36, no. 4 (December 2010): 765–80.

a protracted period of time. The 'Hanslope Disclosure' however provides Special Branch reports and intelligence documents from the Gold Coast administration between 1948 and 1957. These nine years had distinct phases in the colony's progression towards independence as the expectations of British policymakers increasingly shifted in response to continued nationalist pressure. Those shifts can likewise be traced in security documents, showing how Special Branch and the Gold Coast's intelligence apparatus was expected to change its outlook and operations to match evolving political realities. By examine police intelligence across this extended period, we can better see not only the competing opinions of British officials over the process of decolonization, but we can also see when and how those opinions shifted.

The extended frame of these crucial nine years also allows this research to challenge the confines of colonial history. The final years of British rule in the Gold Coast were dedicated to "Africanising" the state - ensuring that colonial institutions were altered to fit the demands of a modern, independent, and African government. This project increasingly involved Ghanaian statesman and even in the realm of government intelligence, elected ministers collaborated with colonial officials to envision the security structures of the future Ghanian state. By studying police intelligence through to 1957, we therefore examine the foundations of civil security structures in independent Ghana, noting the competing visions between colonial and elected authorities over the function of security organizations in the future state. These discussions provide invaluable insight into Ghana's First Republic were security institutions occupy a pivotal place in debates over the leadership and legacy of Kwame Nkrumah.

Beyond this specific literature on Special Branch and decolonization in the post-war era, there is of course a wide array of research addressing imperialism and intelligence with which this dissertation broadly engages. Of particular note is Christopher Bayly's *Empire and Information*. This landmark study of colonial rule in eighteenth and nineteenth century India demonstrates how intelligence work was fundamental to the establishment of British domination. By co-opting or circumventing existing channels for information-gathering throughout local societies, British authorities were able to magnify their political and military presence to realize an imperial state. These intelligence networks predated the era of European imperialism yet British administrators frequently succeeded in integrating themselves and their own objectives into these networks, controlling the flow of information as a precursor to transmitting political and economic power over the subcontinent.[9] By comparison, colonial authorities in sub-Saharan Africa did not encounter similarly extensive, local intelligence-gathering networks as had existed in India. They also approached the partition of Africa in the late nineteenth century after significant technological advances in areas of firearms, transportation, and communication had produced considerable military imbalances that allowed European rule and "effective occupation" to be imposed without the assistance of intelligence work as a force multiplier. Despite these dramatic differences in context, Bayly's study establishes that intelligence was a fundamental resource for British imperialism, one which was deployed when the authority of the state met considerable opposition.

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[9] C.A. Bayly, Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Whereas Bayly demonstrates that intelligence was vital to the imposition of colonial rule in India during the eighteenth century, other scholars have explored how intelligence programs were infused into colonial statecraft due to increased internal opposition during the twentieth century. This argument is made especially clear by Martin Thomas in *Empires of Intelligence: Security Services and Colonial Disorder after 1914*. This study is focused on colonial territories in North Africa and the Middle East, unified by the common theme of European imperial rule imposed over predominantly Muslim communities. Comparing British and French examples from these regions, Thomas explores how intelligence work was organized and mobilized in colonial contexts that were increasingly recognized as being fundamentally unstable after the First World War. He argues that "colonial sates relied on intelligence gathering to survive" after recognizing "the limits of colonial state power in societies governed through systems of uneasy clientage and elite cooption."[10] These arguments for North Africa and the Middle East find obvious corollaries south of the Sahara where similar crises unfolded, albeit only after the Second World War.

There is also significant number of studies that have examined British intelligence generally through its engagement with the larger empire. This is the guiding focus of Rory Cormac's *Confronting the Colonies: British Intelligence and Counterinsurgency*, Calder Walton's *Empire of Secrets: Intelligence, Cold War, and the Twilight of Empire*, and even the Security Service's centennial history, *Defend the Realm: the Authorized History of MI5,* by Christopher Andrew. Each of these studies considers how British intelligence organizations adapted to the demands of the empire, both shaping and in turn being shaped by colonial affairs. More importantly to the direction of this dissertation and the literature already discussed, they demonstrate how British authorities clung to intelligence work as a means of preserving the UK's increasingly fragile position as a world power. With the precipitous decline of her political and economic authority during the contest of the Cold War, intelligence work remained one area where the UK believed they held significant footing alongside either superpower. These studies provide invaluable context for understanding the operation of British intelligence at the metropolitan level and they in turn show how the retreat to intelligence work in colonial territories was part of a larger strategy employed by the UK to meet its particular crises during the Cold War.[11]

These several studies provide invaluable context for the research at hand and likewise demonstrate some of the unique qualities of the Gold Coast as a case study for colonial intelligence. Most scholarship on the intersection of colonial rule and intelligence work has been centered on large-scale crises and insurgencies. In these examples, intelligence work had a clear role in supporting military operations and shoring up the foundations of an increasingly challenged colonial state. The Gold Coast is peculiar in this regard because it did not witness a comparable, protracted crises as examined by other scholars. Outside of the three days of rioting

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[10] Thomas, Martin, Empires of Intelligence: Security Services and Colonial Disorder after 1914 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), pp. 294 -5.

[11] Andrew, Christopher, Defend the Realm: The Authorized History of MI5 (New York: Vintage Books, 2009); Rory Cormac, Confronting the Colonies: British Intelligence and Counterinsurgency (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Calder Walton, Empire of Secrets: British Intelligence, the Cold War, and the Twilight of Empire (London: Harper Press, 2013).

in February 1948, the anti-colonial movement in the Gold Coast hardly approached the scale of insurgency. There were protests, strikes, and national political movements, but the colonial question in the Gold Coast never became a military matter. Furthermore, the intelligence projects that have occupied previous scholars were directly solely to the maintenance of colonial rule. The Gold Coast, on the other hand, operated a large-scale intelligence program for nearly six years after it had been accepted by British policymakers that colonial rule was at its end. The Gold Coast Police Special Branch thus had a far more complicated mandate necessitated by the process of decolonization. It had to secure vestiges of colonial authority, protect a transitional government, prepare resources for an independent state, and safeguard Britain's interests in post-colonial liaison with the Republic of Ghana. These complex and often competing objectives make the Gold Coast a singular example that can highlight the intricacies of intelligence work against the fraught processes of decolonization.

This dissertation examines these intricacies by approaching colonial intelligence and civil security in the Gold Coast in four distinct eras, each the subject of a singular chapter. The first chapter begins in 1941 and examines the intelligence and civil security resources developed in British West Africa during the Second World War. These resources provided the foundation for police intelligence structures in the Gold Coast between 1948 and 1957. This wartime portrait reveals the priorities of local officials towards intelligence matters when colonial rule appeared secure and the threat of external subversion was believed to be negligible or non-existent. In other words, this chapter provides a baseline for British perceptions of intelligence work in West Africa before the fundamental challenges created by post-war nationalism. The second chapter continues the narrative from 1948 to 1951, covering the implementation of Special Branch in the Gold Coast between the two most significant events in its progress toward decolonization - the Accra Riots and the first Legislative Assembly Elections. The former was the first major challenge to colonial rule in the post-war era that succeeded both in questioning the future of the British empire in West Africa and launching the Gold Coast's intelligence program. The latter was the first step toward implementing self-rule in the Gold Coast. This chapter utilizes Special Branch to examine how British perceptions of the nationalist movement changed during these three years, allowing for the acceptance of colonial rule's end. The questions of this era are continued in the third chapter, that follows the history of Special Branch through to the second Legislative Assembly Elections of 1954. The fourth and final chapter considers Special Branch on the eve of Ghanaian independence. In the three years before 1957, intelligence work was chiefly focused on the future needs of the Ghanaian state and Britain's post-colonial interests. These years would provide the lasting legacy of intelligence work under British rule and establish the foundation for civil security institutions in independent Ghana.

Chapter One: Wartime Intelligence in British West Africa, 1941-1945

The Second World War had a profound impact on British Intelligence. Intelligence work had an equally profound impact on the war itself. Today it is difficult to find a single history of the Second World War that does not factor the contributions of British Intelligence into the Allied victory. Whether praising the ingenuity of British codebreakers in solving the Enigma cypher, the intricate counter-intelligence campaign that preceded the Normandy invasion, or Britain's success in turning Axis' agents as part of the Double Cross System - Intelligence enjoys a privileged position in popular and scholarly narrative of the Second World War.[1]

Beyond these narratives, the Second World War also sparked civil security operations throughout the British Empire. The British Security Service was tasked with handling all security matters within three miles of British borders, whether they belonged to the British isles or one of the many colonial domains in the larger empire. This responsibility was largely ignored throughout the empire however. For the majority of the twentieth century, the colonies were not closely aligned to the central security of Great Britain, nor did they face extraordinary threats that seemed to warrant the attention of the Security Service. The colonies and their security could best be left to colonial officials The Second World War, however briefly, challenged that passive indifference.

Axis victories and staggering Allied defeats in 1940 and 1941 made the empire critical to the defense of the United Kingdom and its hope for winning the war. In particular, Britain's four West African colonies - the Gambia, Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast, and Nigeria - supplied critical wartime resources and continued access to the Middle East and Pacific after the Axis powers had secured the Mediterranean. The newfound, strategic relevance of West Africa meant that the Security Service began to fulfill responsibility of securing this corner of the empire. These wartime efforts laid the foundations for civil security and intelligence structures in West Africa that persisted through the final decade of colonial rule. Thus, to understand how these government intelligence influenced the end of empire or the independent African states that followed, we must begin with the Second World War.

West Africa's strategic value fluctuated in direct opposition to Allied strength in Europe. As the tide on the continent turned, Britain came to rely on West Africa to balance its losses. This shift began and accelerated precipitously in the summer of 1940. The first key event was the Fall of France in June. Germany's blitzkrieg campaign had felled the largest standing army in Europe in only six weeks, leaving Britain vulnerable across the channel and limiting its access to Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Emboldened by Germany's stunning success, Italy joined the Axis powers a few days later. Their opening salvo in the war consisted of nine air

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[1] Ben McIntyre has been especially prolific in this regard. *See* Agent Zigzag: The True Wartime Story of Eddie Chapman: Lover, Betrayer, Hero, Spy (London: Bloomsbury, 2007); Operation Mincement: The True Spy Story That Changed the Course of World War II (London: Bloomsbury, 2010); Double Cross: The True Story of the D-Day Spies (New York: Crown, 2012); Rogue Heroes: The History of the SAS, Britain's Secret Special Forces Unit That Sabotaged the Nazis and Changed the Nature of War (New York: Crown, 2016).

raids on the island of Malta, a British stronghold that served as headquarters for her Mediterranean fleet. Without Malta, Great Britain lost a vital link across the Mediterranean and the men and war material she had deployed across the globe.

Together, the Fall of France and the closing of the Mediterranean severely threatened Great Britain's chances at surviving the Second World War. They also awakened colonial authorities to the proximity of the war. From its outset in September 1939 until the Summer of 1940, the war had minimally disrupted affairs in the four West African colonies. Wartime rationing had been implemented, exports of certain minerals had been increased, and recruitment of African soldiers was underway, yet for nearly its first year the Second World War changed little for administrators in their daily affairs and concerns. The war simply seemed too distant. The Fall of France dispelled that illusion overnight. France was now under a German-controlled government and it was unclear whether the French colonies of West and Equatorial Africa would follow the Vichy government, potentially carrying Europe's war into its colonies, or demonstrate their solidarity with the Free French Forces.[2] The only reasonable recourse to this disquieting uncertainty was to presume the worst. In the concise words of a Security Service officer, "the four colonies are all separated from each other by Vichy territory which is, for all practical purpose, precisely the same as enemy territory."[3] British officials in West Africa could no longer ignore the war.

These fears were compounded by the bizarre logic behind colonial borders in West Africa. The product of political bartering at the Berlin Conference in 1884, these borders reflected Britain and France's ambitious economic and political aspirations against one another. They did not represent reasonable political, social, or even geographic boundaries that either power could effectively monitor, let alone control. This bizarre logic was best reflected in the Gambia, where Great Britain claimed a narrow stretch of land on either side of the Gambia River. The resulting colony was nearly three hundred miles long, little more than twenty miles wide, and entirely surrounded by the French colony of Senegal. While more balanced in their size and scale, the other West African colonies were similarly surrounded by French territory. Before the Fall of France, there had been little reason to control these borders or for colonial administrations to have significant presence outside of the coastal centers of each colony. We know now that French officials in the colonies were reticent to support the German cause and equally confused by the political uncertainty created by the fall of France. Yet even the possibility of invasion was enough to disrupt British administrators in Africa to the reality that the entire Empire was at war.

Along with creating the near-threat of invasion, the summer of 1940 also saw West Africa achieve an unexpected strategic value to Britain's larger war aims. With the Axis powers severely curtailing the movement of ships and aircraft across the Mediterranean, Great Britain needed alternative routes to the Middle East and Indian Ocean. The only reasonable solution was for British vessels from the North Atlantic to circumnavigate the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa and for Allied aircraft to relay across the Sahara. In addition to linking the North

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[2] The armistice treaty between France and Germany in 1940 left the fate of the colonies undecided, meaning that local French officials were often left to navigate on their own, the competing futures of the French state. Martin Thomas, *The French Empire at War, 1940-1945* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).

[3] TNA KV 4/311, 172y, "West African Security Service" by J.R. Stopford, 8 September 1942.

Atlantic to the Indian ocean, the West African colonies also afforded critical connections to North America. Despite her neutrality at the outbreak of the war, by the summer of 1940, the United States had firmly placed herself in support of the Allies as the "Arsenal of Democracy". American supplies including aircraft, weaponry, and other equipment were sent across the Atlantic and leased to Allied forces in Europe. By the summer of 1940, the North Atlantic was a dangerous option for vessels carrying these supplies and American war-aid was progressively shipped to West Africa, via Brazil.[4] And later, as the UK lost valuable resources from colonies in the Indian Ocean, West Africa provided the only secure source for minerals critical to wartime manufacturing including tin, bauxite, and manganese. Ironically, the very same sea routes and African economies that had propelled the British Empire to world dominance in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had become instrumental to its survival during the Second World War.

These conditions also made West Africa a new target for Axis intelligence, a point not missed by the Security Service. According to R.D. Gibbs, a senior officer in MI5's OS or 'overseas department', "The flow of American supplies to the Middle East and the accompanying flow of aircraft, personnel and weapons of war, are revealed to us as occupying one of the foremost places in the enemies' grading of intelligence required."[5] No doubt Germany intended to disrupt shipping in the South Atlantic and limit America's capacity to support Great Britain. Gibbs continued, "what was a relatively unimpressive area those eleven months ago, [West Africa] is now, jointly with the Brazilian shoulder, the principal potential field for espionage, and perhaps sabotage, directed against America's war contribution to the Middle Eastern theatre".[6] While Germany and Britain would not wage war in West Africa, the region instead became an intelligence battlefield where each success or failure could determine the fate of physical battles elsewhere.

West Africa's newfound strategic value demanded immediate improvements in its security protocols, structures, and resources. This was answered by a variety of initiatives undertaken by the Admiralty, the Royal Air Force, the Armed Forces, and the Colonial Office. However, the ultimate burden for the security of the colonies still rested with the Security Service, for which they were entirely unprepared. At the outbreak of the war, the Security Service had a single officer posted in only six overseas territories - Gibraltar, Malta, Cairo, Aden, Singapore and Hong Kong. Their focus was clearly towards the Middle East and Asia, and these six locations corresponded with British naval or army bases. The Security Service was not concerned with local affairs within these territories; their officers were only stationed overseas to protect members of the armed services and their equipment.[7] In other imperial domains, MI5 had found creative solutions that meant they had minimal (approaching non-existent) presence in the colonies while still executing their mandate to secure the empire

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[4] For a discussion of this trade from the perspective of the western Atlantic, see Alexandre Busko Valim, Brazil, the United States, and the Good Neighbor Policy: The Triumph of Persuasion during World War II (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2019).

[5] TNA KV 4/310, 137c, "West African Security", 17 July 1942.

[6] Ibid.

[7] One exception to this characterization would be India. Since the First World War, the Security Service maintained regular contact and officers in Delhi; the unit was known as the Delhi Branch (DIB). *see* Andrew's, Defend the Realm.

In place of direct representation, the Security Service relied on a system of 'honouray correspondents' to fulfill their obligations to civil security throughout the Empire. The system relied on local officials in each colony or dominion to select an officer to coordinate with the Security Service in London. Through these correspondents, MI5 could provide security recommendations and forward intelligence material while in turn receiving reports on local matters. It was a system of security consulting where local administrations could receive as much or as little direction as they required and the Security Service could focus their efforts elsewhere. Even into the first months of the Second World War, most colonial administrations in West Africa made little use of their honorary correspondents. For example, in the case of the four West African colonies, three of the honorary correspondents were also serving as their colony's Commissioner of Police. The demands of a colonial police force, often critically underfunded and understaffed, would be enough work for any officer, let alone the added duties of coordinating with the Security Service. The exception to this arrangement was the Gambia, however their selection of honorary correspondent was even less reasonable. The governor assumed the responsibility himself. This system had saved precious resources before the war when the Security Service's budget had been austerely starved by Whitehall. In fact, the responsibility of communicating with the entirety of the Empire's honourary correspondents only required the attention of a single officer, part-time.[8] During the war, however, this frugal system meant that Security Service had no knowledge of West Africa and local officials had no experience or interest in supporting their work. Both would prove disastrous to wartime initiatives.

For ten ineffective months, MI5 tried to revitalize the 'honourary correspondent' system in West Africa. If the correspondents had not been active before, it was hope that the war might perhaps motivate them to implement civil security precautions recommended by the Security Service. Despite the pressure of the war, this system consistently failed to improve local security. In the instances where the correspondent was active to their responsibility, they had other, immediate concerns that often took priority - such as running the colony's police force. If the correspondents somehow found the means to respond to the Security Service requests, they were met by the apathy of local administrators who were unwilling to loosen the government's purse strings for these new initiatives. Finally in March 1941, Security Service realized they would need to assign their own officer to directly oversee security in West Africa. They hoped a full-time representative, titled as a Defence Security Officer [DSO], might be more effective in "[stirring] up the Civil Authorities, as they are ultimately responsible' for security in the region.[9] The first of these officers, Lt. Col. H.M. Haigh-Wood, was posted to Lagos in August 1941.

DSO Haigh-Wood's instructions from the Director General of the Security Service were simple and staggering. His instructions read:

> As the representative of the Security Service, you should understand that your presence in the West African zone is not intended in any way to interfere with the respective responsibility of the various executive authorities with regard to security in each of the above mentioned colonies; but you are charged with the task of providing information,

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[8] TNA KV 4/18, "Report on the Operation of Overseas Control".
[9] TNA KV4/308, from H.J. Allen to Lt Col R.A.R. Neville, 10 March 1941.

> together with reasoned advice whenever possible in each case as your assistance is invited, or whenever you consider that improvement or strengthening of any particular aspect of security is desirable.[10]

In short, Haigh-Wood's task was to supervise and advise security work throughout the region; he had no direct authority or resources to implement any security procedures of his own accord. Despite this enormous limitation, the Security Service expected him to cover an impossible mandate. Haigh-Wood was instructed to ensure that each of the West African colonies provisions for the control of all ports, monitoring of illicit entries into the territories, detection of enemy spies deployed by parachute, protection of important places (aerodrome, munitions dumps, factories, and mines), safeguarding against enemy agents gathering information on Allied shipping and aircraft, censorship of foreign correspondence, monitoring of illicit wireless transmissions, and control of aliens. If the impossibility of Haigh-Wood's assignment was not immediately obvious, it must be remembered that he was expected as a single officer without executive authority or supporting staff to instigate or advise all of these security programs in an area more than five times the size of Great Britain and divided between four unique administrations. Either the Director General placed extraordinary confidence in Haigh-Wood's capabilities or the preceding ten months had disarmed the alarmist fears of Axis subversion in West Africa.

Haigh-Wood began his assignment as DSO by arranging a tour of all four colonies. Haigh-Wood kept the aims and itinerary of his tour limited, intending only to meet each territory's governor and chief of police, and to accomplish preliminary observations of strategically relevant locations - ports, aerodromes, and military bases. Even with these limited objectives, it would still take four months for the him to complete his tour. As Haigh-Wood would discover, travel in West Africa was not easy and the war had done nothing to improve conditions. Travel by boat was the only regular means of transport but was counterproductively slow. Air travel was faster but near impossible to secure. In the colorful words of one of Haigh-Wood's colleagues, R.D. Gibbs, who would attempt a similar tour in 1942, the "only real chance [of securing a flight] is by making love to R.A.F. station commanders but the hazards and discomfort can be very high and the ultimate destination uncertain."[11] The logistics of his tour introduced Haigh-Wood to the inescapable difficulties that would define his entire posting to the region, including the apathy of civil authorities, lack of infrastructure, and the enormity of his tasks relative to his limited resources.

While Haigh-Wood was still completing his tour, British intelligence acquired its first concrete evidence of German espionage in West Africa. This evidence came from MI5's sister-organization, the Secret Intelligence Service [SIS]. SIS had been working to penetrate German intelligence operations in Lisbon and had successfully positioned one of their own agents to be recruited by an Abwehr officer, a Mr. Egetmeyer, in October 1941. Egetmeyer's assignment had been to recruit and deploy agents from Portugal to west and southern Africa, allowing German

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[10] TNA KV4/309, 54a "Security in West Africa".

[11] Gibbs makes no attempt in the remainder of his report to clarify if the "discomforts and hazards" referred to the flights themselves or the proposition of seducing RAF personnel. TNA KV 4/311, 222a, R.D. Gibbs to David Petrie, 6 November 1942.

intelligence to begin monitoring Allied shipping along Africa's Atlantic coast. Inadvertently, SIS had stumbled upon Germany's West African intelligence network at the beginning of its construction.

Soon after discovering Egetmeyer's role in German intelligence, SIS learned that he had recently recruited a Belgian businessman, Roger Henri Marie Lannoy, to oversee all of Germany's intelligence resources in West Africa. Lannoy had departed for the Congo aboard a Portuguese vessel not three weeks earlier. SIS immediately informed the Security Service and the admiralty, requesting the British Navy to intercept Lannoy and take him into custody. Within hours, the British Navy stopped the SS Angola, removed Lannoy and a second Belgian passenger, and delivered them to colonial authorities in Freetown to await MI5's recommendation.[12]

Lannoy's interception was a stunning success for British intelligence. They had acquired evidence that Germany was indeed directing espionage in West Africa, established a source that could continue to surveil these efforts from Lisbon, and intercepted the agent intended to oversee Axis resources in the region. While this one success would not end the threat to West Africa, it was a stunning example that could potentially motivate civil authorities to seriously consider Haigh-Wood's posting and implement his recommendations. In its immediate impact, however, the Lannoy affair demonstrated how relatively simple security matters were unexpectedly difficult to resolve in colonial contexts and would instead place a greater wedge between West African officials and the Security Service.

The Lannoy affair quickly became a diplomatic and legal quandary. Lannoy and the second Belgian removed by the British Navy had not been charged when deposited in Sierra Leone. Yet, the Security Service's brief instructions had made clear that both men were to be detained with the assurance that future instructions would direct the governor and chief of police how to handle their detention. Yet when the Security Service called on the admiralty to intervene, thus beginning this entire fair, they had not yet confronted each problem this action would create. First, they had to coordinate with SIS to determine the credibility of the evidence that Lannoy truly was a German agent and if that evidence could be used without threatening their new source in Lisbon. Second, they had to decide where Lannoy would be ultimately detained and interrogated, whether in Nigeria (under Haigh-Wood's direction) or the UK. Third, they had to establish the legality for these extraordinary actions, including Lannoy's removal from a neutral vessel, his detention without charge, and his eventual expulsion from Sierra Leone to be detained and interrogated by British officials elsewhere. While the Security Service was solving these questions with SIS and the Home Office, they failed to communicate with authorities in Sierra Leone, despite the latter's repeated and anxious telegrams requesting instruction of any kind of instruction.

The Security Service's silence placed the governor of Sierra Leone in a difficult position. Shortly after their removal from the SS Angola, the Belgian consul in Freetown learned that two of his countrymen were being detained without charge by local authorities. When pressed by the Consul to account for this situation, authorities in Freetown were unable to explain, let alone

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[12] TNA KV 2/2116, 5a, Paraphrase of Telegram from Commissioner of Police, Sierra Leone, 9 November 1941.

justify, the situation.[13] This affair equally peeved the Colonial Office in London, who were annoyed that SIS and the Security Service had created this situation without consulting them first and were now seemingly abandoning colonial authorities to deal with the diplomatic consequences.[14] Finally, after two weeks with no reply, the Security Service telegrammed the Commissioner of Police in Sierra Leone to have both Belgians placed on the first available ship to the United Kingdom.[15] Local officials were relieved to have the matter out of their hands but the Security Service had done irreconcilable damage to their reputation with colonial authorities. They may have caught a spy but had forced civil authorities in Sierra Leone to deal with the immediate consequences.

By all accounts, the Lannoy affair is a minor episode in the drama of wartime espionage, even in the limited field of West Africa. Lannoy's career as a spy ended before it even began and he in turn did not provide any information to British authorities, maintaining his innocence and ignorance for the entirety of his interrogation, though these protestations did not stop British authorities from ensuring he spent the rest of the war in prison.[16] Yet Lannoy's detection and detention highlights the shortcomings of MI5's organization in West Africa. To begin, MI5 was not responsible for acquiring the intelligence that led to Lannoy's capture. DSO Haigh-Wood oversaw all four colonies and was prohibited from developing his own intelligence resources. It was beyond impossible for the Security Service to ever make comparable discoveries. Instead, the security of West Africa would have to rely on the support of intelligence resources elsewhere. The Lannoy affair also highlighted the shortcoming of assigning a single officer to the entire region of West Africa. Even if Haigh-Wood had not been engaged with his regional tour, his regular posting was in Lagos. This meant that the practical security procedures that could have benefitted from Haigh-Wood's oversight and direction, including Lannoy's removal from the SS Angola, the search of his bunk and belongings, and his interrogation were left to inexperienced military and colonial officials. Posting a single DSO to the entire region would never allow for valuable intelligence material or security advising.

If the Lannoy affair questioned the structure behind security work in West Africa, it did succeeded in proving such a structure was necessary. It was in this context that DSO Haigh-Wood completed his tour of the four colonies and submitted his recommendations for regional security. Haigh-Wood arrived at the obvious conclusion that the conditions of West Africa and the limited reach of colonial governments meant that conventional security practices would not work there. In particular, Haigh-Wood argued that preventative security measures would be impossible to implement in West Africa. Through a combination of underfunding and understaffing, Haigh-Wood argued the four colonies would never succeed in contravening an act of espionage or sabotage that was already set into motion. The most obvious example being the control of colonial borders. The colonies at no time exercised complete control over their distant

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[13] Ibid, 8a, telegram from Commissioner of Police, 15 November 1941, *and* 17a, telegram from Commissioner of Police, 19 November 1941.
[14] Ibid, 26a, internal memorandum from Sir Arthur Jelf (MI5), 26 Nov 1941
[15] Ibid, 23a, to Commissioner of Police Sierra Leone, 24 November 1941.
[16] Ibid, 72b, to D.G. White, 17 April 1942. The remainder of Lannoy's considerable file consists of censored letters to his wife and family, providing a pitiful portrait of a man fruitlessly raving against the perceived injustices of the world.

borders. Even after the fall of France, when these boundaries potentially represented enemy territory, there was still nothing British officials could do to control the hundreds of miles of bush they represented. In this and countless other ways, the colonies could never be fully secured against foreign espionage.

In this context, Haigh-Wood argued the only reasonable approach to securing West Africa laid in effective intelligence measures. Cheaper to implement and broader in their scope, intelligence measures could allow British officials to detect and preempt German activity. If they could not stop German agents from entering the colonies, Haigh-Wood reasoned, they could identify and arrest them before they accomplished any real harm. Haigh-Wood proposed that West Africa required a "first class officer experienced in C/E [Counter-Espionage] work stationed in each colony."[17] They should be fluent in French, given convincing cover stories that furnished them access to commercial (i.e. expatriate) communities, and finally operate in complete independence from the civil authorities, with even local governors being uninformed of their identities and assignment.

Anticipating the resistance to implementing this proposal, Haigh-Wood offered a dramatic alternative for West Africa's security. Without a counter-espionage network, the only remaining solution would be to "intern all aliens who might conceivably be working for the enemy".[18] Non-British residents, both Allied and not, who raised a shred of suspicion, even in the absence of evidence, should be immediately interned. Haigh-Wood defended this radical proposal with several unfounded suspicions garnered in his brief tour. Haigh-Wood was first convinced that there Axis agents already at work in each of the colonies. He contended there was at least "one good European agent" in Freetown (given the importance of the port to Allied shipping), and likely others for the same reason in Accra, Takoradi, Lagos, and Bathurst. Haigh-Wood further defended his proposal with a critical dismissal of the colonial police forces. He wrote, "the Police Forces have reasonably efficient C.I.D.'s [Criminal Investigation Departments] to deal with Africans, but are almost helpless when it comes to Europeans." He elaborated, "[the fact] that there is no evidence of nefarious activities against any of these people [expatriates] may be because the colonial police forces, composed of Africans, with a few white officers, are incapable of any proper investigation or observation of Europeans."[19] Among the colonies' countless handicaps, Haigh-Wood numbered African police officers.

Haigh-Wood submitted his report directly to the Director General of the Security Service, Sir David Petrie, who received his recommendations with something approaching embarrassment. He forwarded the report to several branch directors for their opinions before composing his reply. Apologetically, he told them that "I do not wish to 'mark down' anything Colonel Haigh-Wood has written, as he is evidently making an earnest attempt to see his problems aright," yet the report remained painfully unreasonable. Both of Haigh-Wood's proposals, a large-scale, counter espionage organization or blanket internment would yield larger problems than he was asked to address. The Security Service could not justify the men or resources for Haigh-Wood's first proposal, while the second would scuttle Britain's diplomatic relations to say nothing of the colony's commercial industries. Rather than an astute security

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[17] TNA PRO KV 4/310, 107B, 27 Dec 1941.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid.

assessment, the Director General and the branch directors interpreted Haigh-Wood's report as evidence of an earnest officer overwhelmed by the enormity of his assignment. The discussion at MI5 headquarters shifted towards identifying a suitable assistant officer that could assist the DSO.[20]

In the following months, the proposition of posting an Assistant Defense Security Officer [ADSO] to West Africa defined most communications between Haigh-Wood and the Security Service. Even after an ADSO was appointed and sent to Lagos in May 1942, Haigh-Wood was adamant that the Security Service still needed an additional officer to cover Freetown alone.[21] In a telegram to a fellow MI5 officer in July 1942, Haigh-Wood wrote, "You will have seen from other letters of mine that I am again screaming for a man at Freetown."[22] On the same issue with the Director General, Haigh-Wood struck a more controlled tone: "I make no apologies for returning to the charge on the vexed question of personnel for this office. Nevertheless I hope you will not think me tiresome."[23] Specialized coverage for Freetown would pester Haigh-Wood for the entirety of his posting and would not be realized for him or any DSO who followed in West Africa. Their work was to advise civil authorities in the entire region and as long as colonial governments coordinated in Lagos (due to the West African Governor's Conference), MI5 officers would be posted to Nigeria, regardless of the special importance and vulnerability of Freetown.

Aside from these additional officers, Haigh-Wood's initial report would have little lasting impact on the security of West Africa. The Security Service's reticence to his proposals would ultimately prove prescient as Haigh-Wood's arguments rested on baseless suspicion. Every recommendation in the his report operated from a single assumption - that the colonies were already targets of enemy espionage directed by European agents operating within the territories. The case of Roger Lannoy questioned these assumption at the same time Haigh-Wood was formulating his recommendations. SIS's intelligence from Lisbon suggested that Lannoy was the first German agent to undertake the task of overseeing their West African operations; he was not replacing an agent already in the field. British Intelligence further knew that the German officer who had recruited Lannoy, Egetmeyer, had only recently begun recruiting agents for work in Africa. All of these facts pointed to the conclusion that German resources in West Africa were nascent and incomplete, a great distance from having a skilled, European provocateur in place at every port city. Finally, there was the fact that Lannoy was directed to establish himself in the Belgian Congo. As future discoveries would demonstrate, German intelligence established their agents in Belgian or Portuguese territories. The chief target remained Allied shipping but the situation in West African ports and shipping lanes did not make this information difficult to acquire.

Rather than infiltrate British territory, German intelligence relied on agents aboard Portuguese vessels and wireless operators in Portuguese Guinea to collect the information they sought from British West Africa. In 1942, the Secret Intelligence Service had detected and deciphered coded, wireless communications between Lisbon and Portuguese Guinea. Seven of

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[20] Ibid, 100a, Minutes 21 - 23.
[21] TNA KV 4/18, "Report on the Operation of Overseas Control", Appendix C.
[22] TNA KV 4/310, 137b, from Col. Haigh-Wood to Sir Arthur Jelf, 14 July 1942.
[23] Ibid, 141a, from Haigh-Wood to Petrie, 10 July 1942.

these transmissions had been intercepted between February and May 1942, and even from this brief sample, British Intelligence was able to identify the objective of their German counterparts and trace the network they were using. Each of the seven reports dealt with the affairs of Freetown Harbor, noting the arrival and departure of Allied vessels, their cargo, and the composition (if any) of a protective convoy. As British intelligence expected, Germany's concern in West Africa rested on its relation to the Battle in the Atlantic; in other words, the colonies themselves were negligible to the battleships and supplies they routed to other theaters of the war. These seven reports also clearly indicated this intelligence was acquired by sailors aboard neutral vessels that traveled between Freetown and Bissau. The wireless operators themselves demonstrated this fact. Their reports on Freetown Harbor were often out of date, to the chagrin of German intelligence. The average delays was usually three or four days, though one report was over two weeks old by the time it was relayed by wireless. The operators in Portuguese Guinea explained the cause of this out-of-date intelligence by pointing to delayed ships that kept their informants' observations from reaching them in a timely manner.[24] Ironically, the irregularities of West African shipping meant that German Intelligence needed little effort to acquire the information they sought but those same irregularities meant they could not dependably receive that information within a useful window of time.[25]

In addition to these Portuguese sailors and wireless operators, German Intelligence did attempt to place a number of European agents in West Africa. Yet none of these agents were deployed to British territory. Three captured agents who were subsequently held at Camp 020 (the wartime prison used to interrogate and turn German operatives) confessed they had been expected to operate from the Belgian Congo. According to their own confessions, they had been assigned to gather information on commercial and economic matters. To the Security Service, this amounted to an "intense German interest" in the larger region but suggested the British colonies themselves were not being targeted.[26] There was no evidence that the Abwehr intended any degree of sabotage or clandestine warfare, save for the peculiar story of Jean Marie Lallart.

On January 22nd, 1943, a sentry at Port Etienne in Mauritania witnessed a most peculiar parade. By the dim light of morning, three exhausted men trudged out of the desert. One was missing his boots and trousers, clad only in a shirt and holstered revolver. The others were in less pitiable garb. All were suffering from the early stages of dehydration. The leader of this sad group explained to the sentry that he was a Frenchman and a spy, that his two companions were Germans and recent castaways of a U-boat, and that he formally surrendered himself to the custody of French officials. He gave his name as Jean Marie Lallart. For the next twenty-four hours Lallart enjoyed the full hospitality of the commanding officer in Port Etienne, while his

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[24] TNA KV 3/421, 24k, from HLA Hart to Gibbs, 20 May 1942.

[25] Additional British Intelligence sources in Spain and Portugal were able to obtain further proof that crew aboard neutral vessels operating from Spain and Portugal were used to collect intelligence on Allied Shipping on Africa's Atlantic coast, though it seems these reports were submitted directly to contacts in Iberia, rather than radioed. *See* TNA KV 3/421, 39, "Summary of Information re West Africa, from most secret sources", 21 August 1942. There was also an unsubstantiated report from a Danish refugee that German agents operated in Cape Palms, Liberia, that was reviewed by the Security Service since he claimed these Germans used African intermediaries to send and receive telegrams from Freetown. *See* TNA KV 3/421, "From SIS returning note on information supplied by MUUS . . .", 9 May 1942.

[26] TNA KV 3/421, 40, to Gibbs from Day, 26 August 1942.

German companions were placed into cells. The following morning, directives arrived from more cautious officials in Dakar who ordered that Lallart be immediately detained. He was indeed a spy but not for France.

By his own confession, Lallart had been landed in Mauritania under orders of German intelligence. He had been told that he would be "an instructor and instigator for Arab radicals", providing the expertise to spark an insurgency campaign against the Allies in North Africa. Lallart was not given any of the specifics of this operation, only the assurance that other German agents posted in Atar (a town in Northwestern Mauritania) would collect him at the shore and provide further directions. To his French interrogators, Lallart claimed that it was his intention from the start to defect to the Free French immediately upon his arrival on the continent. The two Germans who accompanied him were merely the product of a maritime accident. When attempting to transport Lallart from the German submarine to the shore, their dingy had been capsized by unexpectedly difficult surf, throwing Lallart and the three other Germans aboard into the waves. One of the Germans drowned and the three survivors realized they could not return to the u-boat and would likely not survive long on the desert shore. Lallart had been provided with 5 litres of water to await the arrival of the Atar agents. Yet the day before their failed landing, the submarine had received an uncoded message, in French, from Atar, instructing the commander to delay putting Lallart ashore by "11J". Lallart told his interrogators that the commander did not understand French and had misinterpreted the message to mean delaying Lallart's departure by a few hours until 11 p.m. when the proper interpretation likely was to delay by *onze journée*, eleven days. Relaying this predicament to the surviving sailors, Lallart convinced them that their only recourse was to march directly to the nearest port. Adding to the German's fears of death by thirst and capitalizing on their ignorance of North Africa, Lallart added that they were at risk of "marauding Arabs who would soon make short work of them". The sailors promptly submitted to his leadership and Lallart did not correct their assumption that the Vichy government controlled Mauritania.[27] Thirty-six hours later, the three had arrived at Port Etienne.

Lallart spent the following months under French detention, repeatedly being interrogated to discover any discrepancies in his accounts. French authorities notified the British government that they had acquired a German agent and soon British Intelligence was negotiating to have their own opportunity to interview and interrogate this unsuccessful spy or sincere defector. In April 1943, Lallart was handed over to British officials and taken to Camp 020. British intelligence was given one month to interrogate him before he was returned to French officials, when Lallart would either be executed as a traitor or celebrated as a patriot.

Lallart was an intriguing figure for British Intelligence because he was an entirely different quality of enemy agent. Lallart's confessed assignment for German Intelligence represented the far extreme of espionage - to compromise the British Empire in North Africa by sparking colonial insurgency. No other German agent known to British intelligence had even approached such activities. Individuals like Lannoy or the network operating from Portuguese Guinea focused on the collection of intelligence. There had been no known effort by the Germans to foment indigenous rebellion anywhere in Africa. If British officials suspected foreign espionage in the colonies, Lallart's assignment would have been the sum of their fears.

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[27] TNA KV 2/1462, 45, "Camp 020 Report on the case of Lallart", 10 May 1943.

Lallart's only benefit was his professed willingness to share everything he had observed about his handlers, their procedures, and the larger German intelligence network. In the end, Lallart's interrogators developed an honest admiration for him. They wrote of his testimony, noting that while he feared reprisals by the Germans against his family for his betrayal, "withal he tells his story with candour. It is his only chance, for unless he is believed, he will be shot by the French. When he left he had no illusions and, oddly, no bitterness. He told me he had acted for France and that his fiancee would wish it so. Lastly if the truth of his case remains undetermined, at least one thing is certain, LALLART has not been without courage at this establishment."[28] Lallart was returned to Free French officials on 2 May, 1943.

The Lallart affair demonstrates the extreme of what German intelligence was capable of in their African designs; for the same reason, he also represented the deepest fears of local security officials in West Africa. Yet, it is important to note that Lallart was not intended for West Africa. Despite the vague hints provided by his German handlers, it is almost certain that Lallart was intended to disrupt Allied control of North Africa. In November 1942, a combined force of Anglo-American troops invaded Morocco and Algeria as part of Operation Torch. French resistance was unprepared for such an invasion and hampered by the fact that numerous French officers and soldiers favored the Allies over the Vichy Government by that time. The operation secured control of the South-Western Mediterranean and would later allow for Allied invasions of Southern Europe in 1943. Given the timing of his training and deployment, coupled with the suggestion that his efforts would protect French territory against British aggression, there is little doubt Lallart would have been smuggled out of West Africa, through Atar, into either Morocco or Algeria. By comparison, we can see the strategic value of West Africa, relative to North Africa to Germany at this time. Though some in the security Service feared that men like Lallart had infiltrated Sierra Leone and the other West African colonies, it seems unlikely Germany would have spared the effort or attention. Finally, as the DSO's repeated warnings demonstrated - if Germany truly had any designs for sabotage in any of the West African colonies or aerodromes, there was little to impede their success. West Africa then was only a secondary intelligence target for the Axis powers, meriting little investment and no immediate threat to colonial stability.

As the collective portrait of Axis clandestine activities in West Africa demonstrates, the moderate concern of the Security Service in the region was both appropriate and prescient. Despite Haigh-Wood's concerns, his superiors in London did not support radical measures intended to protect the four colonies from a dramatic Axis threat. Instead, the Security Service encouraged Haigh-Wood to continue advising colonial officials on the basic measures. Incrementally, Haigh-Wood did convince his superiors that this task alone required more than a single officer, and additional DSO's and assistants were sent to West Africa in 1942 and 1943. At its peak, there were two DSO's appointed to West Africa (one in Accra and Lagos), two Assistant District Security Officers, and a small secretarial staff coordinating with local officials.[29] Much of what they accomplished appears to have been mundane work, of which little required reporting back to Security Service Headquarters and therefore went unpreserved in

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[28] Ibid.

[29] TNA KV 4/311, 238, David Petrie to D.M.I. War Office, 23 December 1942; TNA KV 4/18, "Report on the Operation of Overseas Control . . .", Appendix C.

Security Service records. Yet small details suggest the breadth of activities these officers were engaged in. For example, nearly a year after Haigh-Wood's posting to West Africa, an expert on port security, T.A. Robertson from MI5 headquarters was sent to make a review of conditions in the harbors and also to collect the DSO's opinion of his work so far. Robertson praised Haigh-Wood's efforts in the colonies, giving special note to his coordination with RAF and Pan American Airways personnel to improve aerodrome security across the region and to a sabotage exercise he organized for officials in Lagos that "was so good that it frightened them into setting up an anti-sabotage squad for patrolling the harbour."[30] Additionally, the DSO's also provided a much needed review review of colonial Police Forces, identifying officers who by temperament or age had become unfit for duty. Of particular note was Captain P.T. Brodie, the Police Chief of Sierra Leone, who had avidly supported the appointment of a DSO to West Africa. Once in the field and in regular communication with Captain Brodie, however, Security Service personnel concluded that he had been serving in the colony for too long to adequately meet the demands of his post. Haigh-Wood observed of Brodie, shortly after arriving in West Africa, that "he is getting on in years and has been in Sierra Leone some twenty years and can hardly be expected to be a very live wire."[31] When R.D. Gibbs made a special tour of West Africa for MI5 in November 1942, he came to similar conclusions, adding that the colonial administration "have in the past shut their eyes to Brodie's needs and felt very little responsibility towards him and no concern for his health."[32] When local officials challenged Gibbs' portrait of the Police Chief and their apathy, he offered a less polite appraisal of Brodie's condition. He wrote to the Director General, "What the Minister does not know is in fact that Brodie, due largely to overstrain, is subject to recurrent spells of mental abnormality so violent that I was impelled very delicately to report the situation to H.E. [His Excellency, the Governor]."[33] Gibbs was quick to add that Brodie was indeed a fine officer but had been brought to his present condition by years of overwork brought on by the administration's failure to provide adequate officers to support him. In this and other minor cases, the Security Service worked to challenge the standards of civil authorities towards personnel and operation of their Police Forces.

Yet undoubtedly, the greatest, lasting impact of the Security Service wartime efforts was the creation of a particular security-ethos, viewed as uniquely required and suited to West Africa's condition. Put simply, the Security Service argued that security and intelligence work in West Africa could only be conceptualized along racial terms. Returning to Haigh-Wood's first security assessment of West Africa, he argued that the chief security threat to colonial governments would originate from the European community. He further contended that colonial police forces could never meet that threat because of their racial composition. Haigh-Wood wrote, "That there is no evidence of nefarious activities against any of these people [non-Africans] may be because the colonial police forces, composed of Africans, with a few white officers, are incapable of any proper investigation or observation of Europeans."[34] Haigh-

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[30] TNA KV 4/310, 127, "Note on talks with Lt. Col. Haigh-Wood", T.A. Robertson, 9 May 1942.
[31] Ibid, 141a, from Haigh-Wood to DG Petrie, 10 July 1942.
[32] TNA KV 4/311, 230b, "Gibbs report on Sierra Leone Security", 9 Nov 1942.
[33] Ibid, 233a, from Gibbs to David Petrie, 10 December 1942.
[34] Ibid.

Wood's paradigm, in brief, was that the security of West Africa could only be threatened and protected by Europeans; Africans were of no concern and no help.

The racial security paradigm was echoed and expanded several months later by R.D. Gibbs. Gibbs had been sent to West Africa late in 1942 to review Haigh-Wood's work thus far and recommend how he and his predecessors might better fulfill their responsibility to colonial security. Although the Security Service generally did not support the fears that enemy European agents had penetrated the colonies, Gibbs recommendations focused on how security work should be organized to prevent such a situation. In a key passage in his report, he divided all security information available within the colonies according to race. He referred to this division as between 'White Lines' and 'black lines' of intelligence. 'White Lines' would be the responsibility of the Security Service personnel while 'black lines' would be relegated to the C.I.D. [Criminal Investigations Department] of the Police. The unstated assumption was that trained security and intelligence officers could only find valuable information from among the colony's European inhabitants, despite their relatively small population, while the Police would gather what minor information would be available from the African population of the colonies. To reinforce the perceived value of these two channels of intelligence, every reference to 'White Lines' and 'black lines' of intelligence, from Gibbs' original report to succeeding Security Service documents, would capitalize the former and lowercase the latter, as has been done here.[35]

The impact of this racial paradigm is perfectly preserved in the DSO's records. After Lt. Col. Haigh-Wood, the Security Service had four full-time officers assigned to West Africa between 1941 and the first months of 1945. In more than three years of records, there is never any detailed description or discussion of the colonies' indigenous populations. At best, the DSO's made occasional, disparaging remarks regarding Africans' and their capacities. For example, one of Haigh-Wood's successors as DSO made a casual investigation of conditions in Fernando Po. The officer noted that authorities on the island were pro-Axis and it was possible that they used the frequent canoe traffic between Fernando Po and Calabar to acquire information from Nigeria. He dismissed this possibility, observing that since "the agents employed are Africans, it is doubtful if information of any real value finds its way there."[36] Similar sentiments also found their way into officials documents produced by officials at MI5 headquarters in London. In the Security Service's own historical report on the work of DSO's in overseas territories during the Second World War, the section for West Africa makes the following note on port security: "local conditions and the use of coloured personnel presented difficulties, which though easily surmountable in the United Kingdom were without practical solution on the West African coast."[37] In a similar section on the security of mines, the report observes, with clear surprise, that "it was found possible to utilise coloured local personnel".[38] No representative of the Security Service for the entirety of the war would devote any reasonable thought to Africans or their societies apart from reductionist racial narratives.

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[35] See Gibb's original report at TNA KV KV 4/312, 1a; and later restatement in TNA KV 4/18, section IV "Security in West Africa".
[36] TNA KV 4/311, 301a, To David Petrie from Major Dixon, 10 May 1943.
[37] TNA KV 4/18, "Report on the Operation of Overseas Control".
[38] Ibid.

The Security Service's racial paradigm would have long-lasting impact on West African security, even as the rest of their wartime structures and resources were dismantled after 1945. By the time the Allies had won the war in Europe and the Pacific, West Africa's brief spell as a strategically important region had faded and passed. The colonies would play an important role in plans to recover Great Britain's economy and pay-off her substantial war debts, but these plans did not require the full-time attention of the Security Service. As the British Armed forces exited West Africa, MI5's regional representatives were likewise reassigned. By the end of the war, the Security Service again had only one officer in Accra, who was shortly removed for a more pressing posting to the Middle East. Colonial Officials were given the assurance that the office would not be closed, only left vacant "and the way left clear for the despatch of another officer should the security situation in the area require any expert assistance in the future."[39]

However, before completely removing themselves from West Africa, the Security Service imprinted their radicalized paradigm of security work into colonial institutions. This began in April 1943, as the colonial office and the Security Service prepared to reimplement the honourary correspondent system in all but name, using the new title of Colonial Security Officers [CSO]. An enterprising officer in the Criminal Investigation Department of the Nigeria Police Force actively requested this assignment and appealed directly to Security Service, contending that his unique position with the police afforded relevant experience in intelligence work in colonial contexts.[40] The Security Service was intrigued by this proposition and presented the idea to Lt. Col. Haigh-Wood, he having become the resident expert on West Africa after returning from Lagos. Haigh-Wood agreed that a senior Police Officer, connected with CID, was the ideal candidate for MI5's Civil Security Officers. Yet he felt that colonial CID's would not provide a perfect fit for intelligence and security work. Instead he argued that selected officers from among the police should be separated into a distinct unit, modeled after Police Special Branches in the UK. These officers would undertake intelligence activities in the colony and their commanding officer would be the local CSO. The explanation for this bureaucratic division returns to his conception on race and security work expressed in his first report as DSO. He explained, "Civil Security or Special Branch work is very closely linked with C.I.D. work in West Africa particularly. Any arrangements such as that suggested would probably result in the Special Branch dealing largely with the white population, and the C.I.D. dealing largely with the 'blacks'".[41] In other words, all civil security efforts in the colonies should focus entirely on the European community. Africans, on the other hand, would require only the occasional investigation following a crime or accident, undertaken by CID.

The four West African colonies, to varying degrees, would follow the Security Service's recommendation to establish Special Branch departments within their police forces, continuing the civil security and intelligence work that the DSO's had attempted to direct and instigate during the war. And like the DSO's, these Special Branches limited their scope to their colony's European, White population. The result of this organization was to leave administrations blind to the possibility that Africans could become potential sources of disorder. By developing a

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[39] Ibid.
[40] TNA KV 4/312, 9a, 6 April 1943.
[41] Ibid, 11 note from register page.

security structure devoting its work solely to Europeans, colonial Special Branches were woefully unprepared for the political and security realities that faced the Empire in the decade to follow. Following the war, colonial officials would not be concerned with expatriate communities but instead the very real demands of African communities, intent on realizing an independent, nationalist future for the continent.

Chapter Two: Police Intelligence and the Nationalist Threat after the Riots, 1948-1951

In the mounting afternoon heat of February 28th, 1948, a crowd of two-thousand African demonstrators marched out from the streets of Accra and approached Christiansbourg Castle. The castle served as the seat of government for the British colonial administration and as the governor's personal residence. The demonstrators intended to continue straight to the castle and there present a petition prepared by the Ex-Servicemen's Union. The petition outlined a number of grievances unique to veterans of the Second World War, such as inadequate war bonuses and the slow disbursement of pensions, yet chiefly spoke to the larger challenges faced by everyday Africans attempting to survive in Accra's urban economy. It was simply too difficult, and the veterans, market women, young men, and activists who thronged in the march were adamant that government must do more on their behalf. Before reaching the Castle however, the crowd was met by a small line of police constables, all Africans save for their European officer, Superintendent Colin Imray. Imray and his men had been hastily despatched to the crossroads with orders to prevent the crowd from reaching the castle and potentially threatening the castle's offices and staff. They were woefully undermanned from the task, armed only with a handful of tea gas canisters and a dozen or so rifles, expected to turn back a passionate crowd numbering in the thousands. It was the perfect context for catastrophe.

Expectedly, tensions quickly escalated between the crowd and the police. The Police ordered the crowd to halt but were shouted down by cheers, chanting, and a hail of loose stones gathered from the roadside. The police responded with tear gas but strong winds dissipated the fumes, only aggravating the crowd instead of dispersing them. As the crowd continued forward, narrowing the empty road between them and the police to forty, thirty, and twenty feet, Superintendent Imray, ordered his men to open fire. None of his men responded, reticent to fire on their countrymen. In a fit that must have mixed fear with frustration, Imray seized one of his men's rifles and personally fired six times in the crowd. The demonstrators fled, retreating from the crossroads back into the city, leaving two dead men in their wake. Rather than snuff-out the afternoon's protest, Imray's actions lit the flames on a powderkeg. For the next three days, the Gold Coast witnessed the most destructive rioting in its history. The demonstrators who fled the crossroads joined crowds in the market centers and looted European importing firms, shut down streets with burning cars, and even stormed Ussher Fort Prison. When peace was finally restored three days later under a formal emergency and martial law, the entire colony was in shock. In the words of Dennis Austin, "it was if the entire political scene was suddenly distorted by an unexpected and violent eruption, with the result that when the dust settled and the lava cooled, a new landscape appeared."[1]

For the last seventy years, the shooting at the Osu Crossroads and the Accra Riots have sat as pivotal moments in Ghanaian history, making the turning point of colonial rule in the Gold

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[1] Denis Austin, *Politics in Ghana, 1947-1960* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 49; Anderson and Killingray, 1.

Coast. Before February 1948, imperial rule in the Gold Coast seemed certain, prosperous, and immovable. Afterwards, British authorities considered and prepared for a transition towards self-rule while nationalist parties confidently advocated on the newly realized strength of African popular action. Though guilty of oversimplification, it is not incorrect to say the Accra Riots started a chain reaction, beginning with the Watson Commission, that resulted in self-rule after the Legislative Elections in 1951 and later in independence in 1957, setting Ghana as an independent standard for all other African nationalist struggles. In short, colonial rule in the Gold Coast, and even European imperialist across the whole of continent, was forever changed by the Accra Riots.[2]

And yet, the revelations of February 1948 were not limited to politics alone. The Accra Riots precipitated another crucial shift in the nature of the colonial state, leveraged on concerns for its security. Before the Watson Commission finished their inquiry into the 'disturbances' (arriving at their radical conclusions on the necessity of political reform), British officials understood the riots as indisputable proof that the Gold Coast Police Force was incapable of providing for the security of the colony. At every point possible, the events of February 28th had demonstrated the ineptitude of the Gold Coast Police Force. To begin, the Commissioner of Police himself had authorized the Ex-Servicemen's demonstration, approving a parade route that kept them far from Christiansbourg Castle but he had not prepared for the possibility the demonstrators could ignore the established route or threaten security in the capital. As a result, only Superintendent Imray and a small contingent of constables were available to respond when the crowd turned toward the Castle. Furthermore, after the riots had exploded on Saturday afternoon, the police had proved incapable of clearing the streets and restoring order over the next three days. Without the intervention of the Royal West African Frontier Force, the rioting could have spread farther and endured much longer. Thus, before the Accra Riots prompted dramatic political transformation, policymakers were considering how best to secure the Gold Coast (and colonial rule) against future crises. In other words, before the Accra Riots fostered uncertainty regarding the future of colonial rule in West Africa, it created an unprecedented commitment to ensuring for the security of the imperial state.

The campaign to improve the Gold Coast Police Force followed several logical avenues. It began by recruiting twenty four additional (European) officers, the formation of a rapid mobile response unit, and the establishment of a new police wireless network.[3] All of these responses answered deficiencies that had been revealed during the course of the riots, notably the police force's inability to coordinate, communicate, and respond to the rapidly deteriorating crisis precipitated by the veterans' demonstration. Yet these initiatives also included, peculiarly, the establishment of security-intelligence resources in the Gold Coast with the conviction that intelligence-gathering, as executed by the British Security Service in the United Kingdom, was a necessary component to the continued security and prosperity of the state in the Gold Coast. As discussed in the previous chapter, such initiatives had been implemented, however tentatively, during the Second World War, only to be abandoned by both colonial officials and the Security Service by 1943. For local administrators, security intelligence was an unnecessary distraction

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[2] *see* Austin, Anderson and Killingray, Rathbone.
[3] Rathbone, p.107-8.

which could not be justified under the shoestring limits of colonial budgets. Likewise, MI5 had concluded that intelligence-work among Africans was impractical, if not impossible, and only made sense in colonial contexts with large European, expatriate communities. How then did the Accra Riots reverse such entrenched prejudices? And similarly, what were the consequences of establishing and operating a security-intelligence regime designed to counter anti-colonial demonstration after self-rule was the accepted future of the Gold Coast?

This chapter traces the development of security intelligence in the Gold Coast between 1948 and 1951. Much like the previous chapter, it will demonstrate how intelligence institutions were developed, challenged, tested and refined. However, there will be a number of important divergences between these two periods. The previous chapter dealt with a system that was ultimately abandoned, a short-lived experiment that was never fully justified by the war itself or accepted by colonial administrators, resulting in a minimal institutional legacy to be carried up here. Instead, this chapter (and all to follow) will deal with a system that became an enduring element to government in the Gold Coast and later Ghana. Placed alongside the political reforms directed towards self-rule, the state in the Gold Coast found itself in a strange bind between efforts to alleviate the exclusionary politics of colonial rule against a newfound security regime designed precisely to protect it. In other words, the implementation of security intelligence in the Gold Coast would prove a stumbling block to the political future of the Gold Coast as it approached self-rule and independence. Such contradictions will be explored here, primarily as they revealed both the limits of political aspirations and the accepted costs for securing the Gold Coast.

Before examining the intelligence-initiatives that followed the Accra Riots, we must must first explain how such initiatives were even accepted as necessary. After the Second World War, colonial administrators and the Security Service had both concluded that security-intelligence had little value in a West African contexts. Colonial officials viewed the efforts of the Security Service as unnecessary and were unwilling to stretch their meagre budgets at the cost of development and economic programs. Intelligence-work, they believed, was a distraction to the larger concerns of the state. The Security Service itself had likewise dismissed the utility of intelligence work in West Africa, despite having tried in vain to convince colonial officials otherwise for several years during the war. By its end, though, MI5 concluded that their expertise lay among intelligence activities among and by Europeans; the little that could be learned through Africans and by Africans did not require the state's attention. If anything could be learned, they argued, the police could passively acquire it in the execution of their other responsibilities.

It is remarkable that the riots overcame these convictions, especially when the riots resulted from fundamental failures in the organization of the police force, not from a lack of information. The riots had demonstrated that the police lacked trained officers, equipment, and insightful leadership. This point was particularly clear during the Watson Commission's investigations. J.B. Danquah, leader of the United Gold Coast Convention, testified to the commission that he witnessed members of the Police Force joining in, rather than impeding, the looting that followed the shooting. Likewise, the commanding officer of the West African Frontier Force, which had ultimately restrained the rioting, testified that he had placed his men on standby on the morning of February 28th. He recognized the tense atmosphere in Accra and

reasoned that the Ex-Servicemen's demonstration could escalate. The Commissioner of the Gold Coast Police, who had himself authorized the march, had lacked such insight and made no precautionary provisions. At no point, could it seem that intelligence-work might have been the key to anticipating, preventing, or restraining the riots.[4] Nevertheless, alongside recruiting 28 additional officers for the police force, organizing a mobile response unit, and planning a new police wireless network, the Gold Coast prepared to develop the Police Special Branch into a modern intelligence-gathering unit.

Neither the riots nor conditions in the colony can provide adequate explanation for the state's commitment to intelligence-gathering in 1948. Instead, we must look to how the riots were understood, perhaps more accurately, how the riots were misunderstood by policymakers. The riots were not immediately seen as an popular protest or a failure of the Gold Coast Police Force. It was originally feared to be evidence for something far more sensational and sinister. These fears were expressed by the under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, David Rees-Williams, two days after the riots had ended. Rees-Williams had been called to answer parliament's questions on the disturbances and though their inquiries were diverse and exacting, in all cases, Rees-Williams kept to the same assurances - order had been restored in Accra, a formal inquiry would determine the cause of the riots, and the report would be presented to Parliament. It was the sort of calculated presentation meant to encourage calm and resist unfounded speculation. At the end of his testimony, however, Rees-Williams dropped his prudent script. He was asked if the future report would answer "whether or not [the disturbance in the Gold Coast] is due to the Communist dupes of the Third International, including the Communist Party in this country?" The under-Secretary replied, "there was almost certainly Communist incitement in this case".[5] The riots were not initially seen as the spontaneous combustion of local political and economic troubles in the Gold Coast, instead, policymakers in London assumed the keystone of their West African empire had suffered its first stroke from a subversive, communist campaign. This was the problem that Accra's reformed intelligence network was intended to answer.

The specter of communist subversion was the crucial spur for establishing intelligence-gathering in the Gold Coast. Five weeks after the riots, the Commissioner of the Gold Coast Police wrote directly to the Colonial Secretary requesting to expand his Special Branch with a Superintendent, five Senior Assistant Superintendents, and 3 European (female) stenographers.[6] A month later, the Commissioner sent his initial budget for Special Branch, including £5400 for new personnel, £740 for supplying their new offices, and £2000 for their general budget. Adjusted for inflation, the proposed budget for Special Branch was slightly more than a quarter-million pounds.[7] Alongside this enormous investment into Special Branch, the Security Service prepared to assign another officer to resume the post of Security Liaison Officer [SLO] for West Africa, with his central office in Accra. The officer selected was Robin 'Tin Eye' Stephens who

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[4] Rathbone.
[5] Hansard, HC Deb 1 March 1948, vol 448, cc37-9.
[6] TNA FCO 141/4992, 9 April 1948.
[7] Used http://www.in2013dollars.com/1948-GBP-in-2017?amount=7600; need citation for later budget, explaining the amount given to SB later. Additionally, the budge would eventually expand by £2000 pounds, making for £4000 for general costs, slightly specified for "Security Typing")

had earned a considerable reputation in the Security Service for managing Camp 020 during the Second World War, a detention camp designed specifically for interning and turning suspected German agents.[8] MI5 had not grabbed a fresh-faced officer, as they had done with Lt. Col. Haigh-Wood in 1938.

Concerns with 'the Communist threat' had recently spiked in the UK, and the Accra Riots were unintentionally folded into them by consequence of timing. Three days before the riots, Czechoslovakia experienced a communist coup that ended the last democracy in Eastern Europe. From that point forward, anxieties over the British Communist Party [BCP] and the influence of the Soviet Union would continue to rise over the following decade. In fact, in 1947, a Security Service officer mockingly observed that the Foreign Office "literally saw a Communist behind every gooseberry bush".[9] While there was no existing link between Czechoslovakia and the Gold Coast to suggest that the two events were related, British officials were prepared to accept the explanation of communist subversion instead of facing the stark reality that colonial rule had become untenable for the people of the Gold Coast. But how could that suspicion remain, especially given the several investigations that explained the riots as. Product of a failed colonial state?

The answer to this question lies, in part, with a brief letter authored by the Director-General of the Security Service, Sir Percy Sillitoe in July1947. Addressed to the Commissioner of the Gold Coast Police, with copies undoubtedly prepared for the Colonial Secretary, Sillitoe's letter reported that a West African student politician, with the possibility of soon returning to the Gold Coast, had "recently come to our notice as contacting members of the British Communist Party."[10] Across three short pages, this letter relates this individual's education in the United States and the United Kingdom, his activism for African nationalism, and lastly his associations with members of the British Communist Party. This individual's name did not yet have any special significance to the Security Service or the Gold Coast Police but the report in fact dealt with Kwame Nkrumah.

Nkrumah had first come to the attention of the Security Service in 1942 while still a student in the United States though they did not begin investigating him, or his political activities until well after his return to London in 1945. Instead the Security Service received to varied scraps of information about Nkrumah and his activities from the Metropolitan Police Special Branch which had taken a concerned interest in Pan-African and anti-colonial organizations operating in the capitol. Yet even as he spoke out loudly and repeatedly against imperial rule, there was nothing in Nkrumah's activities that drew MI5's attention or concern.[11] That changed as Nkrumah increasingly connected with the British Communist Party.

Beginning in the summer of 1947, Nkrumah developed a number of associates within the British Communist Party. Although Nkrumah was not under investigation, the Security Service

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[8] Andrew.
[9] Walton, p. 226. TNA CO 1035/17, Communist Influence in Africa, 14 February 1956.
[10] TNA KV 2/1847, 16 July 1947.
[11] Andrew claims that the Security Service bugged the offices of the West African National Secretariat under a Home Office Warrant in 1946, though the underlying citation does not provide sufficient proof for this conclusion. This claim is repeated by Walton, using a different record for citation though with similarly in conclusive (p.218). Finally Marika Sherwood, Kwame Nkrumah and the Dawn of the Cold War: The West African National Secretariat (1945-1948) (London: Pluto Press, 2019) repeats this claim citing Andrew.

maintained constant surveillance on the party and its members. This included wiretapping the telephone lines at the party's headquarters and maintaining Home Office Warrants on its senior members that allowed for the censorship of their mail. Thus, the Security Service was aware any time Nkrumah placed or received a call from BCP headquarters or corresponded by mail with any of its members. Through such channels, the Security Service was aware that by June 1947, Nkrumah had meet with William Rust, the editor of the 'Daily Worker'; Michael Carritt, a former colonial official who had secretly worked with the communist underground in India; and Maud Rodgerson, the secretary for the BCP's African sub committee. Rodgerson particularly became an important member of Nkrumah's political circle. As MI5 records show, during June and July of 1947, it was not uncommon for them to meet in person or speak on the phone several times a week, with Nkrumah often seeking her advice.

Nkrumah's collaboration with Rodgerson, and the British Communist Party generally, appears to have been motivated by the financial needs of Nkrumah's recently formed West African National Secretariat [WANS]. Nkrumah and other activists from the Gold Coast had launched WANS in the preceding year as a way of mobilizing and unifying nationalist movements across the region and the British Communist Party was intrigued by the ambitiousness of the organization and its leadership. In May of 1947, Rodgerson called Denis Goodwin, a colleague from the party, from her office at BCP headquarters to explain (and for MI5 to overhear) that she had recently been approached by "a body in this country which called itself the West African National Secretariat," looking for a part-time secretary to manage their office. Rodgerson had wanted to ignore this request and the Secretariat generally, concluding that they were "completely unbusineeslike" and likely unable guarantee consistent wages for this office worker, yet the prospect of their West African national congress was too tempting a possibility. It would be a "tremendous event", she supposed, and well-worth the cost to support. In a matter of weeks, the matter of a secretary entirely forgotten but Rodgerson and the other members of the BCP were assisting Nkrumah in drafting the structure of the Congress, lining up potential donors to fund it, and holding fortnightly classes to instruct West African students (nominated by the Secretariat) on a communism. In little over a month, the West African National Secretariat and Kwame Nkrumah had gone from complete obscurity to a pressing matter for both the Communist Party and the Security Service.

Given Nkrumah's ambitious political aims and his recent associates, it was a critical question for the Security Service to determine the strength of his ideological convictions. Was Nkrumah truly a communist or had he simply allowed the BCP to adopt the WANS to further his political aims against imperial rule in West Africa? This would be a difficult question to answer, first for the limited amount of time before Nkrumah departed for West Africa and second for the nature of MI5's intelligence sources. Everything that Security Service had learned of Nkrumah in recent months had been produced by their Home Office Warrants on the BCP. These sources would of course disproportionately emphasize Nkrumah's communist associations, and without other avenues into his larger political circle and activities, it was impossible to effectively 'sound the depths' of his political character. These limitations had been suggested by the Security Service when they first contacted West African authorities about Nkrumah; Sir Percy Sillitoe's report had clearly limited itself to identifying the contacts Nkrumah had with members of the Communist party, it did not venture any conclusions or suppositions about his personal ideology.

The Director General had shared only a concerning possibility, yet colonial authorities in West Africa were unprepared to parse the distinction between "nationalist activist with communist associates" and "nationalist politician with avowed communist politics ". Colonial officials thus expected and prepared for the worst upon Nkrumah's return.

Even before Nkrumah's return to the Gold Coast, officials in Accra were forecasting ominous political trouble from his influence. In an enclosure to their monthly secret despatch. Accra's Government House reasoned that Nkrumah would dramatically alter the character of the leading nationalist party in the colony, the United Gold Coast Convention [UGCC], "[seeking] for it the the support of certain communist organizations in the United Kingdom with which he seems to have been actively associated for some time past." The same despatch mentioned Nkrumah's "extreme political views" and concluded that "his political associations [in London] seem to have been mostly with communist and other extremist groups."[12] It would be inappropriate to dismiss official concerns at that time with the British Communist Party and Communism generally, captured here with the label of "extremist". Beyond that however, these documents reflected a dangerous degree of exaggeration fostered by casual inaccuracy. Rather than qualify that Nkrumah's association with the BCP as only months old, the despatch identified "some time past". Similarly, the despatch concluded that the communist party and other, unnamed 'extremist groups' represented the majority of Nkrumah's political affiliation. In all cases, this language was unqualified in careless ways that suggested a situation far worse than the truth, especially as this information was repeated and distributed among colonial officials in secondary reports. In fact, the Acting Commissioner of Police for Sierra Leone, on receiving indirect warnings regarding Nkrumah through the Gold Coast Police, inquired of the Security Service if Nkrumah's return to the region and intention to hold a nationalist conference "foreshadow increased Communist activities in West Africa."[13] The Security Service would attempt to mediate these suspicions among colonial officials; between December 1947 and January 1948, the Director-General would directly write the Police authorities in all four West African colonies. Each of these letters repeated the same precise caution present in Sir Sillitoe's first letter to the the Gold Coast in July 1947. These letters explained Nkrumah's involvement with the WANS; the secretariat's larger aims to achieve an independent West African state comprised of all British, French, and Belgian colonies; and lastly that the British Communist Parties supported this endeavor. Speaking directly to communist suspicions, the Director General added, "we have, however, no information to suggest at present that the Communist Party is likely to intervene directly in West Africa itself, and we think it is likely that they consider that the West Africans must first of all achieve greater unity among themselves before any outside support could be either effective or worth while."[14] Despite these mediating efforts however, officials in West Africa did not parse the Security Service's distinctions. They would prove unable to distinguish Nkrumah's nationalist politics from their fears of communism.

With this ominous expectation, Nkrumah finally reached the Gold Coast in late December 1947, immediately setting to work with the United Gold Coast Convention. Yet far beyond his own initiatives, or even those of the UGCC, events were rapidly accelerating towards

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[12] TNA KV 2/1847, 33a and 342, 12 December 1947.
[13] Ibid, 34a, 9 January 1948.
[14] Ibid, 40a, to Commissioner of Police Nigeria, 28 January 1948.

the Accra Riots. In January, an Accra businessman and local chief, Nii Kwabena Bonne III, organized a national boycott against foreign importing firms and the extraordinary prices they raised against a variety of products, ranging from cotton prints, matches, soap, and spirits. Without assistance from the UGCC or any other political group, Bonne established local committees throughout the colony, ensuring that all African consumers were aware of the boycott and developing enormous popular support for it. The boycott was extraordinarily effective and the Gold Coast government arranged to mediate a settlement between the importing firms and the boycott committee. By the third week in February, the terms for ending the boycott had been settled - the European importing firms had agreed to cut their profit margins on selected goods by half for a trial period of three months. The new goods were set to take effect on February 28th, the same day scheduled for the Ex-Servicemen's demonstration. This boycott played a critical role in producing the riots, as market-goers expected to see dramatic reductions for the negotiated goods. However, popular expectations had far exceeded reality. The one-half reduction on profit margins agreed to would have little impact on the real price of such goods, while they would still fall, the final reduction would be closer to one-sixth. As was later reported to the Watson Commission, crowds of shoppers, angrily interpreting the new prices as a deception by the importing firms and by government, had met the news of the shooting at the crossroads with the outrage that would drive the riots for the next three days.

Kwame Nkrumah had no direct role in either the national boycott or the Ex-Servciemen's Demonstration. In fact, he was not even in Accra on the 28th. He had instead been campaigning in Saltpond with other UGCC leaders. Yet the explosion of the riots, barely two months after his arrival in the colony was too obvious a coincidence, fostering the false assumption that he had instigated the disturbances as part of a communist campaign now under way to subvert British colonial rule. This brought renewed scrutiny on Nkrumah from officials in Accra, who arrested him and five other leaders of the UGCC for culpability in the riots. Popularly titled "the Big Six", the governor signed their removal order on March 12th, with the police moving swiftly to apprehend and detain them all within twenty-four hours.

With these arrests, colonial officials discovered additional evidence to fuel the exaggerated fears in Nkrumah's political ideology. In addition to correspondences with three other members of the WANS still in London, Nkrumah was arrested with a number of typescript copies for an organization called The Circle.[15] The stated aims of The Circle were to first, "maintain ourselves and The Circle as the Revolutionary Vanguard of the struggles for West African Unity and National Independence" and second, "to support the ideas and claims of the All West African National Congress in its struggle to create and maintain a Union of African Socialist Republics." Far from a traditional political body, The Circle had a number of peculiar requirements that unnerved colonial officials. To begin, members of The Circle were expected to swear loyalty to the organization itself, and "at all time be ready to go on any mission that I may be called upon to perform." Members were instructed to keep the identify of fellow members private, along with any of the Circle's "secrets, plans, or movements". They were even taught a secret handshake in order to recognize one another privately ("ordinary handshake with thumb

[15] KV 2/ 1847,48a, from C.I.D. Gold Coast to DG MI5, dated 16 March 1948.

pressure"). Any member that violated these injunctions, or any of the The Circle's other laws, did so at their "own risk and peril". They also swore loyalty to The Circle and Kwame Nkrumah as its leader.

Beyond from these peculiarities, The Circle was a reflection of Nkrumah's aspirations and the diverse revolutionary ideologies he hoped to synthesize in West Africa. The stated aims of The Circle were a natural extension of the political program he had envisioned for the WANS, in both pursuing national independence and regional unity throughout West Africa, instead of focusing on a limited nationalist struggle in a single colony. It also synthesized the perspective of other successful anti-colonial movements of the time, principally Mahatma Gandhi's anti-colonial efforts in India. The document maintained that all Circle members should commit themselves to non-violence, except as a last resort, and should fast monthly and meditate daily on "the cause THE CIRCLE stands for". It was an unusual political vision that captured much of Nkrumah's future efforts, including his argument that nationalism required not simply political independence but also a refashioning of African culture and African men and women to create new culture capable of sustaining an African state.[16] Yet less than three weeks from the Accra riots, British officials could only see the communist influences and subversive possibilities that The Circle could embody. In fact, officials in Accra suffered from an unparalleled paranoias towards communism in the first months after the riots, leading to critical errors of interpretation that confirmed their worst fears at the cost of an accurate understanding of Nkrumah, the GCCP, and the state of affairs in the colony.

The general hysteria of officials in the Gold Coast after the Accra Riots is preserved in a top secret telegram from the Governor to the Colonial secretary on April 3rd, 1948. The purpose of the telegram was to discuss the recent activities of a British man, only identified as "Burt", who had relocated to Accra to serve as a ground engineer for the British Overseas Airways Corporation in 1947. MI5 had informed local officials that the engineer was a member of the British Communist Party and he had been subsequently investigated after the Accra Riots. His papers proved that he was indeed a member of the party and that he had served as a unofficial courier to Nkrumah for the BCP and Maud Rodgerson, helping pass along various papers including an "open letter" by "a British democrat" that Nkrumah had forwarded and arranged for publications to a number of Gold Coast newspapers. After Burt had departed from the Gold Coast (whether by his ow volition or by an expulsion order from the Governor remains unclear), the administration continued to intercept his mail, which included several letters from Rodgerson. In the governor's secret despatch, they noted that Rodgerson had written that "we are doing all we can to assist [Nkrumah]", including the receipt of money and "deliveries of the dynamite ordered". The Security Service's own records of this telegram record a certain skepticism with this final line, suggesting there was corrupt group in the telegram or that officials in Accra had misread Rodgerson's original letter. MI5 later corrected that Rodgerson's letter had not spoken of "the dynamite ordered" but instead, "the *staff you* ordered" (emphasis mine). In addition to this explosive typo, the secret telegram made another significant error when summarizing Burt's connections with Nkrumah and The Circle. The telegram repeated for the

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[16] see Jeffrey S. Ahlman, Living with Nkrumahism: Nation, State, and Pan-Africanism in Ghana (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2017).

Colonial Secretary that "[The Circle] aims at setting up 'the revolutionary Soviet vanguard of the struggle for West African national independence.'" The original documents in Nkrumah's possession, confiscated by the Criminal Investigation Department and copied to the Security Service for review, has the exact same line save for one word. Nkrumah's papers only describe The Circle a "revolutionary vanguard". The governor's office had inserted the 'Soviet' modifier, and then, either from oversight or blind conviction, neglected to inform the colonial secretary of their alteration to the original text.[17] The implications of this conviction are made even clearer by the Commissioner of the Gold Coast Police. In a letter to the colonial secretary, he pithily concluded, "the emergence of organized subversion inside the Colony and the probability of its stimulation by outside agencies raises a clear and immediate need for widening the scope and activities of the Special Branch" through "a systematic and long term penetration of all organization and persons potentially dangerous to Government is commenced now, and accorded a high degree of operational priority."[18] The commissioner may have reflected some caution in mentioning the "probability", rather than the "certainty", of stimulation of by "outside agencies", yet such caution is rendered moot with his assertion organized subversion having emerged in the colony.

By May of 1948, Special Branch was well on its way to implementing its new institutional vision. It was then they published their first monthly intelligence report, a five page general summary of political affairs in the colony followed by four pages of background information on selected individuals labeled as personality notes. Special Branch would continue to produce such reports until December 1952, and yet, as the colony's first security intelligent product, the May 1948 report deserves special examination because it demonstrates how Special Branch conceived and implemented their work following the riots. In short, we can see the means by which Special Branch collected their information and what issues they primarily pursued. More importantly, this report also captures Special Branch's opinion of the nationalist politicians that primarily occupied their reports. In these instances, it would be difficult to argue that Special Branch provided unbiased reporting of collected facts.

Special Branch's first report opened with a detailed analysis of nationalist politics, focusing chiefly on the UGCC's response to the riots. Here, Special Branch gave considerable attention to the internal politics of the convention and a brief analysis of how these matters might influence the UGCC. They reported that a rift had formed between two camps, the first led by George (Paa) Grant, the UGCC's president and principal financier, and Kwame Nkrumah, who they labeled as the leader of the convention's 'hooligan element'. Special Branch forecasted the division between these two camps would only deepen, but that Grant would have little room to challenge Nkrumah's popular support. They went so far as to claim that Grant feared for his life if he made any attempt to remove Nkrumah from the UGCC. Special Branch claimed this intelligence originated from "a well placed" source in whom Grant confided, though its unclear if this source purposefully or unwittingly passed these revelations on to Special Branch. References to such informants, and questions of their identities and intents, would persists in all future reports. Maddeningly, it does not seem to possible to identify these individuals or their

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[17] TNA KV 2/1847, 49a, 3 April 1948.
[18] TNA FCO 141/4992, 1.

motives. Nevertheless, Richard Rathbone has confirmed that the information Special Branch reported from such informants, particularly of internal politics within the leadership of Ghanaian political parties, was both accurate and likely not recorded in any form. The most reasonable explanation is that Special Branch succeeded, within the first months following the riots and continuing for the next several years, to cultivate human sources of intelligence, at the highest levels of nationalist parties. To some extent, this was made possible by the ideological and generational divisions that Nkrumah precipitated. Just as Special Branch reported that Grant had reservations with Nkrumah's politics and tactics, other senior members of the UGCC opposed Nkrumah's ascending place in the party and influence over the movement. This resentment provided opportunities for Special Branch to develop human sources who were opposed to Nkrumah's leadership in the UGCC. In a future intelligence summary, Special Branch reported that J.B. Danquah, one of the founders of the UGCC and arguably the second most important political figure in the Gold Coast, made a statement to "a representative of this Branch that 'Nkrumah is a bloody ass'".[19] Here there was no veiled intermediary - the senior political figure in the Gold Coast vented his frustrations directly to a member of Special Branch. Just as Nkrumah has become a deeply divisive figure in Ghanaian history, his polarizing aspirations facilitated intelligence-gathering.[20]

Despite the extraordinary access Special Branch enjoyed to nationalist politics, they made little effort to objectively appreciate the individuals they researched. Even from their first intelligence summary, Special Branch leveled an extraordinary collection of diverse invectives against nationalist politicians, most clearly displayed in the individual personality notes that followed the body of each report. In Special Branch's first summary from May 1948 for example, the attached personality notes dealt with three individuals nominally associated with the UGCC. These notes each begin with relevant background information, including their date and place of birth, education, career, and finish with a brief sketch of their character and Special Branch's general impressions. These three Ghanaian politicians were alternatively described as "a deceitful character", "an unscrupulous crook", and an activist who is "prompted more by hopes of personal financial gain than by any deep seated nationalism".[21] In all the reports that followed, Special Branch similarly demeaned every anti-colonial activist, citing ignoble intentions, pettiness, and any other imaginable weakness of character or intellect to dismiss these men and the campaigns they led. For these and countless others opposed to the colonial state, Special Branch was unable to make an unbiased assessment of their character or intentions. Instead, Special Branch used their regular summaries to construct a portrait of anti-colonial politics as a theatre of the disingenuous, the unstable, and the mentally deranged.

Kwame Nkrumah did not escape similar treatment, though Special Branch was not prepared to dismiss him through sarcastic invective. They wished to delegitimize him and convince policy makers of their conclusion that he was the most influential, and therefore most

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[19] TNA FCO 141/4993, Special Branch Summary no. 5, 10 February 1949. Later references in later summaries contribute additional evidence that Special Branch had a human source connected to, or with direct access to, George Grant, J.B. Danquah.
[20] There are additional threads that point to other sources developed by Special Branch. For example, TNA FCO 141/4993, Special Branch Summary no. 4 indicates that SB had a human source currently under trial, perhaps suggesting that Special Branch used the threat of criminal prosecution to develop further sources.
[21] Ibid.

dangerous, politician in the colony. These two demands led Special Branch to make wildly divergent descriptions of his character. In their summary from July 1949, for example, Special Branch off-handedly referenced Nkrumah as a "tub thumping demagogue".[22] Some months earlier they presented him as a leader of "consequence and forcefulness". Continuing at length: "NKRUMAH is something of an ascetic, and gifted with fixity of purpose and resolution, unfettered apparently by tribal caste, he believes with fanatical fervor in the justice and practicability of his cause." Before anyone reading the report could mistake this description for praise, the summary continued, "Any one of these attributes is sufficiently rare in this Colony to make their combination in one man a matter of wonder and admiration to most of the semi-educated".[23] Highlighting Nkrumah's strengths only served to level a general criticism against the rest of his political rivals and popular supporters.

It is not necessary to include more of Special Branch's vituperation but an important point must be made before continuing further. As shown above, Nkrumah sparked incredible anxiety in the last months of 1947 due to his communist associations, and those associations were used by policy makers to overlook the reality of the February riots as a spontaneous expression of popular discontent. The explanation of communist subversion minimized the failings of the colonial state and delegitimized the popular outrage they had engendered. Special Branch had taken such logic a step farther. As their repeated intelligence summaries and personality notes affirmed, Special Branch viewed the diverse anti-colonial campaigns in the Gold Coast as illegitimate. That illegitimacy was only due in small part to communist associates, which could only be applied to Nkrumah and a small number of his colleagues from WANS, including Kojo Botsio and Bankole Awoonor-Renner. For all other politicians, Special Branch argued that none were pursuing independence in the Gold Coast due to their convictions. They were instead driven by the possibility of fame, wealth, and prestige, while the people who supported them were semi-literate, impressionable, and ignorant. None of Special Branch's summaries made the overt claim that these failings were a product of race, but the totalizing nature of their descriptions of all African politicians and the colony's populace can only be read as a racial ideology that dismissed the entirety of anti-colonial politics in the Gold Coast because it was African. This would lead a dangerous corollary, assumed by more than Special Branch officers, that all Africans should be suspected first as adversaries of the state.[24]

Despite the biases in their reporting, there is no doubt that Special Branch had, in the matter of a few months, established a remarkable, human intelligence network in the Gold Coast That network permeated anti-colonial politics, allowing the administration in Accra to critically evaluate suspicions of Communist subversion and appreciate the personal, internal struggles that drove nationalist politics in the Gold Coast. These successes ensured that police intelligence would be a continuing feature of Government, especially as the transition to the self-rule and independence began. But the realization of police intelligence in the Gold Coast would not simply create new tools for Government alone. Instead, Special Branch and police intelligence created a new arena for anti-colonial politics in which both British policy-makers and Ghanaian activists would take part. Ghanaian politicians were not simply subjects of police surveillance or

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[22] Ibid, Special Branch Summary no. 10.
[23] Ibid, Special Branch Summary no. 6.
[24] This point will be especially addressed in the following chapter.

informants but quickly learned to use Special Branch as an avenue for indirectly communicating with and influencing the administration. In this way, Government's intelligence-gathering activities began to exert an appreciable force on affairs in the Gold Coast that anti-colonial activists, in part, hoped to influence. This unique relationship is best captured by the events surrounding Nkrumah's dismissal from the UGCC's working committee in the summer of 1948.

After the release of the 'Big Six' from detention in April (under the spurious suspicion that they had compelled the riots) the majority of the UGCC's working committee had found themselves at odds with their recently appointed General Secretary. While they hoped to assure Government they had no role in the riots, Nkrumah urged the Working Committee to claim the disturbances and thereby capture popular support for the Convention. Nkrumah's strategy was dismissed, but in the weeks that followed, the subsequent inquiries of the Watson Commission publicly continued to uncover details of Nkrumah's past and personal ideologies that continued to embarrass the Working Committee. These revelations included the particulars of Nkrumah's 'Circle' organization, his connections to the British Communist Party through the WANS, and a proposal he had prepared for the Working Committee before the riots on how to inspire and harness popular discontent in the colony. Throughout the hearings, the Working Committee was forced to repeatedly distance themselves from the impression that Nkrumah had created - of the UGCC as a radical, communist organization pursuing the violent overthrow of the state.[25] This would be the beginning of Nkrumah's separation from the UGCC and the eventual formation of his own political party, the Convention People's Party.

Unsurprisingly, Special Branch paid special attention to the growing rift in the UGCC's executive. In their summaries throughout the rest of 1948, they noted that George Grant had tried to limit Nkrumah's capacity to damage the reputation of the UGCC. This included limiting Nkrumah's public addresses and instructing him to sever all ties to the WANS. However, Nkrumah had not followed all of these strictures. Throughout May and June, Nkrumah had drafted and distributed a letter to over fifty individuals from across West Africa and Europe, inviting them to attend the WANS nationalist conference later that year. These documents were discovered by the Working Committee in July, and a few weeks later, Nkrumah was removed from his position as General Secretary. To prevent a public backlash (Nkrumah had already cultivated the popular support that would eventual sweep him into the role of Prime Minister), the Working Committee did not publicly disown Nkrumah. Instead, they appointed him to the hollow title of honorary treasurer, preserving, if even feebly, the illusion of unity among the convention's leadership.

Special Branch reported on these events repeatedly, beginning with a short "appreciation" made on the UGCC in September. In addition to the details noted above, they added that the Working Committee had learned of Nkrumah's letter thanks to "an inspired leakage". They also added that the Working Committee had initially attempted to withhold Nkrumah's removal entirely from the public until "an inspired newspaper rumor" had "brought forth an apologetic explanation that NKRUMAH had been promoted to the sinecure post of Assistant Treasurer".[26] In the report itself, both of the passages referencing these leaks are sidelined, meaning that they

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[25] Dennis Austin, "The Working Committee of the United Gold Coast Convention," *The Journal of African History* 2, no. 2 (1961): 273–97.
[26] TNA FCO 141/4993, Special Branch Summary no. 4, 6 December 1948.

represent sensitive information that Special Branch wanted other officials to avoid reproducing, unless given special permission. From reviewing this and previous reports, Special Branch only took such precaution with passages relating to their own activities or that could potentially compromise one of their sources. The sidelining of these two passages thus suggests that these "inspired leaks" were either the work of Special Branch or one of their sources.

For Special Branch to have acquired and released these documents, presumably to widen the fractures in the UGCC's leadership, is an extraordinary claim. It would mean that Special Branch had intentionally acted to disrupt a nationalist party, moving them far beyond the institutional scope of a law enforcement or an intelligence-gathering organization. It is difficult not to suspect such extremes, especially given the unique provenance of Special Branch's records since the end of colonial rule. However, the truth is likely far milder. According to the Acting Commissioner of Police, Captain P. Eckel, the Gold Coast Police did not learn of Nkrumah's letters until after his dismissal from the working committee. In a letter to the Director General of the Security Service, Captain Eckel informed MI5 of the latest developments in the colony, especially regarding their collaborative investigation of the suspected communist ties between Nkrumah, the WANS, and the UGCC. Eckel's letter repeated Special Branch's report of Nkrumah's removal from the working committee, and added in passing that "it is only recently that a copy of these documents came into our hands". Taken at its word, the police force acquired these documents weeks after the UGCC Working Committee had used them as grounds to remove Nkrumah. Furthermore, Eckel also informed the Security Service that Nkrumah had used the UGCC's own P.O. Box for mailing these documents. These additional details tip the balance towards concluding that a member of the UGCC's Working Committee discovered these documents on their own, shared them with the party's executive, and then later shared them with Special Branch. Special Branch's circumspection on reporting about this document was likely to protect that informant.

Unfortunately, neither Eckel's letter or any other report from Special Branch casts any light on the source of the "inspired newspaper rumor" that had embarrassed the UGCC's leadership and forced the announcement of Nkrumah's relegation to a paper title. But understanding the discovery and leak of Nkrumah's letter for the conference has important implications for rethinking the Working Committee's relationship with Special Branch, and vicariously, the rest of government. It recasts them from simple subjects of Special Branch surveillance or compromised informants into astute politicians, utilizing the Government's secret collection of intelligence to further their own motives. The release of Nkrumah's papers to Special Branch benefited the UGCC on multiple fronts. As discussed previously, since the Accra Riots, the party had been overshadowed with the suspicions raised by Nkrumah's membership in the Working Committee. Had the convention conspired to incite the riots? Did the convention share Nkrumah's radical, communist views? The discovery of Nkrumah's efforts to continue organizing the national congress had the potential to harden those suspicions, further damaging the convention's image. Furthermore, if the Convention had disclosed these papers publicly, in a bid to appease the government's suspicions and discredit their General Secretary, they would have ignited a public debate over Nkrumah and his ideology that could have damaged the Convention's popular support. For better or worse, the UGCC was not prepared to drop Nkrumah yet they could not accept the possibility that his actions could have the entire

convention and its leadership labeled again as communist provocateurs. In this context, their connection with Special Branch would have been a boon to the Working Committee. Through Special Branch, the UGCC could share Nkrumah's papers, ensuring that government was informed of his ongoing 'communist activities' while exonerating the larger Working Committee of complicity in his schemes without forcing a public confrontation in which Nkrumah would have only gained greater appeal. Read in this way, the UGCC used Special Branch to serve their own political aims, astutely turning the government's efforts for secret intelligence gathering into a mutually negotiated arena for communication and dialogue. And their efforts were not without success. In Captain Eckel's letter to MI5 discussed above, he clearly stated that "the whole idea of holding the Congress is NKRUMAH's own."[27] By providing information to Special Branch, the conservative elements of the UGCC were able to maintain their relationship with government and gained unlikely allies in the Gold Coast Police Force.

The unique relationship between Special Branch and the UGCC would prove short-lived. The necessary elements to maintaining their relationship rested on mutual distrust of Nkrumah and the UGCC's position as the pre-eminent political organization in the Gold Coast. By the summer of 1949, Nkrumah had successfully used his internal exile within the UGCC to establish the Committee on Youth Organization [CYO], the convention's youth wing. The CYO itself had little connection with the Working Committee and was, more accurately, the institutional framework for Nkrumah's own political vision. By the Fall of 1949, Nkrumah had formally broken all illusionary ties with the UGCC and reshaped the CYO into his own Convention People's Party [CPP]. From then until independence, the CPP would be the dominant Ghanaian political party, against which the UGCC would vainly struggle to reclaim relevance. As a result of this dramatic political shift, the Working Committee likewise lost their connection to Special Branch. They no longer possessed insider information on Nkrumah or any restraint, symbolic or real, on his actions. In brief, there was little they could offer to Special Branch and police intelligence had shifted their attention from the UGCC to the CPP.

In the short-term, Nkrumah's break from the CPP also had an appreciable impact on Special Branch's reporting. Nkrumah's departure severely limited Special Branch's access to confidential political intelligence. They could no longer rely on the animosities within the UGCC's Working Committee to provide regular updates on Nkrumah's political activities. In the immediate months that followed Nkrumah's departure, Special Branch summaries rarely include mention of "well-place sources"; while these sources did not disappear entirely, their sudden absence signaled how productive Nkrumah's disruptive position in the UGCC had been for police intelligence. As if quietly affirming this fact, in the fall of 1949, Special Branch's monthly summaries stopped carrying special warnings against reproducing side-lined information that dealt with confidential sources. There were simply not enough such references to justify such caution. In the absence of confidential informants, Special Branch expanded their collection of all publicly available information, noting and reporting the particulars of every speech at all political rallies, the highlights from the month's national presses, and the entire bureaucratic minutia that attended the CPP's growing organization across Cold Coast. It was not long before Special Branch's monthly reports were straining the limits of what constituted an

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[27] TNA KV 2/1847, 71b.

intelligence ‘summary’. Whereas the first reports of 1948 had often run to ten pages with a few additional pages for personality notes, summaries following Nkrumah’s departure in 1949 and into 1950 often ran beyond twenty or even thirty pages. These bloated reports might have been Special Branch’s attempt to compensate for the precipitous loss of confidential sources in 1949, however, they certainly evidenced that the nature of police intelligence work had shifted. Instead of devoting their efforts to presenting insights from confidential informants, Special Branch sought and offered a comprehensive view of Gold Coast politics, established largely through publicly accessible and relatively mundane sources. Special Branch’s early informants in the UGCC’s Working Committee resulted in reports that were undeniably sensational, but the information they contained rarely rose above invectives directed at Nkrumah by his political peers. To some degree, it was little more than the gossip of Ghanaian politics. Once they had lost such sources however, Special Branch began meticulously cataloguing the progress of anti-colonial activism through mundane sources.

In little more than a year, police intelligence had become an active resources in the colonial government of the Gold Coast. Despite the number of sources they cultivated and the reams of reports they produced each month, Special Branch was not without its problems or critics. On the one hand, Special Branch entered a colonial system with a pre-existing informational regime. Departments and regional commissioners had previously been solely for supplying Accra with detailed information on matters ranging from local affairs to labour matters. Special Branch’s investigation into anti-colonial politics paralleled this older network, which invariably produced conflicting outlooks between the police and other departments. Additionally, Special Branch’s mandate blurred the distinctions between security and politics in the Gold Coast. For many in Special Branch, anti-colonial activism was read only as an impediment or threat to Government, a view that would become increasingly unacceptable in an administration that progressively accepted the necessity of ‘Africanisation’, self-rule, and independence. These contrasts would be laid bare especially after 1951 when the Gold Coast formally launched the experiment of self-rule with general elections with universal suffrage, creating both an African-led Legislative Assembly and Ghanaian Ministers serving alongside colonial officials in directing Government business. Yet even as early as 1949, Special Branch was beginning to irritate the larger administration, presuming its efforts to further the security of the colony included offer direction on government policy.

These divisions were first demonstrated by a handwritten memorandum that passed between the Secretariat and Governor’s office in June of 1949. The root of the memorandum’s complaints was Special Branch’s assumption of an advisory role on political matters. This advice was conveyed largely through personal discussions and private memorandums, records of which have not survived in the archival record. Yet Special Branch’s monthly intelligence summaries would suggest that such advice encouraged Government to take an antagonistic stance toward the anti-colonial movement, returning to the critical perspectives from the first months of 1948 when the UGCC, Nkrumah, and all other Ghanaian politics were understood as subversive elements. The memorandum labels both such counsel and Special Branch’s adoption of an advisory role a “dangerous delusion”. It explains, “The Special Branch is a fact finding and sifting machine whose assistance may be sought in the interpretation of these facts. The interpretation, however, remains with the Secretariat.” Adding to its criticisms, the

memorandum further accuses Special Branch of having "become very dogmatic and to have vague illusions of omniscience", encouraging a "tendency to fit facts to a given theory". In other words, this memorandum suggested Special Branch was both exceeding its institutional bounds and supplying poor intelligence material that only confirmed their expectations.[28]

In the following days after receiving this memorandum, the Governor met personally with the head of Special Branch. He was joined by a member of the Secretariat and future head of the Ministry of Defense and External Affairs [MDEA], G.E. Sinclair. The meeting seemed to have the desired effect of correcting Special Branch , ensuring that both it and the Secretariat were, in Sinclair's words, "working on the same lines".[29] After which, it seems, that Special Branch fell into an expectant pattern of bureaucratic repetition. They provided their monthly intelligence summaries, building their reports chiefly on public information, and restrained from trying to direct how government should act on this information. Special Branch had reached a kind of institutional equilibrium, having established the extent of their network of intelligence sources and restricted mandate as solely an intelligence-gathering organization. But that equilibrium could not be maintained given the changing affairs of the colony and the political parties championing the cause of immediate self-government. In October 1949, the government's inquiry into constitutional reform, the Coussey Report, was published and it called for an African-led Legislative Assembly, decided by a general election consisting of all adults above the age of twenty-five. For the CPP and their rallying cry of "Self-Government Now!", the Coussey Report was a tepid step designed to maintain British authority by placating nationalist demands. Conservative proponents of empire, however, saw it a wild experiment unable to succeed at little more than disrupting government. Nevertheless, plans soon commenced for organizing the Gold Coast's first general elections and, after several uncertain months for the nationalist parties, candidates began canvassing for support and votes. This created a wealth of material for Special Branch to study and posed a new set of questions on how police intelligence should operate in diarchal government. Could the branch continue to surveil nationalist politicians as elected representatives? Would African ministers be entitled to receive Special Branch reports, and if so, how would they be forced to alter their intelligence efforts?

The Gold Coast Police Force responded to these questions with expected apprehension. On November 1st, 1950, only three months short of the Gold Coast's first General Election, the Commissioner of the Gold Coast Police recommended that Special Branch take peculiar precautions after the formation of the Legislative Assembly. He wrote, "[African] Ministers are well aware of the existance [sp] and functions of the Special Branch and will consider it queer if they see nothing of its activities. I therefore suggest that Special Branch reports should be divided into two parts, namely, Part 1 - Top secret matter confined to the Ministry of Defence, and Part 2 - Stale news and matters of low security value published in a general report to which Ministers would have access."[30] This arrangement would have allowed Special Branch to continue their extensive and invasive inquiries into nationalist politics, an arrangement that reflected the Police's ongoing suspicion of Ghanaian politicians. Yet, it was also a proposition that would undermine the experiment of diarchy, with the British side of the administration

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[28] TNA FCO 141/4992, M.
[29] Ibid, L, 28 June 1949.
[30] TNA FCO 141/4991, 16, to the Chief Secretary, Accra, 1 November 1950.

purposefully deceiving their Ghanaian counterparts in the interest of security paradigms that were conceived under the colonial state.

After the Accra Riots, the Government of the Gold Coast achieved the remarkable feat of envisioning and creating an intelligence organization that encompassed the whole of the colony. Within a matter of months, Special Branch had not only organized its officers, it had already begun building a network of human sources that penetrated the major nationalist parties and revealed the interests of leading politicians. And yet, these early successes overshadowed the fact that Police intelligence had been created to answer the fears of a colonial state. As long as the Gold Coast remained a territory within the British Empire, directed by colonial officials for the supposed good of its African subjects, Special Branch's was perfectly suited to safeguard the state. Yet, as the nature of government in the Gold Coast was incrementally but radically altered towards self-rule and independence, Special Branch struggled vainly to protect a state that no longer existed.

Chapter Three: The Role of Special Branch during Self-Rule, 1951-1954

On February 11th, 1951, the Gold Coast held its first general election under universal suffrage, the first of its kind in all of Africa. These elections were the first step in the Gold Coast's transition from British colony to independent state, pursued along a course of incremental, constitutional reforms. The elections provided the colony a representative parliament, largely comprised of African delegates, and an executive council that would assist the governor in directing government affairs. The council's members included three European ministers (charged with Justice, Finance, Defence and External Affairs) while the remaining eight seats were filled by elected assemblymen, African politicians who had succeeded by popular majority in the legislative elections. It was a purposefully hybrid system, designed to retain colonial authority while African assemblymen and political parties were tutored in the affairs of state and could learn for themselves how to pursue democratic reform from within, rather than without, the administration. Despite all the ways the 1951 elections preserved European authority, it gave the people of the Gold Coast an 'Africanised' government eager to pursue self-rule and independence.[1]

Like the security innovations made between 1948 and 1951, the Legislative Elections were the culmination of political reforms sparked by the Accra Riots and Watson Commission. Yet despite their common impetus, the Gold Coast's intelligence network was severely disrupted by the elections and their consequences. For three years, every effort to improve the colony's security had focused on the threat of African nationalism. Police Special Branch had studied the UGCC, the CPP, and its leaders. The British Security Service had assisted Special Branch by monitoring anti-colonial and communist activists in London interested in West Africa. The Gold Coast's intelligence network, in short, had been designed to limit the influence of African politicians on the security of the state. Yet on February 11th, 1951, these same men became members of government in the Gold Coast and were empowered to direct its course. The most dramatic example of this reversal was Kwame Nkrumah. Before the election, Nkrumah was serving a prison sentence at Fort James for mobilizing a Positive Action campaign. In his absence, the CPP had mobilized to win a resounding victory in the legislative elections, partly by working in rural constituencies neglected by their opponents and by catering their political platforms to the demands of municipal voters. The CPP's victory was so resounding that within twenty-fours hours of receiving the electoral results, Governor Arden-Clarke both released Nkrumah from detention and invited him to become the highest ranking African in government as the Minister of Government Business. Mirroring the language of British Parliamentary politics, Arden-Clarke invited Nkrumah to organize a new government. The Legislative Elections had taken the single greatest concern for the colony's intelligence services and made him the popular figurehead of state. Political reform in the Gold Coast had caught up to its security in the most dramatic way possible.

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[1] For a more detailed description of the 1951 elections, *see* Austin, 103-152.

The legislative elections were intended to transform the African nationalist movement into an orderly enterprise that would cooperate with the British government. In the same instance, it also transformed government to meet the popular demands for democratic reform. Despite these clear shifts, the administration failed to anticipate how representative government would necessitate alterations to intelligence work in the colony. This was perhaps because the officials responsible for such matters did not believe that security concerns in the Gold Coast remained unaltered. Police Special Branch still saw Nkrumah as a irrational demigod who belonged in prison rather than the Executive Council. They also continued to contend that African nationalism was but a shoddy trojan horse for communist subversion. Even though the more-tempered members of the administrator questioned these characterizations, the governor and his advisors still considered nationalist politics to be the most volatile matter in the colony demanding Special Branch's attention.

Though not immediately obvious to the larger administration there was an important divergence between their own and Special Branch's view on nationalist politics. Both accepted that nationalist politics represented an important issue that the government required every assistance to successfully navigate, yet for many leaders in the administration, including Governor Arden-Clarke and the permanent secretary for the Minister of Defense, this was simply a matter of remaining informed. Special Branch however continued to see investigation of nationalist politics as the means of removing Kwame Nkrumah, the CPP, and other nationalist figures from office. They continued to see these men as criminals and were committed to leverage police intelligence to shift the larger government's trust in these men and indeed the entire project of self-rule.

These conflicting views combined with the changed political realities of diarchy presented four difficult questions for the administration to answer in the following years. First, could the administration rely on Special Branch to produce accurate intelligence assessments when its officers were opposed to the process of self-rule? Second, should the administration continue to support surveillance of African politicians, despite the potential political backlash? Third, how should the administration respond if it learned that elected members of government were engaged in criminal activity? Fourth and finally, how should the administration protect ongoing intelligence work while still training African leaders to manage the security concerns of the Gold Coast? These four questions revealed the divergent views on security work and the political future of the colony held by the administration, the police, and metropolitan officials. More fundamentally, the three years between 1951 and 1954 showed that the Gold Coast had produced a security system that was incapable of processing political change.

Special Branch's Tone

Before February 1951, there was surprisingly little discussion on how the legislative elections would impact security work in the Gold Coast. There were more pressing issues to address, not the least of which was holding the elections themselves.[2] This was a critical oversight to Special Branch who viewed the proposition of Africans in government, particularly Nkrumah and other members of the CPP leadership, as reckless and dangerous. For three years

Special Branch had followed Nkrumah with every conviction that he was either a charlatan, a communist stooge, or both. It was unacceptable to them that this man, even with overwhelming popular support, should be permitted any authority in the Gold Coast. Yet the mechanisms of state did not afford Special Branch the opportunity to express these misgivings, nor was the administration concerned with the opinion of the police on matters of political reform. The administration saw representative government chiefly as a necessary reform for a modern African society. Special Branch, on the other hand, viewed these reforms as a threat to the security of the colony. Without the opportunity to reconcile these divergent view, Special Branch became increasingly hostile to the administration for what they perceived as their ignorance and inaction. This hostility slowly bled into Special Branch's monthly intelligence summaries, at first without any notice from the administration in Accra but eventually raising the concerns of the Colonial Office and Security Service in London.

Special Branch's first response to representative government appeared their monthly intelligence summary for February 1951, the first report dealing with the legislative elections. Without comment or explanation, Special Branch simply added the following caution to the header of this and every subsequent report: "This is a TOP SECRET document from which no extract may be made without reference to this office".[3] This was a not a new policy. Special Branch reports had always been classified Top Secret and it was accepted practice to for officials to forebear from repeating or publicizing any intelligence material without the expressed approval of Special Branch. These policies had protected the reports, and the sources on which they were based, since 1948. The reminder of these reports' security classification was not in response to any recent oversights in protocol. Instead, this was Special Branch's first signal to the administration of their concerns. Africans now filled ministerial posts, and regardless of the rest of the administration's views, the police would not accept that representative ministers should have access to Special Branch intelligence. The administration did not realize the significance of this header or that it signaled Special Branch's misgivings with the state, but Special Branch would quickly make more obvious gestures signaling their dissatisfaction with representative government in the Gold Coast. This was done chiefly through the tone of their reporting.

Special Branch's new tone relied chiefly on magnifying their disdain for African politicians. Admittedly, before 1951, Special Branch had frequently adopted a condescending tone when speaking of nationalist parties and their leaders. For example, one biographical profile of a UGCC leader from a 1948 security report concluded, he is "a rather pompous little man who lacks the moral courage ever to become a political or labour leader of any consequence."[4] With this and countless other examples, Special Branch dismissed every African politician for lack of character, will, or intelligence. This condescension only became more severe after the legislative elections, particularly towards the CPP. Ironically, Special Branch's efforts to demean the CPP at times left them praising political parties in the opposition, despite what judgments they had raised in passed reports. For example, in their summary of the first debates in the legislative assembly, Special Branch observed, "The reasoned speeches of

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[3] TNA FCO 141/4996, Special Branch Summary no. 26, 14 April 1951.
[4] TNA FCO 141/4993, Special Branch Summary no. 4.

DANQUAH and his supporters - particularly that of DR. BUSIA who advanced a moderate and cogent argument - overshadowed the whole debate and were in marked contrast to the adolescent vituperations of NKRUMAH and his henchmen."[5] In another extreme example from the same report, Special Branch commented on CPP concessions to their supporters. These included the suspension of the unpopular agricultural program of 'cutting-out', the release of ex-servicemen imprisoned for political protests, and the re-engagement of workers previously dismissed for participating in the Positive Action campaign of January 1950. These initiatives had been part of the CPP's political platform during the elections and were critical components of their success among municipal voters. Special Branch dismissively referred to these initiatives as "the sops" and observed that they "had much the same effect on the C.P.P. Members as strong drink on the hardened drinker - exultation, reaction and a hankering for more."[6] Their language casted CPP leaders and their supporters as juveniles, criminals, drunkards, and ignorant goons.

Beyond mockery and contempt, Special Branch's description of Nkrumah and the CPP began to ascribe them nefarious designs. Following the election, Special Branch made repeated allusions between the nationalist movement in the Gold Coast and the totalitarian state of Nazi Germany. This change is best evidenced in their description of Kwame Nkrumah. The leader of the CPP had in the past been referred to as 'the show boy', mocking the charismatic nature of his political career. After the elections, however, Special Branch adopted a new moniker for Nkrumah. Intelligence reports began referring to the leader of the CPP as "the Fuehrer". Special Branch carried this allusion throughout their study of the entire party's structure, relating their organization and objectives to the Nazi Socialist party. One monthly intelligence summary contended that the defining characteristic of the CPP, absent of any political platform, was "almost slavish obedience to the wishes of the Fuehrer".[7] Special Branch also expanded this allusion beyond the CPP to describe the entire African nationalist movement. For example one report summarized the month's events by saying that "the burgeoning of black nationalism" followed "the shape of the Fuehrer's 'Drang nach Osten'[8]."[9] This language was provocative and sensational, particularly for intelligence reports prepared not five years since the fall of Nazi Germany.

In addition to vilifying the CPP and its leadership, Special Branch began to criticize the administration for their seeming indifference to the perils of the state. The most exceptional of such comments comes from the Special Branch Summary for April 1951, only the third such report since the legislative elections. After presenting all the intelligence material gathered throughout the colony, for the entire month, touching on every political matter possible, Special Branch made the following forecast for the future of the Gold Coast:

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[5] TNA FCO 141/4996, Special Branch Summary no. 27. Reports produced both by MI5 and the Gold Coast Special Branch identified subjects with intelligence files or of security interest by producing their names in block capitals. I retain that practice here when quoting from such reports.

[6] Ibid.

[7] TNA FCO 141/4993, Special Branch Summary no. 4 and FCO 141/4995, Special Branch Summary no. 24.

[8] German, "Yearning for the East". A 19th century idea that refers to German expansion into slavic lands which was later adopted in the 20th century as a core principle of Hitler's ideology, expressed in the invasion of Poland in 1939 and later programs to 'Germanize' conquered states.

[9] TNA FCO 141/4996, Special Branch Summary no. 29.

> Broadly, therefore, although there is the long term possibility that the C.P.P. edifice may crumble and fall, the current trend is towards some form of totalitarianism or, more precisely, mob rule. If the Police Force retains its impartiality and individuality no doubt it can withstand the worst potentialities of such a development, but if, on the other hand, *there* is excessive interference by the Executive as to whether members of the C.P.P. shall or shall not be prosecuted for criminal offences (of which there has been some indications recently), then the Force is well on the way to becoming the cat's-paw of a dictatorship. No doubt the new Constitution has got to be made to work - 'regardless' one might almost say - but if the Police Force is to become a pawn in the game, it would be a bold man who would predict the consequences in the Force itself and in the country at large.[10]

These three sentences reveal the full extent of Special Branch's apprehensions and marked a turning point in the operation of intelligence work in the Gold Coast. Before the April report, Special Branch had expressed blatant animosity toward the CPP and Nkrumah, and this was seen as a general discontent with the nationalist movement and its volatility. But in this report, Special Branch revealed the depth of their unease. They imagined that African nationalism would lead to a totalitarian state along the lines of Nazi Germany. This despotic state would depend on a corrupted police force that protected the regime in place of public security. This course, they felt, could be averted if the police were allowed to arrest and prosecute the criminals leading the nationalist movement, yet they saw their work frustrated by 'excessive interference by the Executive'. In short, Special Branch believed the colonial administration was blinded by the politics of the transitional state and unable to see the collapse they were allowing to occur.

The administration had been able to ignore Special Branch's views of African nationalists, their language was dramatic but their records were accurate, but it was unable to abide its perspective on the state and its future. The Gold Coast was set on its course through self-rule towards independence, and if Special Branch were to continue reporting in this fashion, they would be increasingly out-of-touch with political reality. Their reports also contradicted the image of the colony that the administration was attempting to convey to the Colonial Office and the larger British government. The Gold Coast was Britain's first experiment with transitional government in sub-Saharan Africa. It was intended to be an experiment for how colonial rule could be peaceably dismantled to create a modern African state with the positive disposition to remain in the commonwealth. Special Branch's intelligence summaries suggested the experiment was deeply flawed and doomed to fail. Even if officials in London were not persuaded by Special Branch's pessimism, they would recognize the divergent views between the governor's reports and those of his intelligence unit. It would signal that the administration had lost control of the police. Governor Arden-Clarke, in fact, originally hoped to ignore Special Branch's outbursts and thereby avoid a confrontation with the police. Yet while on leave from the Gold Coast and in London, officials from the Colonial Office informed the governor that

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[10] Ibid.

Special Branch's tone had been both noticed and commented on by various officials; they advised him to settle the matter quickly.[11]

In addition to this pressure from the Colonial Office, the Gold Coast administration began to recognize that Special Branch's contempt was compromising their ability to produce accurate intelligence assessments. The Permanent Secretary for the Minister for Defence and External Affairs, G.E. Sinclair, identified several instances over as many months where the police failed to explain several events in the colony regarding African politics. By anticipating the most devious motives, he explained, Special Branch was overlooking the simplest and well-reasoned explanations for the CPP's activities and strategies. Special Branch's assumptions made it impossible for them to see the true causes of events in the colony. As Sinclair surmised, "It would be just as harmful if [the summaries] were enthusiastically hopeful as it is now that they are cynically hostile to the current political developments."[12] In short, the administration realized that Special Branch's opposition to representative government was creating political backlash from the Colonial Office and undermining the value of local intelligence work.

Just as the administration was slow to recognize Special Branch's perspective, they were equally unprepared to understand it cause. Despite his previous insights, Sinclair believed that Special Branch's animosity was born of ignorance regarding the constitution's strength and the government's achievements. He reasoned that greater dialogue with the administration and time would eventually bring Special Branch back in line. Minister of Police, however, had a more accurate assessment. He wrote to the Permanent Secretary of the MDEA, "I am afraid that the tone of these reports derives much more from hostility to and unwillingness to accept the present regime than from any lack of knowledge."[13] This argument would be confirmed to the rest of the administration as they repeatedly and unsuccessfully attempted to correct Special Branch. Through the spring and summer of 1951, the Minister of Police, the Permanent Secretary, and even the Governor repeatedly requested that Special Branch alter their tone, informing them of their oversights and the progress made under the new constitution. When Special Branch ignored these entreaties, the administration turned to the police chain of command and spoke with the Commissioner of Police. Once again Special Branch continued in its criticism of the government, willfully ignoring the governor's directives. The administration realized that contempt for government was not restricted to Special Branch, but was the attitude of most senior police officers including the Commissioner of Police.[14] The concerns over Special Branch's tone had revealed a broader divide with the entire police force.

Despite Special Branch's persistent and insubordinate contempt for the administration, there was little the government could do. It was unthinkable to release any of the officers in the police force or attempt to replace them. In the post-war years, there were few British police officers who were suitably trained or inclined for colonial work. Each administration was desperate to secure as many officers as they could, especially as urban populations expanded rapidly and nationalist parties became commonplace in every territory. The Gold Coast felt these same strains, despite having a larger police force than most other British colonies.

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[11] Ibid, #121 to G.E. Sinclair, 6 July 1951.
[12] Ibid, #151 from G.E. Sinclair, 15 July 1951.
[13] Ibid, 153, from R.S., 15 July 1951.
[14] Ibid, 122, note to the Governor, 13 July 1951.

Dismissing any number of European officers would have been crippling. The demand for Special Branch officers was even higher and they proved increasingly difficult to replace. The Security Liaison Officer [SLO] once lamented to the Governor over the transfer of a single Special Branch officer to another unit in the police, noting that only a limited number of officers had the right "training and temperament" fit for intelligence work.[15] Even if suitable candidates could be located to replace the contentious members of Special Branch, this move would antagonize the leadership of the police force, solving one problem while creating several others.

Unable to resolve these issue themselves, the administration turned to London and the larger British security network for assistance. Their first hope was in the London Metropolitan Police Chief, Colonel Young. Young was scheduled to visit several colonies, including the Gold Coast, and provide detailed reports on their police forces so they might be improved to meet the demands of modern states. He was due to visit the Gold Coast in the fall of 1951 and the administration collected representative samples from Special Branch summaries to demonstrate their concerns to him shortly after his arrival.[16] The administration hoped that Colonel Young, as a fellow police officer, would be able to persuade the Gold Coast police to alter their view while also being removed enough from local contexts to see the validity of the administration's concern. The administration was sorely disappointed. In his final report, though vague on specific details regarding Special Branch, Colonel Young praised the unit and defended them against unnamed critics. His brief statement of support ended, "the Special Branch of the Gold Coast whose work and organization I have carefully examined is, like the Special Branch in the United Kingdom, a loyal, efficient and essential organisation."[17] In the end, MI5 was responsible for solving the administration's intelligence problem.

In October 1951, the Head of MI5's 'overseas section', Sir John Shaw, made an extraordinary visit to the Gold Coast. His trip coincided with the meeting of the Central Security Committee , or CENSEC. CENSEC been organized under the supervision of the SLO in 1948. Its purpose was to coordinate efforts between the British military, the Gold Coast police, and the colonial administration on matters of security. For example, during their meeting for October 1951, they discussed the general affairs in the colony, a crate of military rifles that had "gone astray", and the present supplies of tear gas, barbed wire, and wireless sets. In short, CENSEC dealt with far-reaching and mundane security matters. But in the same meeting, CENSEC proposed and approved a bureaucratic solution to the Special Branch problem. They discussed the formation of a Local Intelligence Committee (LIC). Governor Arden-Clarke introduced the idea by observing that government "should be provided with a regular appreciation of the current political situation. This should be prepared and submitted by a committee which should consist of persons best qualified to assess intelligence."[18] These persons included the Permanent Secretary of the MDEA, the SLO, the officer in charge of Special Branch, a member of the Special Air Service, and a General Staff Officer in the British Army. Shaw explained to the members of CENSEC how a committee would provide a more accurate analysis in place a sole officer or department with the same responsibility. This new system would not require Special

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[15] TNA FCO 141/4992, from P.M. Kirby Green, 27 September 1954.
[16] TNA FCO 141/4997, 42, from G E Sinclair, 18 September 1951.
[17] PRAAD ADM 5/3/84.
[18] TNA FCO 141/4999, 31 Minutes of the Twentieth Meeting of the Central Security Committee, 22 October 1951.

Branch to prepare monthly intelligence report. The officer in charge of Special Branch would instead report directly to the LIC which would make the final assessment of the raw intelligence the police provided.[19]

Although the issues with Special Branch were not mentioned during the CENSEC meeting, the formation of the LIC was undoubtedly a response to the tone of their reports and their stubborn opposition to the administration over the last several months. The formation of the LIC would ensure that all future intelligence reports coming from the Gold Coast gave a balanced perspective on political affairs in the colony. Special Branch would still have a role in drafting monthly intelligence assessments, but instead of being able to express their views without comment from the administration, the officer in charge of Special Branch would be required to argue their perspective with the other members of the LIC. With representatives of the MDEA, the military, and the SLO, the LIC was bound to produce tempered reports with greater objectivity through the demands of achieving consensus. This complicated and slowed intelligence work in the colony by separating the responsibilities for collection, analysis, and assessment between Special Branch and the LIC, but it would provide better intelligence material and avoid an unprofitable confrontation between the administration and the police. The purpose of this sudden change did not go unrecognized in the Colonial Office. On receiving the first intelligence report from the LIC, one official observed that this change to intelligence reporting in the Gold Coast was "an occasion for dispensing with the tendentious Special Branch Summaries."[20]

Special Branch's concerns and contempt with the transitional state is emblematic of the unexpected strains created by political change in the Gold Coast. Before 1951, the government had been unable to recognize Special Branch's particular suspicion of the nationalist movement. In some respect, those suspicion likely served the administration when the UGCC and the CPP were outside government. But with the introduction of the Legislative Assembly and the opening of ministerial posts for its African leadership, Special Branch was incapable of providing accurate assessment due to its pessimism. The formation of the LIC provided more objective intelligence material but unfortunately did little to address the underlying suspicions within Special Branch that had fomented the conflict in the first instance. This would impact the administration's relations with Special Branch until independence, negatively affecting security work in unusual ways. This episode also reveals how the political demands of the transitional state augmented the intelligence apparatus in the colony. More important than the creation of the LIC, the conflict with Special Branch had drawn the administration closer to security resources in the metropole. The Security Service, through the SLO and the head of the OS section, had provided a convenient and effective solution to the administration's security concerns. The following years would prove the complications of the administration's rift with Special Branch and their increased reliance on the Security Service.

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[19] Ibid.
[20] TNA PRO CO 554/387, minute sheet item 1, 5 Dec 1951.

Source CHEST

After the formation of the LIC, the rift between Special Branch and the administration would quickly create unexpected complications in security work and political matters in the Gold Coast. By far the most unusual complication rested on the use of letter intercepts. Since February 1949, Special Branch had intercepted all post for Kwame Nkrumah and other nationalist leaders. This work was supported by the Security Service who first provided Special Branch with Nkrumah's personal and secret p.o. box address, ironically obtained through their own intercepts on Nkrumah's associates in London.[21] Mimicking Security Service protocol, letter intercepts in the Gold Coast were codenamed Source CHEST and became a closely-guarded secret.

By any estimation, CHEST was a modest operation. Special Branch worked through two post office workers in Accra to monitor all correspondences arriving for selected nationalist leaders. Post directed to any of their public or private P.O. boxes was opened and copied. These letters were then be sealed and delivered to avoid detection. Though a simple process, letter intercepts provided the administration the most valuable intelligence on the nationalist movement and its leaders. Nearly every other source that Special Branch operated was an open source - public statements, party minutes, printed speeches - material that Nkrumah and other nationalist leaders knew would become public knowledge, or at the very least, was known by a number individuals. But letter intercepts represented a closed source. Nkrumah, Botsio, Renner, and unknown others did not know that the government was reading their correspondences. These letters captured these men at their most private, and for that reason, Special Branch was confident CHEST provided the most accurate portrait of nationalist leaders' thoughts and objectives.

Beyond the intelligence that CHEST provided on individuals in the Gold Coast, letter intercepts also revealed the connections that African leaders cultivated within and without the colony. These letters documented who these men relied on for guidance and instruction in their nationalist projects. For example, Nkrumah was an old friend of George Padmore, a Trinidadian writer, anti-colonial activist, and public member of the Communist Party. Throughout his career, Nkrumah sought Padmore's advice on political affairs in the Gold Coast and even asked for his assistance in drafting a new constitution for the transitional state in 1952.[22] Similarly, Nkrumah's friend and fellow CPP leader, Kojo Botsio frequently received communist literature and corresponded with individuals in East Germany. These connections disturbed British officials and Source CHEST was the only reliable way to measure their influence on affairs in the Gold Coast and the larger empire. In short, nothing equaled the utility of Source CHEST in answering both local and metropolitan security concerns in the Gold Coast.

Under the transitional government, however, letter intercepts were an increasingly dangerous intelligence resource. The representative government was a fragile coalition of African nationalists. In the recent past, these groups and their leaders had directed confrontational campaigns against the British administration and echoed their rallying cry of

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[21] TNA PRO FCO 141/4992, to Secretariat Accra and Ag. Postmaster General from Superintendent Special Branch, 2 June 1950; TNA KV2/1847, 80a, from Sillitoe to Captain P. Eckel, 13 November 1948.

[22] TNA PRO KV 2/1850, 245a, from SLO WA, 24 September 1952.

"Self-Government Now!" The concessions embodied by the legislative elections were designed to temper and redirect these nationalist demands into a constitutional and guided process of increasing self-rule and independence. Yet the administration rightly feared that the experiment of representative government could fail and that its failure would ignite impassioned and impatient demands for immediate independence. In this context, Source CHEST had the potential for precipitating that failure. If discovered, the censorship of African correspondences could destroy trust between the Governor and the representative ministers. At any cost, it could not be discovered.

The administration's first scare with Source CHEST came in June 1951. Kojo Botsio, the Minister of Education and Social Welfare, had received a number of letters from Berlin that had been "inexpertly opened" by an unknown party before their arrival in Accra. When these letters were delivered to Botsio, he immediately suspected the Gold Coast Police and the administration provided a hasty, though entirely false, assurance that the minister's mail was not being censored in the colony. Suspecting that another division in British intelligence was responsible, the SLO for West Africa, W.H.A. Rich, wrote the Director-General of the Security Service for his assistance. Rich requested the Director-General to identify the responsible agency and "advise them to stop examining a Gold Coast Minister's mail", thereby helping the Gold Coast "to avoid an embarrassing situation." The Director-General was unable to offer any substantive assistance. At the time, Berlin had already become a battleground of Cold War boundaries and been divided into four zones administered by the Americans, the British, the French, and the Soviets. It was unclear which zone Botsio's letters had originated from and possible that British intelligence had no responsibility for the amateur censorship. The Director-General did observe, however, that if these letters had originated from the Soviet Zone, the administration could take this opportunity to inform Botsio that, "this is only what he can expect if he elects to keep in touch with individuals in territory under communist control."[23] In a moment of unbelievable irony, Source CHEST had narrowly avoided detection and yet the Director-General recommended criticizing Soviet security for this same type of intelligence work! Intelligence Officers could not maintain this hypocrisy for long as censorship in the Gold Coast would be revealed only a few weeks later.

In August 1951, party scouts for CPP caught police officers censoring mail for Nkrumah and party headquarters, perhaps because the Minister of Government Business doubted the explanation for Botsio's letters.[24] Thanks to Nkrumah's personal press, the Accra Evening News, this discovery was quickly publicized and criticized. The matter prompted immediate intervention from Governor Arden-Clarke, who called a meeting of the colony's Executive Council and arranged for a private discussion with Nkrumah. Once again, intelligence work in the colony had precipitated a political problem for Arden-Clarke to resolve, and whereas he was slow to respond to Special Branch's reporting, he wasted no time to correct the problems associated with Source CHEST. The Gold Coast Executive Council decided to no longer grant Home Officer Warrants that would enable continued censorship and the Governor made a "personal undertaking" to Nkrumah that mail intercepts would cease.[25] Amazingly, these efforts

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23 TNA KV 2/1915, 55a, from W.H.A Rich, 3 July and 54c, to W.H.A. Rich from DG, 13 July 1951.
24 TNA KV 2/1950, 191b, from W.H.A. Rich, 25 September 1951.
25 TNA PRO KV2/1850, 252a, from SLO West Africa to DG, 18 Oct 1952

succeeded and the discovery of Source CHEST did not result in political scandal of any kind. Arden-Clarke had dispelled Nkrumah's suspicions and his word was seemingly sufficient to restore goodwill between the CPP and the administration.

Yet, despite the governor's 'personal undertaking', MI5 records prove that censorship continued in the Gold Coast for several more years. One other scholar, Calder Walton in *Empire of Secrets*, examined this quandary and arrived at the conclusion that Arden-Clarke deceived Nkrumah while directing Police Special Branch to continue censoring his correspondence. Walton argues this is evidence of Governor Arden-Clarke's "Machiavellian side", as he deceptively won Nkrumah's confidence while using Special Branch to study his affairs, concerns, and private thoughts. It is a claim that dramatically recasts the history of decolonization in the Gold Coast. Unfortunately, it is likely incorrect. The truth of Source CHEST is stranger still and speaks to the Governor's strained relationship with Special Branch rather than with Kwame Nkrumah.

The explanation for the continued use of letter intercepts lies in communications between the SLO and other members of the Security Service. MI5 was aware of both Nkrumah's discovery of Source CHEST and informed of the Governor's personal undertaking to suspend censorship in the Gold Coast.[26] Nearly a year later to the day however, the SLO passed on intelligence that Nkrumah was still corresponding with George Padmore in London.[27] Padmore was undoubtedly a target of MI5 investigation and surveillance, and though his security file has yet to be declassified, there is sufficient evidence in Nkrumah's files alone to prove that MI5 censored Padmore's mail and closely followed his movements. He was, after all, a professed communist who had studied in Russia and was devoted to spending his later-years in support of anti-colonial movements throughout British Africa. The SLO's intelligence was therefore a valuable assistance to the Security Service. But there was only one possible way for the SLO to have this intelligence - Special Branch was still intercepting Nkrumah's mail. This required clarification that the Security Service sought from the SLO during his next visit to MI5 headquarters the following month. The SLO explained that the source for their intelligence was "a local source SWIFT operated unofficially by Special Branch, against the written orders of the Governor, who receives the product in a form which he is not obliged to recognise as the fruits of disobedience to his own orders."[28] Though no explanation is given in the file, Source CHEST was renamed Source SWIFT and operated as if it had never been discovered. This was a clever cover as MI5 used the same codename to refer to their censorship of Padmore's mail. This note, by itself, can be interpreted to mean the Governor was ultimately responsible for Special Branch's continued censorship of Nkrumah's mail. Arden-Clarke had simply prepared official orders that exonerated his involvement and privately instructed the police to obscure their source in official documents, even those addressed to himself. For example, in this particular case, Special Branch had explained their intelligence on Nkrumah's continued contact with Padmore

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[26] Ibid, 191b, from SLO WA, 25 September 1951
[27] Ibid, 245a, from SLO WA, 24 September 1952.
[28] Ibid, 247a, note by H. Loftus Brown, 15 October 1952. Sherwood's *Kwame Nkrumah* (p. 91) identifies Source SWIFT as an informer. The records she relates do indeed portray SWIFT as an individual but the explanation provided here from records in the Gold Coast demonstrate that these records were part of a purposeful sham orchestrated by the Gold Coast Police Special Branch and the SLO to obscure the fact that SWIFT was postal censorship of Nkrumah's correspondence.

to the administration in Accra by inventing a human source. Their report to the Governor claimed that they had received the intelligence from "one of NKRUMAH's closest associates", adding that he "is a man in whom we have complete confidence."[29] If the governor truly was responsible, this was a remarkable example of obfuscation, misdirection, and invention. Yet this thesis falls apart under the additional records of MI5's review of this intelligence and its source.

Special Branch's discovery and the SLO's explanation were later reviewed by Sir John Shaw, the head of MI5's 'OS' Section. It appear that during his visit to the Gold Coast to organize the LIC (in correction of Special Branch's cynical reports), he also commented on the practicality of censorship in the colony as the the affair with Botsio's letters from Berlin and Nkrumah's discovery coincided with his trip. On discovering Special Branch's continued use of Source CHEST as Source SWIFT, Shaw wrote the following:

> Personally I think that SB were mad to operate [Source SWIFT] 'against direct orders of Governor'. Keenness on one's job is a virtue, but excessive keenness, amounting to foolhardiness, is not. When I was in the Gold Coast 14 months ago I strongly advised the Police to discontinue this practice then, in view of the legal position and the fact that the use of this source had already been discovered by local politicians. I was not thinking only of local repercussions, either. All in all, the game did not seem to be worth the candle.[30]

If Governor Arden-Clarke was responsible for Source SWIFT, Shaw's response would be peculiar for its sole emphasis on the Gold Coast Police. Again, he notes that "SB were mad" to operate this source, and reiterates that he advised the Police to discontinue it. There is no mention of the Governor, the Minister for Defence and External Affairs, or any other member of the administration. Shaw's note suggests that the police alone were responsible for Source SWIFT, committing themselves to another act of willful and illegal insubordination.

The SLO for West Africa, P.M. Kirby Green, provides additional evidence that Special Branch censored mail without the knowledge of the Governor. Two months after he had first shared Special Branch's intelligence on Nkrumah and Padmore's continuing correspondence, Kirby-Green provided further explanation for this intelligence directly to the Director-General of the Security Service. Whereas others members of MI5 could comment only on the implications of this source and the manner it was presented, Kirby-Green was in the unique position of being able to explain the cause for Special Branch's reckless disregard of the Governor's order. As MI5's local representative, the SLO operated in a middle point between the administration, Police Special Branch, and the Security Service in London. Perhaps given his position outside the administration or as a fellow intelligence officer, Special Branch had been forthcoming with the SLO regarding their motives. His note to the Director-General explained that Special Branch was persuaded to take the "undoubted risk" of continuing to censor Nkrumah's mail because the Minister of Government Business was still suspect and he surrounded himself with subversive councillors. Without Source CHEST, they argued, British intelligence would be blind to this

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[29] Ibid, 251a enclosure 3, from SLO WA, 18 October 1952.
[30] Ibid, note to 258, 1 December 1952.

situation. For example, shortly after Source CHEST had been discovered by the CPP, the Security Service had surmised from their own letter intercepts in London that Padmore and Nkrumah had begun to communicate less frequently. The Security Service had surmised that Nkrumah no longer identified with Padmore's radical idealism, now faced with the practical concerns of managing affairs in the Gold Coast and remaining in power. In MI5's report, they supposed that Nkrumah "finds Padmore's rigid political guidance not only inapposite, but irritating."[31] Special Branch, however, disagreed with MI5's conclusions. They supposed that Padmore's influence on Nkrumah was as strong as ever; the Security Service had simply failed to detect their continued correspondence because Padmore had taken greater precaution with his mail. Special Branch believed that censorship in the colony would be the only way to detect these communications and monitor what they supposed to be the most dangerous influence on Gold Coast politics. Kirby-Green further explained that Special Branch felt compelled to continue Source CHEST because they feared the Governor, lacking the proper intelligence, "might be misled by the overt statements and actions of NKRUMAH". Supporting Special Branch in their decision, Kirby-Green concluded, "we have no reason to believe that NKRUMAH means what he says to His Excellency [the Governor] or in the Assembly, again indeed we know that he does not."[32]

These records make plain that Special Branch continued the illegal censorship of Nkrumah's mail without the knowledge or support of the Governor. When placed beside the events that caused the formation of the LIC, Special Branch's actions are even clearer. From the first months of transitional government in 1951, Special Branch set itself at odds with the administration. Eventually, this led to a reorganization of security work that distanced Special Branch from intelligence analysis and reporting. This had been an organizational solution that did nothing to address Special Branch's concerns and further distanced the Police from the rest of the administration. It was during this same time that Source CHEST was discovered and the governor discontinued censorship. To Special Branch, the affair with Source CHEST must have appeared as another example of the administration compromising the security of the colony for political expediency. This is why the police directly ignored the governor's order and continued an illegal intelligence operation.

These events also raise unsettled questions regarding the British Security Service. The SLO in Accra and the Security Service were both aware of Special Branch's illegal operation of Source CHEST by the summer of 1952, nearly a year after the Governor's personal undertaking to Nkrumah that censorship had ceased. Yet Special Branch continued to collect intelligence in this manner and the Security Service was complicit in the deception to hide the original source. For example, in May 1953, Special Branch used Source SWIFT to acquire further intelligence on Nkrumah's relationship with George Padmore. Kirby-Green reported these findings to MI5 with their conclusion that Nkrumah had broken from Padmore and no longer sought his advice. H. Loftus Brown of the 'OS' section responded to the SLO, noting that MI5's surveillance of Padmore's mail revealed an entirely different story. The disagreement between these intelligence officers is unremarkable, but it is surprising that Special Branch continued to operate this source

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[31] Ibid, 226b, from H. Loftus Brown, 5 July 1952.
[32] Ibid, 262a, SLO WA to MI5, 29 November 1952.

without intervention from the SLO or the Security Service. Rather than inform the governor, MI5's representative in Accra quietly received, analyzed, and reported intelligence from an illegal and officially non-existent source.[33] The Head of 'OS' Section, Sir Shaw, had advised the police against this source, appreciating the larger political context. He concluded that the result of its discovery on local and potential metropolitan affairs made 'the game not worth the candle'. Yet when Special Branch disagreed with Shaw's counsel, the Security Service did not intervene.

The matter of Source CHEST reveals the disjointed nature of the Gold Coast's intelligence network. As originally envisioned, the coordination between MI5 and Police Special Branch was intended to prepare timely and valuable intelligence for the administration as it navigated the pressures of nationalist politics in the colony. Instead, the political outlooks of the Police and the administration divided this work, leaving the Security Service in an awkward position. In principle, they agreed with government's decision that Source CHEST was too dangerous to pursue, but in practice, the value of this intelligence outweighed their misgivings. In the end, this resulted in an intelligence network where the administration was actively being deceived by its own officers and its advisors from the Security Service. This deception resulted in the administration having access to sensitive intelligence that served their interest in Nkrumah and nationalist politics in the colony. However, this came at the cost of the administration's authority to govern. The Security Service allowed Special Branch to dictate what policies were in the best interest of the colony. Source SWIFT would not be the last time the Security Service failed the administration.

The Curzon Affair

Like the Gold Coast administration, the Security Service would realize that the advent of representative government would result in unexpected complications to intelligence work, particularly regarding Kwame Nkrumah. The legislative elections had both freed Nkrumah from prison and made him the highest ranking elected officer in the Gold Coast government. This increased Whitehall's interest in the Minister of Government Business and it partly fell to MI5 to determine exactly what kind of man was leading the new government. But because of his election, studying Nkrumah was not a simple security matter. There were political dimensions that the Security Service was unable to recognize and would later struggle to address. These struggles would not result any serious threat to the process of self-rule in the Gold Coast but would once again limit the colonial administration's ability to direct affairs in the colony.

MI5's first struggle with the Gold Coast's new political context arrived in the summer of 1951. Lincoln University, Nkrumah's alma mater, had awarded the Minister of Government Business an honorary degree and invited him to visit the campus in Pennsylvania. Nkrumah accepted the invitation and the Secretary of State for the Colonies swiftly scheduled a two-week tour in the United States and the United Kingdom for Nkrumah and his chief political ally, Kojo Botsio, currently serving as the Minister of Education and Social Welfare. The Secretary of state designed this tour to provide British and American policy-makers the opportunity to meet the men who would likely guide the Gold Coast to independence. He also hoped to preempt similar invitations, expected by the Security Service, from "communist penetrated organizations" who

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[33] Ibid, 285a, from H. Loftus Brown, 3 June 1953.

were equally interest to to meet and congratulate the leaders of the African nationalist movement after their electoral victory.[34] For the Security Service, Nkrumah's trip was an opportunity to reassess Nkrumah's political ideology when British officials were most keenly concerned with it. Nkrumah's association with the British Communist Party were well-documented, as was the socialist rhetoric he mobilized as a critic of the Gold Coast administration. Yet, it was unclear to officials in London how imprisonment, leadership of a national party, and ascendancy in the new government had affected Nkrumah's political aims. No doubt Nkrumah's behavior on the tour, properly followed by the Security Service directly, would provide answers to Whitehall's questions; Nkrumah's actions in the colony had certainly not provided any answers.

Since his release from prison, Nkrumah had expressed conflicting indications of his political leanings. Together, these contradictory signs made it impossible to determine exactly what kind of state Nkrumah envisioned for an independent Gold Coast, a position that exasperated intelligence officers locally and abroad. On the one hand, in a printed message to the members of the Legislative Assembly, Nkrumah had paraphrased an extract from 'A History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union', a doctrinal handbook that had been commissioned by Stalin in 1935. Nkrumah had also renewed his passport since his release from prison, making particular effort to ensure it was valid for all countries in Europe including the U.S.S.R. On the other hand, Nkrumah at times tempered his communist associations and ideology. After his release from prison, he had clarified to the local press that he was a Marxist Socialist, not a communist. And during his first few days in the U.K. for the tour, he was quoted saying, "if the Western Democracies are prepared to give us what we want we shall not have to go elsewhere for it."[35] These conflicting signs raised difficult questions for officials and intelligence officers alike. Was Nkrumah secretly an ally to the communist cause? Was Nkrumah truly open to Western support and influence? Was Nkrumah simply an opportunist, open to whichever side courted his attention the most ardently? Commenting on 'Nkrumah's mind' on the eve of the tour, the Director-General had concluded that "it is possible that he may be guided only by ambition, but the information now available is not sufficient to justify any forecast of his political evolution."[36] This was a problem that MI5 aimed to solve as quickly as possible.

If the Security Service had any consolation in their uncertainty, it was the knowledge that that Nkrumah's communist mentors were equally mystified by his political evolution. Chief of these was the British Communist Party [BCP]. The BCP had been intimately involved with Nkrumah's days in London before his return to the Gold Coast in 1947. The party had given him personal instruction for his nationalist aspirations in colonial Africa while and financially supported his first political endeavors as an organizer of the West African National Secretariat. In some respects, the BCP had seen Nkrumah as one of their African pupils, expecting him to guide the Gold Coast out from imperialist exploitation and into the international fellowship of communist states. His elevation to Minister of Government Business would have been the first clear sign of their hopes, if not for the absence of communist conviction in Nkrumah's words and actions. While the Security Service feared at Nkrumah's passing allusions to communist

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[34] TNA PRO KV 2/1849, 157a, to G.T.D. Patterson, 1 June 1951.
[35] Ibid, 162a, from WHA Rich, 8 June 1951.
[36] Ibid, 157a, to G.T.D. Patterson, 1 June 1951.

thought, the BCP feared the same statements demonstrated a dangerous flirtation with Western capitalism and imperialism.

Like MI5, Nkrumah's supporters in the BCP saw the tour as an opportunity to reassess Nkrumah's position. This hope pervaded the BCP's African Sub Committee, who postponed their regular meetings to attend Nkrumah's public speaking engagements and "if possible contribute to the discussion in a way that will show that collaboration with Imperialism leads to slavery and not to freedom."[37] But Nkrumah also had his critics in the BCP. These suspected that Nkrumah had already sold over to the British and the Americans for the promise of financial assistance in Ghana's future national projects, concluding that Nkrumah was only "a muddle-headed chap".[38] While the Security Service was privy to the BCP's uncertainty and frustration, this intelligence did not answer their own questions and only heightened their surveillance of Botsio and Nkrumah during the tour. If Nkrumah had any troubling contact with communist elements, MI5 prepared to uncover them during the tour.

Partly from this interest and also due to a tip from the Secret Intelligence Service, MI5 began investigating a diamond dealer named Vaclav Curzon. In April of 1951, Curzon had come to the attention of British intelligence by making discrete inquiries to locate a geological expert who could assist him in identifying ore samples from the Gold Coast. Curzon had unknowingly confessed to an MI6 informant that he was operating as a technical adviser to the 'newly appointed Prime Minister of the Gold Cast' - Kwame Nkrumah. When questioned why he did not use the geological facilities operated by the government in the Gold Coast, Curzon explained that he wanted to avoid the attention of British authorities.[39] Subsequent inquiries had shown that Curzon was originally from Czechoslovakia but had become a naturalized British subject after WWII. He had some past business dealing in West Africa and currently held held mining rights to diamond fields in the Gold Coast. In addition to his inquiries, Curzon's Czech origins further raised MI5's suspicions. Czechoslovakia had fallen under communist rule in 1948 and the Security Service feared that Czech agents served as emissaries of Soviet intelligence throughout the African empire. The Security Service was intent on discovering exactly what kind of association Nkrumah and Curzon shared and the tour promised them such an opportunity. Nkrumah had arranged to meet Curzon in London at the beginning of the tour. MI5 knew both the date and location of the meeting and requested to use audio surveillance equipment, euphemistically referred to as 'chairs', but "the Foreign Office had not felt able to cooperate over this type of furniture at that place."[40] Despite this setback, MI5 was able to surveil the meeting and learn all that they hoped. Curzon and Nkrumah would not prove to be communist subverters, but the intelligence MI5 did collect, though less threatening, would prove equally troublesome.

Curzon was simply an illegal diamond seller and Nkrumah was his partner. MI5 discovered that the two men operated a diamond buying operation in the Gold Coast. They

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[37] Ibid, 170, intercepted letter to E. Onwochsi from London District Communist Party, 13 June 1951.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid, 149b, to SLO WA, 23 April 1951.
[40] TNA KV 2/1849, 160, from Cummings, 12 June 1951. Furniture appears to be a common designation for MI5 intelligence sources at this time. For example, wiretaps on BCP telephone lines was referred to as Source TABLE while letter surveillance of George Padmore was known as Source CHEST.

purchased stolen diamonds from African farmers who trespassed onto privately-owned diamond fields in Oda and the region between Nsuta and Takoradi. With his own mining rights in the Gold Coast, Curzon could collect, export, and sell these diamonds without raising suspicion. The two men had collaborated once before, during Nkrumah's brief tenure with the West African National Secretariat in London. This scheme never materialized, but it appears that Curzon approached Nkrumah shortly after his release from prison in February 1951 with his latest scheme, and their latest collaboration had proved more fruitful. In the four months before Nkrumah's tour, the two men had successfully traded five to six thousand carats of stolen diamonds from the Gold Coast. Most were small stones, measuring 1/20 carat, and of poor quality, but they would have netted a significant profit. Their diamond interests had been the cause for their meeting in London. Nkrumah had brought with him a small quantity of diamonds so he could have them appraised in both the United Kingdom and the United States. Nkrumah wondered if the diamonds might prove more profitable if sold abroad and was willing to expand the operation to the United States if profitable enough. In brief, the Security Service had discovered that Nkrumah was not only involved in illegal diamond buying but was also using his first foreign trip as a representative of government to investigate expanding his criminal activities internationally.[41]

Though not the revelation they had feared, the Security Service needed to determine why exactly Nkrumah had pursued this course and if these diamonds were finding their way to Iron Curtain countries. Once again, their investigations revealed that Nkrumah did not have any secret communist ties. "Nkrumah's interest in diamonds," they wrote, "is bound up with his plans to make the Gold Coast economically independent, and he wants to break the hold of de BEERS and the Banks on the diamond trade in order to secure the profits for the benefit of the Gold Coast."[42] The Security Service also concluded that Nkrumah intended to "build up capital with which to obtain the help of American industry, and partly to 'buy' American politicians, who can assist him with official economic aid."[43] Simply, Nkrumah engaged in illegal diamond buying as an act of anti-imperialist defiance and to curry political favour that would serve the independent state he intended to lead. With no indication that the Minister of Government Business was using the same means to secure Soviet aid or that he continued to engage in such activities after June 1951, MI5 chose to take no action on this intelligence. It was criminal activity but a far cry from a threat to the security of the realm. Strangely though, the Security Service did not share this intelligence with its officer in Accra or the Gold Coast administration. While the motives for that decision are unclear, its consequences are plainly evident.

MI5's decision (or oversight) not to share Nkrumah's I.D.B. activities created a political problem for the administration of the Gold Coast. When it was first discovered in June 1951, this intelligence represented politically sensitive material of the highest order. At the time of the tour, Nkrumah was the leading African politician in the colony and the figurehead of transitional government. This information could have severely damaged Nkrumah's position if made public. His critics in the opposition would have used it to challenge his leadership while critical elements in government, i.e. the police, would have attempted to use it as grounds to remove the Minister of Government Business from office. This intelligence also had the potential to reshape

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[41] Ibid, 176a, from O.S.3., 13 July 1951.
[42] TNA KV 2/1850, note to 213a, from J.V. Shaw, 30 Jan 1952.
[43] Ibid.

the administration's relationship with Nkrumah. Even if only known to Governor Arden-Clarke, the administration would have been far more cautious when working with and supporting Nkrumah. But by the time MI5 informed its officer in Accra of Nkrumah's activities in January 1952, this intelligence had become even more dangerous.

Six months after the tour, Nkrumah had been promoted to the position of Prime Minister. This had not been the administration's original plan. The first year of transitional government had proved difficult, not only integrating the new African ministers and the Legislative Assembly but also ensuring that the growing pains of the new state did not derail the transitional process. In September 1951, Nkrumah and the CPP had been under significant criticism from the opposition. They claimed that the CPP had abandoned the aim of 'Self-Government Now' due to the personal privileges that they enjoyed under the present government.[44] To quell this criticism, Nkrumah had challenged every member of the Legislative Assembly to walk out from their offices if they had no confidence that the present government would not lead to self-rule and independence. Nkrumah promised that he, the other representatives ministers, and the CPP would join them if they took his challenge. It was only a bluff, and a successful one, but Nkrumah had gambled the state to deal with the opposition.[45] It was a moment that proved how fragile the new state was and how that fragility was beyond the protection of the European administration. Not long after, the CPP had begun questioning why Nkrumah was only afforded the title of Minister of Government Business and ranked below the ex-officio, European ministers in executive authority. The CPP contended that Nkrumah was the leading official in the majority party and under the UK parliamentary system (that the present constitution modeled), he should be recognized as the Prime Minister and be second only to the governor. This sparked a political crisis for the administration, with both governors from the Gold Coast and Nigeria flying to London to discuss the matter with the Secretary of State and the cabinet. Following an emergency meeting, it was decided to honour the CPP's request and protect the transitional government from potential agitation.[46]

This dramatic shift for Nkrumah made the intelligence on his I.D.B. activities all the more damming. Beyond any other point, Nkrumah had come to represent the transitional state. His criminal activity reflected on the entire administration. Additionally, the government's decision to elevate Nkrumah to Prime Minister effectively represented an endorsement from the highest offices in Accra and London; the administration had publicly, if not willingly, supported Nkrumah's place at the head of government. This meant that Nkrumah's indiscretion with diamond buying could damage the administration and the entire transitional process. The leadership of the police force had already expressed their discontent with the administration, believing the Governor to be guilty of grossest negligence in his duty to protect the peace and prosperity of the Gold Coast because of misplaced political aims. It was easy to imagine how this intelligence would vindicate their fears and renew their criticisms. By uncovering

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[44] One source of this criticism was the apparent prosperity demonstrated by the CPP ministers. They refused to live in bungalows provided for them in the outskirts of Accra and instead constructed large houses for which they drew rent allowance. Their flamboyant lifestyles were joined with rumors that government contracts must be bought from ministerial secretaries and that party funds were being diverted for personal pleasures - including Nkrumah's borrowing of £1,800 to import a Cadillac. *See* Austen, 164-165.

[45] KV 2/1850, 200a, from Arden-Clarke, 10 October 1951.

[46] Ibid, 215a, Kirby-Green to Shaw, 26 February 1952.

Nkrumah's criminal activities, the Security Service had produced a political quandary. Failing to appreciate its political context, MI5 had allowed matters worsen. Yet they still did not take this information to the Governor. Instead, the matter was left to the SLO for the Gold Coast, P.M. Kirby Green.

P.M. Kirby-Green first learned of Nkrumah's diamond dealings in January of 1952. He had investigated Nkrumah's contacts with foreign businessmen, including Curzon, and inquired if the London office had any relevant information on these relationships. The Security Service's reply presented all the details of Nkrumah's illegal diamond operation, to the extent that they had been reported six months earlier, including the areas of operation, Curzon's role, and Nkrumah's use of these diamonds to pursue his political objectives. There was no new intelligence to report, yet the Director-General recognized that recent changes in the affairs of the Gold Coast demanded a decision - simply, did anyone need to know anything about it? "You will appreciate," the brief from MI5 headquarters concluded, "that this matter is one not properly to be dealt with by us. It has criminal and/or political implications which, on the face of them, are not only of great potential delicacy but also are not really the business of the Security Service."[47] MI5's only suggestion to the SLO was to privately inform the Governor of these matters, with a special request that the Governor forbear sharing this information with the Gold Coast Police. Given Sir Shaw's assistance with settling the problems with Special Branch's 'tone' a few months earlier, MI5 was well informed of the possible repercussions of involving the Gold Coast Police. Yet, it was left to Kirby-Green to decide what action, if any, should be taken.

Remarkably, Kirby-Green decided not to inform the governor immediately, waiting several months after Nkrumah's appointment to the office of Prime Minister. In a telegram to the Director-General, explaining this decision, Kirby-Green revealed the myriad of ways that the Security Service was unprepared for the political complications of colonial intelligence work. Kirby-Green's first defended his decision through the difficult position that the governor faced with Nkrumah and the CPP leadership. He explained, "The fact is that Sir Charles [Arden-Clarke] is gambling for very high stakes to keep NKRUMAH on the present lines and it looks now as if he may well succeed . . . In view of these matters of major political import, I felt unwilling to intrude with what is by comparison a very minor incident". Kirby-Green also felt that the criminal component of this intelligence was not a simple conclusion either. "I am by no means sure," he wrote, "that [this report], if true, could be termed morally criminal for an avowed Nationalist leader, even though the methods may be illegal at the moment. The objects stated in [this report] seem on the contrary to be commendable for an African Nationalist who puts the welfare of the Gold Coast above that of H.M.G." Furthermore, Nkrumah and Curzon's enterprise was comparatively insignificant against the total number of diamonds exported by Africans in the Gold Coast. The SLO's latest estimate held that African prospectors were responsible for exporting two-hundred thousand carats each month. If Curzon and Nkrumah had only managed five to six thousand carats in five months, they were only adding half-a-percent to the trade. Finally, Kirby-Green revealed what was perhaps the most import cause for his reticence. He wrote, "I am not suggesting that H.E. [the Governor] should not be informed but I

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[47] The Security Service is solely an intelligence organization and lacks the authority to arrest or detain suspects, unlike its closest counterpart in the United States, the Federal Bureau of the Investigation. This is why the brief distances MI5 from both political and criminal issues. *see* Andrew.

would rather not do it myself at this stage, as above all, I do not want him to link me with the Police in his mind as one who is obsessed with the idea that NKRUMAH is no more than a cheap crook to be hunted."[48] Special Branch opposition to representative government had created a political rift, where even the SLO was anxious to share any intelligence that could be used against the Prime Minister.

Kirby-Green held to his arguments and postponed informing the governor until a month later. Governor Arden-Clarke agreed with the Security Service that the matter was closed, unless he added, Curzon continued to deal with "high political personages" in the colony.[49] It is unclear if Nkrumah continued to engage in illicit diamond buying after 1951. There is evidence that MI6 reopened the investigation in the summer of 1952 because of unstated sources, but Security Service papers presently available are unavailable to reveal what came, if anything, of their inquiries.

In the larger skein of Ghanaian history, Nkrumah's potentially brief involvement in illicit diamond buying is unsurprising and unrevolutionary. Kirby-Green himself noted that his actions were perfectly in-line with the attitudes of a professed nationalist who put African welfare before the laws of HMG (although the SLO did not air the possibility that Nkrumah's motives might have rested on personal gain instead of idealism). But reflected against the colonial administration's efforts to expand their intelligence resources to the demands of the representative government, this episodes reveals the complications that constitutional transitions created and the limitations to the support that imperial intelligence provided to local administrators. What is so remarkable about this episode is the frequency at which the administration was overlooked by the Security Service. In addition to collecting and producing this intelligence, MI5 effectively decided the administration's response by withholding this information. On the part of the London office, this was likely an oversight because the intelligence itself lacked a security component. The Security Service had been unable to appreciate how the political context in the Gold Coast might affect the value of this intelligence, perhaps shifting the administration's support for Nkrumah. On the part of the SLO, the matter is stranger still. Kirby-Green actively opposed sharing this intelligence with the governor for fear of compromising his relationship with Arden-Clarke. The SLO feared that he would appear too much like the Police Special Branch in their repeated attempts to question the transitional government and label Nkrumah as a political agitator, unrestrained demigod, and unscrupulous criminal. Special Branch had not only damaged their relationship with the administration but also made a critical outlook on African nationalism unacceptable in Gold Coast intelligence. In brief, this affair demonstrates how the intelligence network between London and Accra was unprepared to circulate politically sensitive material. It also questions if this network was truly intended to serve the interest of the colony or the metropole.

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[48] TNA KV 2/1850, 215a, from Kirby-Green, 26 February 1952.
[49] Ibid, attachment to 231, from Kirby-Green, 16 July 1952.

Chapter Four: Intelligence Work and Independence

In his landmark study of Ghanaian politics, Dennis Austin described the 1954 Legislative Elections as a "narrow gate" through which the country uncomfortably passed into the final years preceding independence. That narrowness was the result of the several ways the second parliamentary elections challenged both colonial officials and nationalist parties to progress the experiment of self-rule. This is perhaps most evident in the makeup of the assembly itself. While the first Legislative Assembly had provided the Gold Coast it's first African-led legislative, the majority of its members had not been directly elected by their constituents. Most had been nominated by territorial councils of traditional authorities, by foreign firms invested in the colony's natural resources, or by Governor Arden-Clarke himself. These had been provisions for a colonial system, charged with taking a tentative step towards self-rule. By 1954, these provisions had all been withdrawn. The 104 members second Legislative Elections would all owe their seats to the simple majority of their constituents. These members were welcomed to fill ministerial posts that had been previously held by colonial officials, assuming nearly complete control of the operation of the state. The only vestige of colonial rule was the continued presence of Governor Arden-Clarke, charged with the sole responsibility of working alongside Prime Minister Nkrumah until the expectedly short realization of independence, at which time he would pass the final responsibilities to the First Republic of Ghana.[1]

To some extent, the 1951 elections had simply served as a referendum on colonial rule. To vote for any candidate was an open support for the prospect of self-rule and the gradual series of reforms suggested by the colonial government. While parties competed for votes and the prestige of organizing the Gold Coast's first African government, these were modest contests compared to the unmitigated chaos precipitated by 1954. These votes would decide which individuals and parties would guide the colonial state into Ghana's First Republic, and with the abandonment of legislators nominated by traditional councils, each party had to transform itself from a nationalist party with limited regional representation into a national organization that aimed to represent the whole of the Ghanaian state. These changes would have their own growing pains, particularly as rivals competed not only to secure local support in individual districts but also the official nomination from within their party. These were fierce debates that produced equal conflict within and between the nationalist parties in 1954. Despite these changes, in addition to the formation of new powerful regional parties like the Northern People's Party, there was little that could unseat Kwame Nkrumah and the Convention People's Party from power. The CPP secured 72 of the available seats, safely beyond two-thirds of the new assembly, their closest challenger being the NPP who won 15 seats and a cohort of independent candidates ("rebel candidates" to Kwame Nkrumah) who took an additional eleven. The 1954 Elections had settled beyond doubt that Nkrumah and the CPP would guide the country into independence.

Beyond the demands of organizing and directing a legislative contest of this scale in the Gold Coast, 1954 also marked the tipping point in the administration's commitment to

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[1] Austin, 200 - 249.

dismantling the colonial state. Under the new legislative assembly, Governor Arden-Clarke would only continue to manage the state's affairs in matters of defense and foreign policy. All other posts, formerly held by ex-officio colonial administrators, were passed to Ghanian ministers. For the sake of this study, this meant that police intelligence remained isolated from African members of government, but the hope among Arden-Clarke and other liberal officials was that this would be a temporary situation. Eventually, the responsibility for managing the police intelligence would pass to Ghanaian officials, and the sooner that transition occurred, the more training they could receive in these complex matters. But this transition could not be finished quickly. As this study has repeatedly shown, police intelligence consistently proved a delicate matter with the potential of upending the affairs of state. Much of the worst had already passed but particularly here at the end of British rule, when the inevitability of independence was certain, police intelligence still had its own unique dangers. It no longer threatened to undermine the experiment of self-rule, but it did have the potential of destroying any goodwill the United Kingdom hoped to build with the future Ghanaian state and of scuttling Britain's designs for ongoing security.

In 1956, Colonial Secretary Alan Lennox-Boyd pithily surmised the concerns that officials in Accra were balancing after the legislative elections. Speaking of transitioning Special Branch operations to local members of government, he wrote, "the ultimate objective is to create a professional service, able to stand on its own feet when self-government is attained in meeting the intelligence needs of the territory and *with which the United Kingdom Security Service can continue to liaison on the normal Commonwealth pattern*. [emphasis mine]"[2]. As officials in Accra would realize in 1954, with others throughout the empire to swiftly follow, police intelligence had outgrown its original purpose in defending the colonial state. These resources had to be adapted to meet the future demands of independent governments and the groundwork had to be additionally laid for a Commonwealth intelligence network that would bind the United Kingdom to its former colonies. Especially given the continued uncertainties of the Cold War, the UK required its empire-wide intelligence resources to maintain its previous global position, an objective not dissimilar from continued investments in African economies or treaties designed to provide preferential access to strategic resources pursued by Britain and France in coming decades. Special Branch was now part of a post-colonial security vision one which raises uncertain questions about the fate of national security in Ghana, the most immediate being - can an effective independent domestic intelligence security organization be crafted from a colonial institution? And second, can the transition from a colonial to national security regime be meaningfully achieved alongside a post-colonial objective of developing a commonwealth intelligence network. In other words, would the future of Ghana's domestic intelligence apparatus be compromised both by the legacies of the colonial state and by the preparations for the security of Great Britain in the post-colonial world?

This chapter is the concluding study of police intelligence in the Gold Coast. It operates within the clear limits created by the the 1954 legislative elections and 6th March, 1957. Within this time frame, it considers how British and Ghanaian officials understood the purpose of the local police intelligence for the future of independent Ghana and the post-colonial world of the

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[2] TNA FCO 141/ 49992, circular despatch, 20 March 1956.

United Kingdom. It examines how Special Branch was transformed and if it was truly prepared to become an effective, independent institution in the First Republic of Ghana. These were issues that sparked frequent debates between Whitehall, Government House in Accra, the Security Service, the Special Branch itself. These debates and their resolution reveal the ultimate priorities and meaning of Gold Coast's nine-year experiment with police intelligence.

Africanizing Intelligence Work

As Lennox-Boyd had described, the objectives after the 1954 Elections were to create a professional intelligence service that could both stand on its own and liaise with the British Security Service after independence. Broadly speaking, these two objectives required 'Africanizing' Special Branch and police intelligence, a term local and metropolitan officials used to describe the inclusion of Ghanaian personnel at every stage of government intelligence work. This process had two chief targets. First, representative ministers had to be transformed into intelligence consumers, with both the experience to process intelligence material and the knowledge of how to direct Special Branch operations. The second target was Special Branch itself. Since its reorganization in 1948, Special Branch had almost entirely consisted of European personnel. None were expected to remain in the Gold Coast for long past 1954, let alone continue working for the Ghanaian Republic after independence. The continued operation of Special Branch required that Ghanaian police officers be immediately trained in intelligence work and given as much time as possible to work within the unit before inevitable reassignments and retirements drained its institutional memory. Though critical, neither of these transitions entirely succeeded due to unanticipated complications arising from local and metropolitan interests. In many ways, the Ghanian state inherited an intelligence network trapped in its colonial origins that it was further unprepared to operate.

Between the two task described above, introducing Ghanian ministers to intelligence work assumed the obvious priority. Governor Arden-Clarke clearly stated this at a meeting of the Local Intelligence Committee in May 1953. The meeting's purpose had been to review Special Branch's budget and the expected costs of preparing the unit for independence. To cap this discussion, Arden-Clarke argued that all these details indicated first that representative ministers needed to begin receiving LIC notes - how else could they be expected to authorize any increase in police expenditure for intelligence work if they were completely unaware of it? The governor also reminded the LIC that the eventual purpose of self-rule was to prepare Ghanian ministers to assume full control of the government; despite the security concerns with their politics and associates, this aim could not be achieved if representative ministers continued to be excluded from intelligence and security matters.[3] This proposal produced expected reticence from Special Branch and the Security Liaison Officer [SLO] who both anticipated this new policy would compromise secret intelligence information, but the Governor received overwhelming support from authorities in London. The Colonial Secretary called it an

[3] TNA FCO 141/4999, 90, 23 May 1953.

"imaginative experiment" and wished the Governor the greatest luck with his "bold and shrewd" initiative.[4]

Before implementing this plan, Governor Arden-Clarke also presented his plan to Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah. The Colonial Secretary had provided his unwavering support but he was likely unaware of the distressing frequency with which cabinet matters leaked in the Gold Coast. If the cabinet could not be expected to exercise discretion with rudimentary government business, what could they expect if they were introduced to secret intelligence information? Nkrumah supported the Governor's apprehensions and agreed it was "unwise" to share intelligence matters with the entire cabinet at that time. Instead, the two decided that only the Prime Minister's office would begin receiving reports from the LIC and that following the ratification of the new constitution in 1954, three more representative ministers, constituting an Advisory Committee on Defense and External Affairs, would be included as well. It was a limited implementation of the Governor's plan, yet by including Nkrumah in these deliberations, Arden-Clarke demonstrated the sincerity of his commitment to expanding security matters beyond the confines of the colonial administration.[5]

Despite the Governor's caution, even this limited plan was plagued with problems and failures. Within weeks after receiving LIC notes, Nkrumah requested that he be removed from their regular distribution list. Nkrumah would not explain his reasons to the Governor, saying that "it is only because of his [the Governor's] insistence that he continues to receive them." Arden-Clarke surmised that Nkrumah's reticence stemmed from "his dislike of facing unpleasant facts which do not accord with the wishful thinking in which he is prone to indulge."[6] This is a plausible explanation, particular if the LIC's reporting presented sobering predictions for the Gold Coast's finances or the state of it's politics.[7] There is another possible explanation for the Prime Minister's reticence. After implementing the Governor's orders, the LIC took peculiar precautions when sharing their notes with the Prime Minister's office. Instead of simply delivering the reports to the Prime Minister's office as was done with other officials on the regular distribution list, a member of the LIC personally delivered a copy of the weekly report to Nkrumah. This officer would then "stand over" the Prime Minister as he read the report and promptly remove it when he was finished. This copy would not leave the committee member's sight and most especially, it would never be left in Nkrumah's possession unattended.[8] This protocol directly countered Governor Arden-Clarke's original intention. Whereas he had included Nkrumah in discussions of document security and affirmed his trust in him by recommending he begin receiving the weekly intelligence summaries, the LIC's precautions suggested that the rest of the government's intelligence network viewed Nkrumah as a potential compromise to that system. Even from the office of the Prime Minister, Nkrumah was forcefully

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[4] Ibid, 112.
[5] Ibid, 127, from Arden-Clarke, 17 August 1953.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Reports from the Gold Coast's LIC from the period October 1951 and April 1953 are available at the British National Archives (see TNA CO 554/387). These reports generally cover a period of one month or longer. LIC reports from the period described above are unfortunately not available. Likewise, surrounding documents indicate that most policymakers in Accra were more concerned with the LIC's weekly intelligence notes, briefer documents that would have been the focus here. None of these weekly notes have been located in either British or Ghanaian archives and appear to have been destroyed.
[8] Ibid, 126, undated note.

reminded that officers in the government bore deep suspicions toward him and felt he could not be trusted with the state.

Of the peculiar affairs described so far regarding intelligence work and self-rule in the Gold Coast, this particular instance deserves further attention for the potential consequences it had for the future Ghanaian state. Since his return to the Gold Coast in 1947, Nkrumah had been immediately placed at the center of security and intelligence operations within British West Africa. His departure from the U.K. had been monitored by the Security Service and his arrival in the Gold Coast had sparked widespread fears of an eminent, communist plot against colonial rule. In the years that followed 1948, Nkrumah was repeatedly made aware of the position he occupied and the special animosity the police force carried toward him. By the governor's own admission, Special Branch had surveilled his correspondences as an elected representative of the Ghanaian state. These intrusions undoubtedly raised Nkrumah's concerns in Special Branch but before 1953, there had been an institutional divide separating the police from the larger bureaucracy of government. In countless instances, Governor Arden-Clarke affirmed his trust in Nkrumah and the administration's commitment to support his leadership towards an independent Ghanian state. Yet, Nkrumah's first encounters with the larger apparatus of government intelligence, with the officials responsible for analyzing intelligence and subsequently shaping government policy, had revealed these suspicions went much higher than the police. The LIC's decision to singularly and blatantly monitor Nkrumah's access to intelligence material signaled that the entire system of government intelligence was a political affair. Indeed, if Arden-Clarke's original purpose had been to train representative ministers in the operation of intelligence work, it had only succeeded in planting a seed of paranoia for Prime Minister Nkrumah. It had taught him that despite his office at head of the state, members of government could restrict and manipulate his access to intelligence. While the LIC pursued this policy in the interest of protecting their intelligence material, Nkrumah was not given the liberty of that explanation and might naturally have suspected their 'precautions' were only all too similar to the police's continued antagonism towards his office and nationalist aspirations.

These suspicions unfortunately impacted more than the delivery of Nkrumah's weekly reports. Upon receiving the governor's request to include Nkrumah on the distribution list for the Weekly Intelligence Report [WIR], various members of the LIC suggested that there was some information that would prove too sensitive even for Prime Minister at that time. They proposed that such information be removed from the WIR and submitted separately to the Governor as a Special Intelligence Report. This would not be a regular occurrence they decided, only used "as and when necessary". The governor accepted this proposal, aware that he was already severely challenging Special Branch and the SLO by including Nkrumah in such matters. After this meeting, though, other recipients of the WIR requested that they too would receive copies of these special reports. Quickly, the entirety of the original distribution list of the WIR were recipients of the WIR and their special addenda, allowing the LIC to remove all material that could reasonably be qualified as "intelligence". The recalcitrant members of the LIC had found a way to honor the letter of the Governor's initiative, to distribute the WIR to the Prime

Minister's office, but had entirely transgressed its spirit by making ensuring it had no intelligence material whatsoever.[9]

Before this time, the LIC had consistently supported the Governor's vision for security and intelligence matters in the Gold Coast. In fact, the LIC had been created especially so the Governor could mediate Special Branch's snide criticism of nationalist politicians and the experiment of self-rule. This divergence in 1953 owed to the fact that the LIC's chairman, the Minister of Defense and External Affairs, Norton Jones, was absent from the Gold Coast at the time of this new policy. The Commissioner of Police and the SLO appear to have used this opportunity to push through the new policy, trusting that neither chairman's acting representative nor the governor would recognize the implications of this new system or its dangers. It would only be a limited victory as on his return to the Gold Coast, Jones immediately sought the governor's authority to discontinue special intelligence reports and for all copies, saving those at Government House, to be destroyed.[10] If Nkrumah chanced upon one of these special reports, Jones feared tea administration would face another political crisis with the Prime Minister questioning the governor's sincerity to include representative ministers in security matters. Likewise, the LIC's special intelligence reports had the potential to mislead metropolitan officials on local affairs. As officials at the Colonial Office in London had received some of these short-lived reports, Arden-Clarke was later warned them not to "assume that I am necessarily always in general agreement with a report . . . [they] are apt to get things out of perspective and sometimes paint an exaggerated picture".[11] Much like the events that had originally created the LIC, the Chairman's brief absence from the Gold Coast had allowed various conservative elements in the Government's intelligence apparatus to subvert the official policy of the administration and create a contradictory portrait of self-rule in the Gold Coast.

This affair expectantly lead to an institutional confrontation between the minister of Defense and External Affairs, the Commissioner of Police, and the SLO. At a brief meeting with the SLO, P.M. Kirby Green, Jones asked him to explain the pitiful state of the WIR and the cause for their complete lack of intelligence material. Jones obliquely observed to the SLO "that the contents of the W.I.R. would indicate to a reasonable man that either the Special Branch Officers were producing almost worthless information and, in consequence, did not justify the public expenditure of large funds, or that the real information was not being disclosed."[12] He likewise many similar suggestions to the Commissioner of Police. Both were affronted by Jones' insinuations and defended that their efforts had been a necessary precaution to the unreasonable situation created by the Governor. The SLO was particularly bitter in his complaint, arguing that the Governor's desire to share WIR with Nkrumah had placed the LIC in an impossible position. In the SLO's view, the LIC reports were designed so that the Governor, fully appraised of matters in the colony, could ensure the security of the state. However the WIR could not fulfill this original, primary purpose and additionally educate the Prime Minister regarding the importance of regular intelligence reporting. It was impossible, the SLO argued, for the LIC to prepare an effective intelligence report for the governor that was sufficiently secured against the risks

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[9] Ibid. 123, 12 August 1953.
[10] Ibid., note to123, 12 August 1953.
[11] Ibid, 127, from Arden-Clarke, 17 August 1953.
[12] Ibid, 139, from Jones, 10 September 1953.

presented by Prime Minister Nkrumah. Two separate reports was the only means of accomplishing both tasks. Taking more forceful ground, the Kirby-Green also mobilized his position within the British Security Service to badger his point further. He wrote, "It is also my duty to inform you that I am responsible to my Director-General for the protection of all sources of secret intelligence operated by and under the control of the Security Service, and in this connection is is also my duty to point out that the Prime Minister is not considered at this stage to be a person to whom these secrets can be disclosed."[13] The Commissioner of Police similarly defended their actions, stating that it was inevitable that Nkrumah would abuse secret intelligence sources, if not in the protection of his allies then in pursuit of his own political ends.[14]

To the chagrin of the governor and the Chairman of the LIC, the anxieties of the SLO and the Commissioner of Police were not without merit. Within weeks of sharing security reports with the Prime Minister's office, Nkrumah had purposefully compromised government intelligence material. It was originally believed that a collection of secret papers had been stolen from the Prime Minister's office. Naturally, some assumed that Nkrumah had given the papers to someone, rather than the more innocent but equally damming explanation that they had been left in a "stealable condition".[15] In September, Nkrumah confessed that he had in fact knowingly copied an extract from an intelligence report and shared it with an individual under investigation. He assured the permanent secretary of the MDEA that he would not make a similar oversight in the future, though the rest of the LIC likely were unconvinced by Nkrumah's promise.[16] Under these circumstances, the LIC was poised to clash repeatedly throughout the following months, debating whether to reinstate special intelligence reports or whether the governor should withhold the WIR from the Prime Minister in specific instances.

As these debates continued over the summer of 1953, both sides developed two contradictory discourses for understanding the present situation and their own propositions. For the Police and the SLO, the dispute rested in a matter of policy and security views. They argued that Governor and Minister of Defense were approaching the matter from a policy view, which subsequently left them blind to the real concerns that were reaching Special Branch through its intelligence sources. On the other hand, the MDEA understood the situation as between the short and long term security interests of the Gold Coast. They saw the SLO and Special Branch's qualms as a short-sighted commitment to colonial security matters, overlooking the potentially disastrous consequences for Britain's future interests in West Africa and the stability of the Ghanaian state. In a memo from within the MDEA, an unknown secretary articulated these points clearly. He observed that the Prime Minister, along with all of the Representative Ministers, generally dismissed British fears in the "Communist danger". He did not disagree with Special Branch that there were disconcerting contacts between communist elements abroad and local organizations but was concerned that refusing to share the underlying intelligence that demonstrated those connections would leave Ghanian ministers indifferent to a tangible threat. This memo also noted their qualms over withholding information from the prime minister went

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[13] TNA FCO 141/4999, 132, from Kirby-Green, 9 September 1953.
[14] Ibid, 136, from Ag. Commissioner of Police, 10 September 1953.
[15] Ibid, 125, note addressed to secretary.
[16] Ibid, 142, from Senior Assistant Secretary MDEA, 12 September 1953.

far beyond the calculation of politics. This secretary pointed out that legally, the Commissioner and SLO held no ground for withholding intelligence from Prime Minister as an executive officer of the state. He summarized his arguments, writing "if the Prime Minister is really a Prime Minister he is entitled to see reports like this, and to withhold such information from him is not only dangerous in the long-term Commonwealth interest but indeed dishonest."[17]

As had happened three years earlier before the organization of the LIC , the administration found itself divided on security matters and those divisions arose from personal opinions of Kwame Nkrumah, nationalist politics, and the trajectory of self-rule. In 1951, those divisions had not been fundamentally addressed or corrected and they were again not be addressed here. After the setbacks of introducing intelligence material to representative ministers, Governor Arden-Clarke sought a compromise that would satisfy the concerns of the SLO and Special Branch while allowing a limited application of his original initiative to survive. The structure of weekly reports supplemented with secret addendum was not in itself a permanent solution yet it provided the foundation for the resulting compromise suggested by the governor. At a meeting of the colony's CENSEC [central security council], Arden-Clarke proposed that the LIC discontinue its regular, weekly reports entirely. The LIC would still meet and confer weekly but their preliminary assessments would no longer be written. Instead, the chairman of the LIC would offer an oral report directly to the Governor following the meeting. What information he deemed necessary, Arden-Clarke would in turn relay to the Prime Minister. Finally, at the close of the month, the LIC would produce a written Monthly Intelligence Report for distribution among the same list of local and metropolitan officials who had previously received intelligence notes. This included Prime Minister Nkrumah. The Governor reasoned this delay between written reports would allow the LIC to record and report valuable intelligence material for the Prime Minister, and other representative ministers in the future, without unnecessarily threatening Special Branch's sources. The police could procure additional sources to corroborate individual details from their weekly meetings so that if any of these monthly reports were compromised, it would be harder to identify individual sources. The proposal was accepted and this revised reporting structure remained in place until the end of British rule.[18]

In all of the Government's debates over this revised reporting structure, this is no account of how Prime Minister Nkrumah was appraised of these changes or what explanation, if any, he was given for them. Nkrumah certainly would have noticed the diminishing content of the weekly intelligence reports in the short time that he received them. Likewise, he also would have noticed the sudden end to the weekly intelligence papers while the Ministry of Defense and the governor debated the longterm consequences of the Special Intelligence Reports. When finally introduced to the monthly reporting structure, it would not have been unreasonable for Nkrumah to rightly assume that he had been the cause of these sudden and erratic changes. They evidenced that members of the government did not fully trust him and that even in his office as Prime Minister, those opposed to his political views or leadership could withhold intelligence without his knowledge. Governor Arden-Clarke's original intent had been to introduce representative ministers to intelligence matters and train them in its utility, but it's lasting impact

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[17] Ibid, 141, from unknown, 10 Sept 1953.
[18] Ibid, 146, telegram from SLO GC, 1 October 1953; 147, from Ag. Permanent Secretary MDEA, 2 October 1953; 150, notes of Censec Meeting, 30 September 1953.

would be to undermine the necessary and mutual confidence that needed to exist between the Prime Minister and his intelligence agencies. British officials in the Gold Coast and the London would not realize how poorly these efforts had backfired until the first years of Nkrumah's rule in independent Ghana, though they were already in evidence in the finally months of British rule.

In December of 1956, Nkrumah submitted an unusual proposal regarding intelligence and security matters in the Gold Coast and their future operation in independent Ghana. In the previous year, he had been introduced to the SLO and the Security Service's proposed plan for continued security liaison between the UK and Ghana. That plan had included recommendations that Ghana retain Special Branch as its domestic intelligence agency and all other intelligence structures such as the LIC. The SLO also advised that the Ghanaian state should forbear from the expensive venture to develop its own external intelligence agency; whatever intelligence the new state might need on foreign affairs, he assured, the Security Service could be depended on to provide.[19] Nkrumah's entirely rejected this plan. He wished instead bring the 'the Secret Service', meaning all intelligence resources in the country, directly under the control of the Prime Minister's office. This would involve removing Special Branch from the larger police force and making it an executive agency which he would direct. The Prime Minister would also assume the chairmanship of the LIC, giving him direct access to all intelligence provided by the SLO and giving him a direct hand in shaping intelligence assessments. These changes would be attended by a significant increase in Special Branch's which Nkrumah wished to increase from £10,000 to £50,000 per year.[20] If it proved too difficult or disruptive to alter these agencies, Nkrumah was also prepared to create a new intelligence organization. In short, Nkrumah wanted to personally control every aspect of intelligence work and ensure that the new Ghanaian state relied on intelligence work far more than its colonial predecessor.

For British officials, Nkrumah's plans were unacceptable for the ways it compromised the existing system and Britain's expectations for security liaison after independence. Immediately, the Commissioner of the Police, the LIC, and the SLO set to work dissuading Nkrumah from this proposal, primarily by identifying the several pitfalls of this new intelligence structure. Most concerning for these officials was Nkrumah's desire to bring intelligence collection and assessment directly under his control. This change would weaken the Police Force and create a dangerous possibility that intelligence material was unwittingly altered to fit the Prime Minister's expectations. With the distance that currently existed between the executive and intelligence assessment, they argued, the LIC was free to consider the full implications of collected material and arrive at potentially unpopular conclusions. With the prime minister as the head of the LIC however, they feared that "there would be a greater - and very dangerous - tendency to only provide information estimated as being palatable to the Prime Minister, and to suppress or ignore information which it was considered to be unwelcome."[21] They also observed that these new duties for intelligence operations and assessment would overwhelm his office, causing his entire portfolio to suffer. Finally, and most importantly, they argued that distance between the Prime Minister, his intelligence officials, provided necessary political protection. If the Prime Minister brought Special Branch or a new intelligence agency under his office, opposition members

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[19] TNA FCO 141/4990, 93, "extract from the minutes of the meeting held of the 31st October 1955", ITEM 7
[20] TNA FCO 141/4992, 88, minute by Duncan, 28 December 1956.
[21] TNA FCO 141/4992, 92, 104, and 105.

would have ample cause to accuse Government of creating and using 'political spies'.[22] None of these officials acknowledged the irony that Special branch for the last nine years had operated exactly as a 'political spies' and had only avoided such claims from nationalist critics by ensuring that Special Branch's work, if not its existence, remained outside public knowledge.

These several suggestions from the LIC and its membership focused on the efficacy and ramifications of Nkrumah's plan but they failed to recognize the central fear that motivated them. As the Governor pointed out to the LIC, Nkrumah was not chiefly concerned with the efficacy of intelligence work or even the nature of intelligence liaison with Great Britain after independence. Arden-Clarke explained that "the P.M. requires assurances that he will have access to all the information at present available to the Governor, when the responsibility for internal security passes to him as head of the government of Ghana."[23] Nkrumah's revised plan for intelligence work was the result of the years which he had been placed at the distant end of the state's intelligence structures. Since 1953, he had nominally been a recipient of the government's intelligence material but he had witnessed repeatedly how that information been withheld from him in various ways. The reduction of the WIR and their discontinuance entirely, demonstrated to Nkrumah how easily he and his office could be dismissed by Special Branch and the LIC. His proposals were simply assurances to ensure that such a situation could not be continued after independence. Unable to entirely assuage these fears, given that they were responsible for them, colonial officials agreed to implement an aspect of Nkrumah's proposal - for the final months of British Rule, Nkrumah served as the chairman of the LIC replacing the Minister of Interior who had been slated for the position. Nkrumah would not directly control all intelligence matters but he would oversee all assessment.[24]

Since 1953, Governor Arden-Clarke had attempted to introduce representative ministers to intelligence work, ensuring they understood the role of intelligence in government policy-making and how to direct an institution such as Special Branch. Although not recognized at the time, these attempts were an unmitigated failure. Arden-Clarke's caution and the suspicions of the LIC resulted in Nkrumah alone gaining any substantive experience in intelligence matters while the rest of Government remained ignorant of Special Branch. Even a year after the second Legislative Elections of 1954, a representative minister asked a colonial official if he knew anything of the "police intelligence service". He did not even know Special Branch's name, let alone their exact duties. In this case, the British official decided to preserve that uncertainty by pretending he knew nothing on the matter.[25] Special Branch had been treated too long a s secret of colonial officials that should be deliberately withheld from Ghanaian both within and without government. In addition to filing to address the general ignorance surrounding Police Intelligence, Governor Arden-Clarke's efforts served to inspire suspicion instead of providing real experience with intelligence and security matters. Nkrumah approached independence with the conviction that intelligence was inherently a political tool, a tool he himself would have to manage to prevent to potential rivals in government from using against him. The evidence of those fears was born out by his plan in 1956 and his actions after under Ghana's First Republic.

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[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid., 106, handwritten memo, 21 January 1957.
[24] TNA FCO 141/5001, 457, 11 February 1957.
[25] TNA FCO 141/4992, letter, 8 September 1955.

In a cabinet meeting of the independent government in June 1958, Nkrumah began implementing the original plan he proposed to British officials in 1957. The meetings of this minute read that Nkrumah "had observed in the other African Independent States, the Special Branch of the Police dealing with internal security should be attached directly to the Prime Minister and the Cabinet so that the Government would be continuously informed of what was going on in the country. He stated that he would, on the following day, meet the Commissioner of Police and the Minister of the Interior to discuss the matter." In the months that followed, Special Branch was attached to the Prime Minister's office and Nkrumah fulfilled his other aim of creating a secondary security service that operated entirely under his direction. Taken on their own, these actions could be seen as evidence of Nkrumah's autocratic tendencies, contributing to debates that Nkrumah had originally and purposefully envisioned an independent Ghanaian state to serve as the extension of his own personal authority. Placed alongside the history of his experiences with Special Branch as critic of government and his 'training' in security matters as Prime Minister, it is natural that Nkrumah would take these precautions, have repeatedly witnessed how intelligence institutions did not effectively operate in the interests of national security alone. In nearly every situation, Nkrumah had encountered government intelligence as a political tool that the state mobilized against its critics and against factions within the administration it did not trust. Nkrumah abuse of intelligence and security resources as the Prime Minister and President of independent Ghana only replicated practices he had witnessed under colonial rule and were trained to expect as necessary.

'Africanising' Special Branch

After 1954, one of the colonial government's immediate priorities for security matters was to ensure that Special Branch itself was sufficiently "Africanised" to ensure its work would continue after independence. This was an entirely new demand for Special Branch, more so than countless other bureaucracies in the colonial administration. When first organized in 1948, Special Branch consisted of seven Police Superintendents and three secretaries. In the case of the secretaries, the Commissioner of Police specifically noted that these three should be female and European. Such racial distinction was unnecessary with the police officers; at the time Ghanaian officers hardly achieved the rank of superintendent. It was not a deliberate racial bar but effectively meant that the foundation of intelligence would be accomplished by British officers. Given the precaution surrounding police intelligence, inventories and yearly reviews of the Police Force did not include specific details about the Special Branch, making it impossible to perfectly trace the identity and makeup of most of its officers, except for limited records from 1953 moving forward. These records establish that intelligence work, from Special Branch and the SLO were consistently restricted to European personnel or African personnel were frequently limited.

The most glaring example of the racial restrictions in Police Intelligence work comes from the office of MI5's SLO. In 1953, the Accra Evening News ran an article asking the Minister of Defense and External Affairs to name the Security Service officer stationed at Gifford Camp, Accra's military base and to explain why his staff consisted entirely of Europeans. Leveling a more particular charge, the article also asked the minister to account for "the causes

of the frequent dismissals of poor illiterate messengers since the office was established". The articles clear concern was that Government had been committed to a program of Africanization for several years and yet this particular office, managed by the Security Service, seemed remarkably resistant to employing Africans. It is unclear if the Government respond to this article yet the SLO for West Africa, Kirby-Green, nevertheless provided the minister an description of his staff and directions on how he might respond to the article. Kirby-Green's (attempted) defense of these charges began by noting that his office had employed five Africans as office orderlies, two having left at their request, one at his discharge from the army, one discharged for incompetence, and the final still employed by the SLO. He continued "the duties of these men are extremely light, being to sweep and generally keep clean our very small office accommodation - a task that normally takes about hour. For the rest they tend and keep tidy the small garden surrounding the office and take letters to the Post Office." He concluded, "the S.L.O. has always looked after their welfare, granted the inevitable loans, and generally looked after them and with the one exception they have all tended to become office mascots!"[26] As far as the Security Service was concerned, intelligence operation in the Gold Coast did not require Africa officers to execute their duties and they maintained the same patronizing and paternalistic perspectives that had ended MI5's efforts in West Africa after the Second World War (see chapter two).

Although Special Branch had begun with the presumption that only Europeans should be engaged with executing this work, the unit made some efforts to recruit and train Ghanaian personnel as intelligence officers in the year following 1948. This fact is established by a review of Special Branch executed by A.M. McDonald, an MI5 officer attached to the colonial office as a Security Intelligence Adviser, in 1954. This review was made with deliberate attention to the colony's needs during the final years of colonial rule and the expectant requirements of the independent state. Personnel were expectantly the focal point of such estimations. McDonald's report reveals that Special Branch's organization had shrunk from seven officers in 1948 to only five officers in 1955. British police officers, particularly those trained intelligence work, were in high demand across the empire as other anti-colonial crises resulted in numerous Special Branches being formed or expanded. Likewise, that decline owed to the Gold Coast's progress towards independence. Few British officers welcomed the prospect of working for an independent African government and in turn, there was uncertainty if the new state would even welcome their experience. All the better to secure a lateral promotion to another territory rather than risk the uncertain prospects of a European police officer in an independent African nation. Perhaps from these loses of British officers, Special Branch's five officers included three Ghanaians. McDonald met with one of these officers and was impressed by "his obvious good calibre and general ability". Despite this development, McDonald perceived a unit in decline. Police intelligence was weakening both from its loss of officers but the general deficiencies in the larger police force - as the force itself was diminished, Special Branch lost their dedicated source for general information across the colony. In 1955, Special Branch's police contacts for the whole of the Gold Coast only consisted of four inspectors, nine sergeants, ten corporals, and forty-one constables. There were obvious gaps in Special Branch's coverage in the colony. Of

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[26] TNA FCO 141/4991, 90, 21 March 1953.

the Gold Coast's seven regions, Special Branch lacked officers in the central province and northern territories, in each case relying on only a handful of constables and sergeants to identify and relay relevant material. Special Branch had always held an extraordinary concern in political intelligence, which was overwhelmingly based in Accra and Kumasi, but as a colony-wide organization or in preparation for becoming a national intelligence operation, they fell far short and there was little hope of correcting that. As McDonald observed, "during the present transition period personnel and administrative problems are such that its Ould be of little utility to embark on any extensive re-organisation."[27] Special Branch and police intelligence was to be left as it was while the administration worked to slow its attrition through the recruitment of more African officers.

The colonial administration in Accra would discover in the years to follow that there were extraordinary barriers to recruiting additional African officers to Special Branch. There were undoubtedly enough interested candidates looking for employment in the Police Force, but Special Branch had always had particular requirements for officers bearing the correct "temperament" or sufficient "calibre" to qualify for intelligence work. Additionally, the Gold Coast lacked the capabilities to train intelligence officers on their own, at least to sufficient degree that the LIC and the larger administration administration considered them capable. For example, of the three African officers in Special Branch at the time of McDonald's report, the Security Intelligence Adviser appraised them as "working satisfactorily".[28] The chairman of the LIC was deeply concerned with even this lukewarm approval. Speaking of all five of Special Branch's officers, the chairman considered that only one of these (a British officer) had "any real aptitude for S.B. work and I do not consider that he has the experience or ability which would enable him to take effective charge of the branch . . . it will be a sad state if one of the five has to take charge."[29] Since 1948, authorities in the Gold Coast had relied on programs in London to train the skilled officers they needed, especially for Special Branch work. But from 1953 onwards, when British officers were retiring in mass or accepting lateral recruitments to other colonies, the Gold Coast had been unable to secure Special Branch training for its African officers.

Much like the unofficial color bar that had existed for Special Branch officers at the unit's creation in 1948, police intelligence training programs in London likewise blocked African recruits. Intelligence training programs were directed by the British Security Service which required that potential applicants should be limited to the Officer in Charge of the Branch or an officer standing at least at the rank of Assistant Superintendent. Even as late of 1956, the Gold Coast did not have Ghanaian officers at this rank despite the constant bleed of British officers. Governor Arden-Clarke was concerned by this problem reflected the narrow way that the Security Service still understood Special Branch units and matters of colonial security. These restrictions accommodated territories still firmly placed in the maintenance of colonial rule but were out-of-step with the demands of a colony such as the Gold Coast where independence was

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[27] TNA FCO 141/5000, 288, from A.M. McDonald, 20 October 1955. There were certain inaccuracies in McDonald's report regarding the total number of Special Branch officers and the number of African officers. These errors were corrected by an LIC memo following this report. Those corrected figures are used here.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid., 295, 5 January 1956.

both certain and eminent. In January 1956, Arden-Clarke nominated three British officers for MI5's next special Branch training, but added "I am unable to nominate an African officer on this occasion as there is no such officer of sufficient seniority, but I assume there is no objective in principle to the acceptance of suitability qualified African officers for this course on this or any future occasion."[30] As Arden-Clarke was to discover, the Security Service did indeed object in principle to training African officers for intelligence work, though not for the reasons the Governor of any official in the Gold Coast would expect.

At the same time that Arden-Clarke had regretted his inability to nominate an African officer for U.K. training course in Special Branch work, the Security Service was preparing an alternative training program that might answer the needs of the Gold Coast police force. In addition to their London-based training programs, the Security Service also fielded a number of training officers who were expected to travel throughout the empire, running local courses on a variety of security and policing issues. This was an especially attractive solution for administrations that frequently balked at the costs of these training programs. Even when the Security Service waived fees for these programs, colonial administrations were still responsible to pay for travel, room, and board for their officers. This had in fact resulted in the practice of frequently selecting officers for these programs if they already happened to be on leave at the same time, a solution that rarely provided the most appropriate or apt candidates.[31] The prospect of a traveling training officer offered similar training to a potential wider field of local officers for a fraction of the cost attending metropolitan program. In place of two or three officers, a traveling training officer could instruct entire divisions, adapting multiple trainings for a variety of units and officers. Arden-Clarke was expectedly intrigued by this proposition and requested that an MI5 training officer visit the Gold Coast.

The Security Service ultimately rejected the Gold Coasts' request. In a letter to the Commissioner of Police in the Gold Coast, A.M. McDonald explained that the Security Service was unable to provide a local training program since their traveling officer had fallen ill. He further explained that the Security Service's was skeptical if these local programs, especially in African colonies, were sufficiently effective to justify the time and effort involved. McDonald wrote, "I am doubtful whether the type of course which we run is really suitable for Inspectors and NCO's [African officers]. Experience in Nigeria and elsewhere has shown that it is very difficult for a training officer who does not know the calibre of the African to put across the lectures in a form which they can assimilate." McDonald also doubted "whether it would be an economic proposition from the Colony's point of view to send out an officer solely for the purpose of training Africans ASP's [Assistant Superintendent Police officers] for a week as the Colony would have to pay air passages and allowances although the Security Service continue to pay salary."[32] More than anything else, McDonald's reply conveys the shocking ignorance of the Security Service to the affairs of the Gold Coast and the pressing needs by its swiftly approaching independence. With independence little more than a year away, the government could no longer maintain the luxury of presuming only British officers required training in Special Branch work or that investment in its African personnel was somehow ineffective or

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[30] TNA FCO 141/4992, 48 19 January 1956.
[31] Ibid, 37 circular despatch from Colonial Office, 20 December 1955.
[32] Ibid, 52, letter from MacDonald, 11 Jan 1956.

unproductive. Quite the opposite, as Arden-Clarke had repeatedly affirmed, training British officers would yield small returns for the Gold Coast Police Force. British officers, especially those experience in Special Branch, were far more likely to leave the force for an appointment in another administration. Only by training Ghanian officers could the government ensure it had a consistent base of personnel and training to keep Special Branch operating.

Without support from the Security Service, the Gold Coast's last hope for 'Africanising' its Special Branch rested on an ambitious initiative to develop a regional police training college for all of British West Africa. This scheme was developed by General Sir Gerald Templer who had earned considerable clout in colonial security matters after serving as High Commissioner in Malay in 1952 to 1954, applying his extensive military experience towards breaking the insurgency campaign of Malaysian communists. In 1955, he completed a report colonial police forces across the empire and arrived at the obvious conclusions that they were often woefully unprepared and untrained, especially according to the standards he had required in meeting the Malaysian crisis. He recommended correcting this problem by developing regional police training colleges in the Caribbean, West Africa, East Africa, and "the Far East" respectively. These colleges would presumably facilitate training for more local officers by defraying costs and in turn allow for such training to be tailored to local contexts. Regional police colleges would also facilitate the personal and institutional connections across administrations that would facilitate regional mobilizations against extreme crisis in individual territories. In the case of West Africa, where independence was looming for both the Gold Coast and Nigeria, a police training college could strengthen ties between future commonwealth countries and their continued liaison with the UK on local security matters. Templer recommended that West Africa's college be built in Nigeria and estimated its initial costs to run to £71,000 with annual recurring costs of £9,4000. Special Branch training was particularly noted in Templer's report, constituting a fifth of the regional college's annual budget. The Colonial Office in London did not account for the fact that this college could likely not be launched before independence, but the administration in Accra and and Lagos pursued Templer's suggestion in the hopes that these colleges could eventually assist independent Ghana and Nigeria to overcome the deficiencies in local police forces they had inherited from colonial rule. They were overly optimistic.

Within a year of Templer's report, the idea of a police training college in Nigeria for Britain's former colonies in West Africa had been summarily dismissed. Both the Nigerian and Ghanaian governments had their own discomforts with the proposal that made cooperation on such a project impossible to effect. The Nigerian government did not reject the proposal outright but communicated to the Colonial Office that they were incapable of committing to such a large project in the immediate future. This hesitancy was the result of both costs and Nigeria's own unique constitutional debates. Templer's original estimate of £71,000 was challenged by Nigeria's Public Works department who concluded that even if the college were constructed at a site with existing access to water and electricity, it would require an initial investment of £200,000. It was also unclear if Nigeria's future as a federal state could successfully manage a single police training college. Upcoming constitutional conferences were set to debate, among other issues, 'regionalizing' the Nigerian police force. It was unclear if any would decide to utilize a national training college or if the location of college would motivate animosity between the three regional administrations. The decision to abandon the project from the Ghanaian side

fell entirely to Nkrumah. Keenly aware of the deficiencies in the force, Nkrumah still rejected the proposal for the potential compromise it could create to Ghana's future policing needs. He could hardly recommending funding and supporting a training college outside the borders of Ghana, despite whatever assurances colonial officials could secure from the Nigerian federation. Unless the training college could be relocated to Ghana, Nkrumah would not support the project. Once dismissed, no other plans were prepared for Ghana or Nigeria's training needs before their independence.[33]

In his 1956 circular despatch, Colonial Secretary Alan Lennox-Boyd had committed every colonial administration to prepare its police and Special Branch units for the eventual realization of independence. As discussed earlier, he remind British officials that the "the ultimate objective is to create a professional service, able to stand on its own feet when self-government is attained in meeting the intelligence needs of the territory and with which the United Kingdom Security Service can continue to liaison on the normal Commonwealth pattern."[34] At the time, Ghana's independence was less than a year away and yet beyond Governor Arden-Clarke, there was a consistent indifference to this project. A few months earlier, an officer in the Governor's office had in fact written that, "the question of the provision of an adequate number of Special Branch officers capable of maintaining an efficient intelligence organization after independence is not of such immediate urgency". Instead, he and others felt the government's first priority was to ensure accurate intelligence for British officials during the final year of the transition period.[35] The purpose of Special Branch was to remain as it had first been envisioned - a tool of the colonial state. Governor Arden-Clarke attempted to shift that expectation but the reticent of officials in the Gold Coast and especially of the Security Service's metropolitan officials ensured that Special Branch approached independence with only three Ghanaian officers, men who would serve as a bridge between the unit's colonial legacies and the operation of police intelligence under the first republic of Ghana.

"Weeding Special Branch"

The government's several efforts to prepare Special Branch for independence, as discussed above, all failed. The unit remained unprepared to operate as a national security force and Ghanaian government officials remained ignorant of the unit's practices or purpose. Yet not all of Britain's security initiatives in the Gold Coast during these years failed. Alongside the professed goals of Africanising police intelligence, officials in Accra and London were also concerned with the fate of the colony's catalog of security papers. The combined records of Special Branch, the LIC, and the SLO represented a veritable trove of intelligence papers. Like any intelligence operation, the value of Special Branch reporting had been enriched both by its ability to cultivate additional sources and the growing archive of information that they carefully catalogued. In other words, Special Branch's utility as an intelligence organization directly increased with its ability to contextualize present affairs over information they had previously

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[33] Ibid, 79, memo from Secretary of the Federation of Nigeria, 19 April 1956; 55, from Arden-Clarke to Nkrumah, 1 February 1956.
[34] Ibid, circular despatch, 20 March 1956.
[35] Ibid, #44, to Collens, 7 January 1956.

acquired. As valuable as these records were, arguably as essential as they were to future intelligence work in the Gold Coast, British officials collectively agreed that they could not be allowed to pass to the Ghanaian state.

The Gold Coast's security archive possessed an expansive range of material that could compromise the U.K. strategic interests, both within and without West Africa, in a variety of ways. At the simplest levels, much of Special Branch's reports threatened to strain political relationships between HMG and the Ghanaian republic, especially while Kwame Nkrumah and the CPP remained in power. As discussed in chapter three, Special Branch's initial analytic frame for Nkrumah was "the Fuehrer". When not comparing the onset of Black nationalism to the formation of German fascism, they often resorted to snide invectives, describing Nkrumah as "the show boy" and even as a "tub-thumping demagogue". Other nationalist leaders were treated by Special Branch in like manner, their several entreaties in Special Branch reports casting them as charlatans, imbeciles, or or petty power-mongers. If passed to the Ghanaian government, only so much of this material could be explained as the personal prejudice of individual Special Branch officers before precipitating a diplomatic crisis. This was not the worst threat of this archive however. The truly damaging material was evidence of Special Branch's continued (and illegal) use of postal censorship, even after Governor Arden-Clarke's official suspension of the policy. Disconcertingly, the Security Service and Special Branch would have been equally committed to ensuring that both British and Ghanaian officials remain ignorant of this fact (see chapter four). Just as colonial officials had obscured Special Branch operations during self-rule, the U.K. could not allow the Ghanaian government to understand the full extent of intelligence efforts in the terminal years of British rule.

Alongside these diplomatic considerations, Security records in the Gold Coast also threatened Britains global strategic interests beyond West Africa. During the nine years of the Gold Coast's experiment with self-rule, local officials had been frequently involved with metropolitan security matters through the contributions of the SLO. The SLO's own records dealt with Britain's intelligence liaison with French colonial officials, the identity of several MI5 officers, and detailed some of the operational procedures (including cyphers) of Britain's larger intelligence apparatus. None of this material could be left for Communist elements to acquire and by 1957, these fears were still alive in the Gold Coast. British intelligence officers and policymakers had tempered their initial fears that Nkrumah was a communist provocateur. They had arrived at a far less disconcerting conclusion that Nkrumah's politics were centered only on his personal advancement. He could not be accurately labeled an ideological communist, capitalist, socialist, or any other variation of current political thought. They argued instead that his guiding political philosophy was the interest of Nkrumah, and he would adopt whatever ideological stance facilitated his self-interest. In the words of one MI5 officer, "Nkumah may have found himself driven off his ideological course by the compulsion of party politics, and may experience increasing difficulty in reconciling his preconceived theories with the tactical maneuvers necessary to keep himself in officer."[36] Yet many of Nkrumah's associates, including George Padmore and Kojo Botsio, were still viewed as communist threats. In the case of Botsio, Security Service officials were perpetually concerned with his potential identification as a

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[36] TNA KV 2/1850, 226b, to Tafford Smith, 5 July 1952.

communist but were unable to provide definitive proof one way or another. Botsio was thus a perpetual anxiety born of uncertainty. The SLO, P.M. Kirby Green, wrote the Director-General of the Security Service regarding this matter, hoping to answer if suspicions toward Botsio should influence how the Gold Coast 'Africanised' its intelligence apparatus. After pages of details and analysis, Kirby-Green concluded, "the fact remains that despite all that I have written in this rather over-long letter, I am personally unable to make up my mind, though I am left with strong suspicions based on no adequate foundation."[37] This middling conclusion left the larger Security Service believing that the Ghanaian Republic was potentially headed towards a communist intervention originating from its deputy Prime Minster and such an intervention could allow Soviet officials unmitigated access to whatever records or resources British officials failed to remove from the Gold Coast.

The process of destroying and removing security records from the Gold Coast, with the obvious detriment to future security matters, was formally conceived in October 1955. During his review of the Gold Coast Special Branch, A.M. McDonald recommended that, "Special Branch records will have to be 'weeded' before achievement of full self-government". If his choice of analogy was too unclear, McDonald further clarified this was not a simple reorganization of files but that "many files will inevitably have to be destroyed."[38] As future records would indicate, not simply "many files" but perhaps the entire archive of security papers in the Gold Coast would be removed or destroyed by 1957.

The process of 'weeding' security records in the Gold Coast seems to have begun sometime after January 1956. At the time, an officer in the Governor's office began planning this project with the Commissioner of Police, first with the organization of a committee to both identify which records should be destroyed and to ensure that these records were appropriately disposed of throughout the colony.[39] This would prove no easy task. Intelligence records were primarily held at two locations in Accra, at Police HQ and the SLO's offices at Giffard Camp. These collections would be simple enough to review, remove or destroy, yet Special Branch and the LIC's regular reports had followed a wide distribution throughout the colony. Regional officers, military officials, and the Governor's Office regularly received intelligence documents that could have been accidentally stored amongst other records. Intelligence papers, including Special Branch assessments and LIC reports, were never intended for constant storage in regional offices. All such reports distributed outside Special Branch, the LIC, and the SLO's office were appended with tear-off dockets, reminding regional officers that such reports should be destroyed shortly after their reception and the dockets returned to security officials in Accra to verify such procedures had been followed. In the case of LIC reports, the Minister of Defense recommended that regional offices regularly review and purge their holdings every three months. This "weeding" committee was expected to detect any departures from this policy.

Aside from McDonald's recommendation and the later plan for a specialized committee, there is no other mention of the destruction of security papers in the Gold Coast. That is perhaps an indication of the success this program. Further evidence of this program's success is the fact that in only one instance have any Special Branch or intelligence papers from the colonial period

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[37] TNA KV 2/1916, 82z, 17 August 1954.
[38] TNA FCO 141/5000, 288, 20 October 1955.
[39] TNA FCO 141/4992, 44, to Collens, 7 January 1956.

been located in Ghana. These records were located by Richard Rathbone in 1966 at the former offices of the Chief Commissioner of Ashanti in Kumasi. They consisted chiefly of Special Branch papers from the lat 1940's and though they bore the destruction procedures and tear-off dockets of later reports, the policies had clearly been overlooked in this instance. The effort to erase intelligence and security matters from Ghana's colonial archives had nearly proved a complete success.

During A.M. McDonald's review of the Gold Coast Special Branch, one of the unit's three African officers asked the Security Intelligence Adviser a pointed question regarding the future of police intelligence. He asked, "what safeguards were to provided to ensure that a future Gold Coast Government would not use Special Branch as a political weapon." McDonald may not have provided an answer then, but bleakly replied in his repot, "there can, of course, be no effective safeguard."[40]

Between 1954 and 1957, every security policy in the gold Coast had been pursued in light of the colony's rapid acceleration towards independence and in expectation of the future Ghanaian state. These policies were intended to create a professional intelligence service for the Republic of Ghana, yet has been shown here, none of these efforts succeeded. The leadership of the Ghanaian state approached independence largely ignorant of Special Branch, its purpose, or the standards by which it should be managed. As the force progressively lost its British officers, only nominal efforts were made to recruit and train additional Ghanian officers. Police intelligence in the Gold Coast was allowed to atrophy as the security of the colonial administration also diminished.

[40] TNA FCO 141/5000, 288, from MacDonald, 20 October 1955.

Conclusion

On the 24th of February, 1966 the First Republic of Ghana was overthrown in a coup d'état organized by its police and military. The officers responsible, calling themselves, the National Liberation Council, claimed their actions had been required in order to remove Kwame Nkrumah's increasingly authoritarian government from power, to halt the economic decline created by his socialist projects, and to ensure the return of a more democratic state in Ghana. The coup was unabashedly a violent referendum against the leadership of Nkrumah, a point the NLC publicly declared at the outset of the coup. After seizing control of Radio Ghana, Colonel E.K. Kotoka announced to the country: "Fellow citizens, I have come to inform you that the military, with the cooperation of the police, have taken over the Government. The myth surrounding Kwame Nkrumah has been broken."[1] The NLC had not only overthrown the government but also assumed the challenge of envisioning a Ghanaian state without Nkrumah.

The eight men leading the NLC encompassed the leading military and police officers in the Ghanaian government, though three deserve particular attention here: J.E.O Nunoo, Commissioner of Police, administration; A. K. Deku, Commissioner of Police, C.I.D.; and J.W.K. Harlley, Inspector-General of Police and Vice-Chairman of the N.L.C. These three were the senior police members of the NLC and nine years earlier, they had bee the only Ghanian officers of the Gold Coast Police Special Branch at independence. They were, in all likelihood, the only Special Branch officers to transition from the colonial state to the Republic of Ghana, responsible for rebuilding police intelligence after the personnel losses and document destruction that were discussed in the last chapter. They were, in other words, responsible for deciding what practices the independent Special Branch unit would continue from its colonial predecessor. Given their trajectory from Special Branch to leaders of Ghana's first coup, a coup personally directed against Nkrumah, it is difficult not to assume that they had perpetuated some of its particular enmities.

Two years after the coup, Nkrumah wrote of these three and contended that their affiliation in Special Branch directly explained their participation in the 1966 coup to remove him from office. Writing in *Dark Days in Ghana*, one of his last books and dedicated to defending the accomplishments of his presidency, Nkrumah contended that Special Branch bore particularly blame for the coup itself and the threat of military rule that hung over Ghana. He wrote that Special Branch had been specifically organized in 1949 as a direct counter to his own political influence and that it had trained its officers to view him "as a dangerous man whose political views and activities threatened all that was stable and respectable in British eyes." Nkrumah also accused Special Branch of undermining his presidency long before the coup itself. He noted that there had been six assassination attempts made on his life while in office, ranging from shootings to bomb attacks, and that in each instance Special Branch had been complicit in these treasonous acts. Nkrumah claimed that they had either ignored these several plots, withheld intelligence regarding them, or actively assisted the would-be assassins.[2] The coup had

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[1] "Army Seizes Power in Ghana," *The Times*, February 25, 1966, p. 12. *The Times Digital Archive*, http://tinyurl.gale.com/tinyurl/CUrGd3. Accessed 10 Dec. 2019.

[2] Kwame Nkrumah, Dark Days in Ghana, (New York, International Publishers, 1972), 41-2.

simply been the overt demonstration of their multi-year campaign to destroy his presidency and, in Nkrumah's view, compromise the future of African nationalism for the interest of neocolonialist forces.

With his charges and suspicions in Special Branch stated so clearly, Nkrumah also used to *Dark Days in Ghana* to explain why he had allowed the unit to continue to exist in his government despite the threat it represented. Given its dangerous legacy and the unit's dubious history, how could he have chosen to trust these men and this institution? Nkrumah wrote:

> Were it not for the continued criminal conspiracy by the opposition then I might have taken the risk of abolishing the Special Branch at an earlier stage. After all, it was not even part of the old colonial set-up and had only been instituted to deal with me and the C.P.P. in 1949. If I had done so, however, all security would have to be entrusted to the Party and while I did use it as a major source of information as to what was taking place in the country, once again it would have been equally dangerous to have relied exclusively on it.[3]

Nkrumah's explanation provides a number of revelations beyond the matter of Special Branch, showing his perception of the opposition, his party, and the dangers of government intelligence generally. While raising a number of additional questions, it makes clear that intelligence work had been a fundamental aspect of government under Nkrumah and an uncertain role in its end. Both the coup itself and Nkrumah's later reflections suggest that the matters considered here, regarding the role of police intelligence in the terminal years of British rule, carry far beyond 1957 and independence. It will be a matter of future research to answer what role government intelligence played in the First Republic of Ghana, but it would seem critical that these questions operate within colonial legacies that have been explored here.

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[3] Ibid, 76.

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