

May 6, 1960

**Reception of Kojo Botsio, the Leader of a Delegation
of the Legislative Assembly of Ghana, and J. B.
Elliot, Ambassador of Ghana in the Soviet Union, by
N. S. Khrushchev**

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Summary:

On May 6, 1960, Nikita Khrushchev met with Kojo Botsio, leader of Ghana's Legislative Assembly delegation, and J.B. Elliot, Ghana's ambassador to the USSR, to discuss Ghana's political and economic challenges and their vision for African independence. Botsio conveyed messages from Ghanaian Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah, emphasizing the need to combat new forms of colonialism, secure economic independence, and develop infrastructure, particularly the Volta River hydroelectric project. Ghana expressed interest in technical and financial aid from the Soviet Union to support its socialist development agenda. Khrushchev assured Ghana of Soviet goodwill and potential collaboration while highlighting the challenges of colonial resistance. Both sides agreed on the importance of African liberation and socialist solidarity, with Khrushchev expressing support for future cooperation through on-site assessments by Soviet specialists. This document summary was generated by an artificial intelligence language model and was reviewed by a Wilson Center staff member.

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RECEPTION OF KOJO BOTSIO, THE LEADER OF A DELEGATION OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF GHANA, AND J. B. ELLIOT, AMBASSADOR of Ghana in the Soviet Union, BY N. S. KHRUSHCHEV

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After the end of the general conversation with the full membership of parliamentary delegation of Ghana N. S. Khrushchev had a conversation with Botsio and Elliot.

At the beginning of the conversation Botsio said that Prime Minister Nkrumah had charged him with presenting a number of questions to N. S. Khrushchev about which Nkrumah would like to get a detailed report on his return to Ghana. Botsio then said that Nkrumah was confident that N. S. Khrushchev understood the situation which has developed in and around Ghana well. The main factor right now is the struggle to liberate the African continent; however, the colonial powers are beginning to lose ground in Africa, giving independence to some countries.

N. S. Khrushchev noted in this context that it would be more accurate to say that the colonial powers are beginning not to yield [their] positions, but to change tactics.

Botsio agreed with this comment and said that the current policy of the colonial powers is a new form of colonialism, against which the people of Ghana and their government are fighting. The new tactic of the colonial powers prefers not only to grant a fictitious independence to African countries, but to also draw these countries into military blocs. Botsio said in this connection that Prime Minister of Ghana Nkrumah would like to assure N. S. Khrushchev that the government of Ghana does not intend to join any such bloc, including a military alliance with Great Britain or any other country of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

Botsio further declared that the program of the government of Ghana provides for the establishment of a socialist system in Ghana. However, the imperialist powers are doing everything that depends on them to frustrate this movement of the Ghanaian people.

At the present time, particularly in Ghana, the next question is of the accomplishment of the project of hydraulic structures on the Volta River. The US government has expressed a readiness to give the government of Ghana financial aid to realize this project in the event the government of Ghana is able to come to agreement with a private company about the operation of the facilities which have been built. The International Bank of Reconstruction and Development has expressed doubt of Ghana's capability of performing such construction at the present time. However, there is information that this Bank will be ready to give the necessary assistance to the Ghanaian government in the event the US government also gives such assistance. In addition, there are a number of international aluminum companies which are ready to take part in the construction and give financial aid to the government of Ghana in the event they are sure that they will be able to then get cheap electricity. Several million pounds sterling have already been spent on all possible survey work. According to preliminary estimates it is supposed that all the construction will come to several hundred million pounds sterling. However, recently these projects have been reduced and the construction of a hydropower station on the Volta River and a plant to produce aluminum is being proposed as the first phase. About 62 pounds sterling will be needed to build a power station and electrical transmission lines to Accra, the capital of Ghana, and some cities. At this time Botsio noted that there is no coal in Ghana and very little electricity is produced, as a consequence of which the government of Ghana thinks that a hydropower station on the Volta River will be the primary energy base for industrialization of the country. That is why for several years the government of Ghana has been stubbornly trying to accomplish this project. Botsio stressed that Prime Minister Nkrumah had asked him especially to tell N. S. Khrushchev about that situation in which the projects [SIC] for the construction of hydraulic structures on the Volta River find themselves at the present time, inasmuch as Nkrumah will possibly raise this question in the future officially.

Botsio said further that at the present time the government of Ghana is striving to develop its own industry and agriculture. However, this is associated with considerable difficulties since the political situation of the country does not allow the

government to take too vigorous measures to accomplish its plans. The government has many enemies, both inside the country and at its borders. Therefore the government of Ghana has been forced to seek technical and economic aid abroad inasmuch as the fate of Ghana's movement toward socialism depends on getting such aid. Botsio referred to the housing problem in Ghana as an example. He said that it is one of the pressing problems and the government would like to have the domestic resources to build homes; however, it is not easy to get such money. At the same time the government of Ghana has repeatedly received proposals from private companies of the United States, Great Britain, the FRG, and other countries desiring to take part in housing construction in Ghana and to rent land for these purposes for a period of 100 years. When this was done the companies strive to get better plots of land, intending to use them for speculative purposes.

Botsio noted that senior leaders of Ghana know very well that the imperialist powers and especially France, and also certain forces inside Ghana are dissatisfied with the government of Ghana's fight of the liberation of African countries and the building of socialism in Ghana, and are trying to frustrate the policy being pursued by the Ghanaian government. Therefore the question of getting technical and economic aid is of vital importance for Ghana. Bearing this in mind, the delegation of Ghana held conversations yesterday at the MVT [Ministry of Foreign Trade] and GKEHS [the State Committee for Foreign Economic Relations] and presented Ghana's needs. Some preparatory work has been done in Ghana at the present time to calculate the country's economic needs. On the whole, according to the calculations made by the government of Ghana it will need a credit of 100 million pounds sterling for the next five years in the form of goods and services, including the construction of industrial enterprises.

At this time Botsio said that Prime Minister Nkrumah had asked [him] to inform N. S. Khrushchev about these plans of the government of Ghana, bearing in mind the possibility of obtaining practical aid from the Soviet Union. Botsio stipulated that at the present time the delegation could not hold specific discussions about these questions and was not empowered to sign any agreements. The goal of the delegation is to hold conversations of a general nature in order that specific discussions could be held in the future with Soviet specialists in Accra in the event such [people] were sent to Ghana, and then an appropriate agreement [would] be signed.

N. S. Khrushchev said that the ideas Botsio stated in the name of Nkrumah would be studied. The Soviet Union is in general benevolently inclined toward the needs of the peoples liberated from colonial dependence, and gives them feasible aid. However, it is naturally impossible at the present time to say anything specific about the questions Botsio raised. The idea expressed by Botsio about inviting Soviet specialists to Ghana to study the situation on site deserves approval. Such specialists could conduct the necessary study and then report the results of their work to the government of Ghana and the government of the Soviet Union, after which the Soviet government could consider the reports of the specialists and express its opinion about them.

N. S. Khrushchev asked the government of Ghana be passed wishes for success in the accomplishment of its plans.

N. S. Khrushchev jokingly noted that how easy it is to imagine the appearance of Soviet specialists in Ghana causing a howl from colonizers, who will begin to shout about Communists beginning to penetrate Africa, etc. The colonizers will try to arouse fear in the leaders of Ghana; however, it is well known that the Soviet Union never strives to penetrate anywhere and it has sufficient business inside countries. But if the government of Ghana asks the Soviet Union about assistance, the Soviet Union will try to help. As concerns the colonizers then they actually very much fear that the peoples of Africa will have contacts with the socialist countries. However, in our time it is impossible to prevent such contacts, for life takes its toll.

Botsio and Elliot noted that the capitalist countries themselves enter into contact with the socialist countries. Botsio was surprised when in Moscow he saw numerous representatives of British, American, and other firms who were holding active negotiations there.

N. S. Khrushchev confirmed that the Soviet Union has broad business ties with foreign

countries at the present time.

Botsio said in a continuation of the conversation that a quite important problem is appearing before the African countries at the present time – the question of the colonial powers, especially France, granting fictitious independence to some African countries.

N. S. Khrushchev noted that during his recent time in Paris some “representatives” of African countries approached him who tried to assure him that they lived very well under French rule, etc. In response to such big talk, said N. S. Khrushchev, I asked if things were actually so, who is fighting against the colonizers in Africa? The people making the big talk about the good life under the rule of the colonial powers obviously are those very lackeys of the colonizers whom the latter are feeding, trying to pass them off as “representatives” of the African countries.

N. S. Khrushchev said that, while on an official visit to France, he naturally could not engage in discussion with such people; however, he told them, he had a different opinion about the situation in the African countries.

Botsio said that in any event the struggle for the independence of Africa would continue and the colonizers will not be able to snuff it out.

In conclusion Botsio thanked N. S. Khrushchev for affording the opportunity to hold this conversation.

When parting with Botsio, N. S. Khrushchev said that the Soviet government would closely study the questions Botsio posed and try to help Ghana when possible, both through advice as well as through economic assistance. He then gave Prime Minister Nkrumah wishes for good health, good cheer, and persistence in the struggle, for only through persistent struggle can the independence of the African countries be consolidated.

Present at the conversation from the Soviet side were: N. A. Dygay, Deputy of the USSR Supreme Soviet and USSR Minister; Ya. A. Malik, a Deputy USSR Minister of Foreign Affairs; I. K. Kolosovsky, Acting Chief of the USSR MFA Department of African Countries; and V. G. Vysotin, Deputy Chief of the Office of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet.

I. Kolosovsky and V. Sukhodrev recorded the conversation.