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THE YEAR 1979 IN RETROSPECT

The year 1979, in all probability, will go down as a watershed in the political, social and economic history of this country. As the decade of the 70's drew to a close, three former heads of state were executed at the Teshie firing range; the historic retail trading centre of Makola was mowed down by soldiers; there was hardly any prospect of any of the governments in power in the year arresting the double-digit spiralling inflation; the promised return to civilian rule after seven years of turbulent military politics came to be enveloped in uncertainty, and men of wealth and position either fled the country or when they chose to remain in Ghana lived on their nerves from day to day. These were heady days when all aspects of life were dominated by politics.

Politics

With the lifting of the ban on party politics on January 1, the year started on a hopeful note for political stability after seven years of nightmarish mismanagement, ineptitude and all the negative superlatives appropriately fitting the disreputable National Redemption Council and its two phases of the Supreme Military Council, first under General I.K. Acheampong and then Lt. Gen. F.W.K. Akuffo.

For a brief period, it seemed that military intervention in politics - considering the blatant and widespread nationwide expression of disgust with the military - was going to be a thing of the past. But if political developments are unpredictable, more so in Africa's as yet unsettled political climate, coups d'etat are much less foreseeable. Thus, it would have taken more than mere political calculation to imagine that the SMC, then under Lt. Gen. Akuffo, would not only be swept away in the very middle of the year, but that Akuffo himself, his disgraced predecessor, Gen. Acheampong, six of their military collaborators and their professional senior, Lt. Gen. A. A. Afrifa, would also be shot, mowed down on the stakes, in the unforgettable exercise that was June 4.

The coup d'etat led by Flight Lt. Jerry J. Rawlings was the most significant, albeit jolting and, to sections of the society, menacing, event of the year clouding and dwarfing as it did all other events in this memorable year. Perhaps many have not yet recovered from the shocks of June 4. But while we are still unravelling the meaning of the three-month-reign of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), while the full impact of this chaotic period is still being calculated -

awaiting history's full and rigorous judgment - one can take consolation in the fact that the AFRC, at least, did not breach the promise to return the country to civilian rule. It inherited an exercise already started by its predecessor, Akuffo's SMC.

Barely 72 hours after Lt. Gen. Akuffo lifted the ban on party politics, two parties, the Action Congress Party (ACP) under Col. Frank Bernasko (one-time NRC Commissioner for Agriculture) and the National Popular Front Party - later renamed without the "National" - announced their existence and intention to contest the promised elections. By the end of the first week of the year three more parties had made their formation known. Mr. William Ofori Atta, presently Ghana's oldest political veteran, announced his United National Convention indicating a rift in the ranks of the former Progress Party (PP) leadership. Dr. John Bilson, a Kumasi medical practitioner, announced his Third Force Party (TFP) - a name that first appeared in the political arena a year or so before the return to civilian rule in 1969. Mr. George Osei, a 24-year-old political newcomer - and a novice - launched his Reformed People's Party. It is now, by all purposes, a mere historical footnote.

On January 7, an Accra lawyer, Mr. Johnny Hansen, launched his self-proclaimed Socialist People's Revolutionary Party. For some time it seemed as if a new generation of Ghanaian Socialists would put up a staunch fight in electoral politics. The hopes of such "socialists", as there may have been, were dashed on the hard rocks of politics when Hansen's PRP coalesced weeks later with the People's National Party (PNP).

The PNP, a regeneration of the Convention People's Party, shorn of its doctrinaire "socialism", (at least as theorized by Nkrumah in exile) was inaugurated on March 10 at Accra's Liberation Circle, promising to continue where the CPP under Nkrumah left off, or was edged off. By March 24, 16 parties were registered and issued with certificates by the Electoral Commissioner. Two weeks later, on April 7, the Electoral Commissioner prohibited seven of them: five for submitting false particulars on the location of their national, regional, district and constituency offices, one for not submitting any particulars on the deadline, and the seventh for late submission of its papers.

How the United Dynamic Party, the National Conciliation Party, the Development Filosofas Kongress, the People's Democratic Party, the United Movement, the Reformed People's Party and the People's Vanguard would have fared in the race to power, can now only be an exercise in futile speculation. But their exit, however, paved the

way for the six larger and better organized finalists: the PNP, the PFP, UNC, ACP, the Third Force and the Social Democratic Front (SDF).

Though the January 1 disqualification of 104 persons from elections and from holding public office certainly blighted the dreams of some political aspirants, it did not in any significant way (except fomenting squabbles within the parties) prevent the parties from choosing their presidential and parliamentary candidates. And in the midst of the June 4 turbulence, Ghanaians went to the polls for the first time in a decade.

Parliamentarians were elected, with the PNP taking majority seats in the 140-member assembly. The presidential race, fought once, and twice in a runoff, was won by Dr. Lilla Limann, a political newcomer, a man perhaps best known in the corridors of international diplomacy, and apparently a last-minute compromise choice whose selection was obviously made to avert possible rifts in the PNP. Mr. Victor Owusu, an oldtimer, an astute and experienced politician, peacefully, sensibly and satisfactorily conceded defeat in a contest well run and well fought for. His concession was made in a manner that could only portend a healthy and harmonious opposition politics in the civilian era to come.

If the AFRC allowed the elections and held firm to the promise of return-to-civilian-rule, it however postponed the transfer of power from July to October, or more specifically September 24. The AFRC, for good or ill, shifted the onerous tasks of reconstructing a shattered national economy, a down-trodden national sense of pride, a broken-down social fabric and a befuddled international image onto the shoulders of a PNP whose early toddling steps in administration gave little impression of a resurged party that had ruled this country for 15 years before. Besides, the PNP took over a country whose military and police apparatuses were, on the one hand, ridden with indiscipline and disorder, and on the other, at latent loggerheads with each other. The enmity broke loose when, very early in Limann's reign in October, the Takoradi air force men and the local police clashed in arms over a seemingly inconsequential act of arrogance by airforce personnel. If Ghanaians bitterly despised both the military and the police for their despicable daily assaults and humiliation of unarmed civilians, the police did not make it any easier for themselves. On November 16, the Apam police, in a zealous attempt to crush a feeble secondary school demonstration, shot and fatally wounded a form five student, Charles Nelson. After weeks of incapacitation in Korle Bu Hospital, Nelson was transferred to a London

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hospital some weeks later.

Economy

If anything has most preoccupied Ghanaian regimes, it is the numerous commissions of enquiry that never finish. The numerous commissions probing various sectors and branches of the economy were solid indications that the economic bankruptcy, in no small way, stems from the cancerous corruption that has immobilized even the most well-organized corporations.

On January 4, the committee probing the Ghana Timber Marketing Board (TIMBOD) discovered a deal, made in 1976, granting credit facilities for the export of C78,000 of wood products. The foreign exchange equivalent of the deal had then not been accounted for. Without letters of credit, TIMBOD the committee reported, two days later, exported C667,000 to Saudi Arabia in June the previous year. The Board failed to inform the Bank of Ghana of C467,000 of the proceeds and paid it into its London accounts without the Bank of Ghana's approval. These are just a few examples of similar findings in several areas of probes.

But it seems as if in 1979, corruption was concentrated around the sale of our forest products. On March 30, the Chief Executive of the Cocoa Marketing Board publicly stated that the CMB was "rife with corruption". The statement probably anticipated the fate of the Board under the AFRC which, later on September 13, dissolved the CMB and replaced it with the Cocoa Council. Two weeks earlier, on August 28, Mr. Kwame Afreh, Commissioner for Cocoa Affairs, reported the loss of 500,000 tonnes of cocoa through smuggling alone. Sixteen cocoa buying agencies, by September, owed the CMB some C65,722,141 which they were asked to gorge out. For the grumbling cocoa farmer, the price of his product was raised from C80 to C120 per 30 kilos by the AFRC.

If national money was lost through corruption and smuggling, pure negligence also took its toll. On February 13, 400 logs worth about C7 million went adrift into the sea at the Takoradi harbour while on the 28th of the same month, a fire outbreak at the Tema harbour destroyed goods worth C20 million. Worse still, while consumer goods were in acutely short supply, it was discovered on June 27 that 6,000 cartons of mackerel and large quantities of baby food were left to rot at the provisions section of Tema's GNTC.

By August, according to the AFRC's Maj. Mensah Gbedemah, the rate of inflation had dropped from an incredible 130% to a not so encouraging 100%. The drop, if only statistically correct, had no realistic reflection on the acute shortages and expensively bizarre prices of the

available goods, even in spite of the forced slashes of prices - such as the pegging of a loaf of bread at C2.30.

But if the forced price cuts did not please business and, especially, market women, they were in for a more mind-boggling experience. Makola women (or generally market women) seemed to have borne the greater wrath of the "moral revolution" of Jerry Rawlings and his boys. They practically saw their nakedness in public as many were whipped (by men), their hair shaven and forced to roll in odorous gutters as punishment for their alleged leading role in the unscientifically defined mess of "kalabule". To cap it all, the citadel of the Accra Market women, Makola No. 1, was demolished on September 20 to the applause of large sections of working people and others who apparently perceived the "revolution" in the superficial symbols of beatings and dynamiting. Four days later, the sprawling Kantamanto market in Accra was also pulled down. Not only markets, but private homes allegedly put up with "kalabule" money, were dynamited to their foundations. In the Roman Ridge, as one example, 16 houses were uprooted. Someone appropriately asked: "Do houses commit crimes?"

Some foreign press rather derogatorily described the AFRC as a "tax collector". In August for example, the Tata Brewery, which was subsequently taken over by the state, was ordered to pay back taxes amounting to about C30.3 million, while the CMB paid about C1.22 billion as export duty for 1979. On September 13, as a further example, 14 vehicle importing companies also paid an amount of C3,047,000 in refunds and fines for alleged anomalies in business practices.

Labour

The turbulent labour situation, one indicator reflecting the almost sinking economy, was in full swing in the early part of the year. Inherited from the previous year, labour agitation was on the increase, only to wane in the days of the AFRC when, perhaps, the AFRC's attacks on business people and traders provided a sense of appeasement or satisfaction that something real was being done to alleviate their plight.

Health

When the AFRC came on the scene, nurses across the country were on strike. Korle Bu nurses, those at Okomfo Anokye in Kumasi, at Takoradi's Effia Nkwanta, all joined the fray for increases in financial emoluments. In Kumasi, at least, the effect was reportedly the death of 10 patients in one ward. But if nurses and doctors' strikes caused some deaths, the conditions of health facilities themselves contributed massively to health pro-

blems and unrecorded deaths. At Effia Nkwanta hospital, it was found in March that all six operating theaters were in too dangerous a dilapidated situation to use, and were closed down. Later in the year, Okomfo Anokye was reported to be in a similar, if not worse, situation: negligence.

But the environment of our cities, towns and villages has probably never been in a worse hazardous shape. Filthy, uncleaned and open gutters still gape at neighbourhood residents and passers-by, and garbage heaps in some places are mountains dwarfing nearby houses. In the cities, to cap it all, conservancy labourers went on strike on June 5 for more pay, health care and better equipment for their jobs. It was the first labour issue the AFRC had to deal with - and appeasingly.

Transportation

Transportation problems, already aggravated by lack of spare parts, itself accentuated by bad roads riddled with pot-holes and criss-crossed by virtual gutters and broken culverts and small bridges, reached an abominable peak in June-

September. The oil sanction briefly imposed on Ghana by Nigeria as an expression of its opposition to June 4, worsened the situation by grounding cars, trucks, buses and jalopies. The situation abated somewhat on August 29, and into September, when 25,000 tons of crude oil from Libya were discharged at Tema harbour. Another shipment apparently arrived from Algeria - all to boost the 10,359 metric tons of crude oil from the Saltpond Oil Fields discharged at Tema earlier in the first week of August. The petroleum situation remained critical to the end of the year, haunting the new year. And though the acutely terrible transportation problem minimally abated by year's end, the 100% oil price increase effected by President Limann's first budget on December 21, has worsened daily transportation costs for travellers. This, in turn, has pushed up the prices of several consumer and producer goods. The effects of the budget and its accompanying price increase are flowering into grumbles and expressions of dissatisfaction that don't seem to augur too well for the new civilian administration. On the same budget day, it was also announced that Ghana's external debts stood at \$1,334.80 million, or C3,670.70 million by June ending. It represented medium and short-term payment obligation.

To soothe mass discontent with high prices and unavailability of goods, and to fulfil a promise for a "unique Christmas" the government received gifts of 23 articulated truck loads from Nigeria. The goods ranged from milk, toilet paper and (it was reported) common table salt. The controversy over whether they were gifts or whether they were purchased, led the opposition ACP and PFP to demand the resignation of Mr. F. K. Buah, the Minister for Trade and Tourism, for reportedly saying earlier that the gifts were purchased.

At the close of the year, there were several legal contests by victims of AFRC justice for exoneration or release from jails. The legal battles would definitely continue into the next year, and other issues concerning the reign of the AFRC would almost definitely come into the open for debate.

Perhaps the most politically significant social movement, in the past couple of years, the student movement, seemed to have died down in its militancy by the year's end. Apparently satisfied with the ouster of Acheampong and his Unigov proposal and perhaps partially soothed by the AFRC's drastic and summary justice, the national student movement retreated into the politics of issuing protest notes on this or that national and international issue.

At the close of the year, a new term, "Gyeanabu", had replaced "Kalabule", a vague terminology

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cumulatively embracing trade malpractices, bribery and all forms of graft. Much as the year's episodic events will be of great interest to political historians and politicians alike, the origin of the two terms will doubtlessly be of interest to linguists and etymologists. As the year drew to a close, there emerged an anti-military-rule sentiment and a higher sense of striving to maintain and defend fundamental democratic and human rights. And the hope is that these will not be mere sentimental desires, but will be concretized in institutional guarantees and social awareness and practical defense of these noble rights, as at least, enshrined in the Third Republican Constitution.

Economy

This is the first in a series of articles that will be written on the 1979/80 budget. Various views will be expressed on this important topic; any such views as will be expressed in our columns will reflect the thinking of those who express them. The Legon Observer will simply provide a forum for the expression of such views.

Acting Editor.

GHANA'S ECONOMY AND THE BUDGET

By

J. H. Mensah

The first budget of the Limann government shows the same characteristics as their other policy pronouncements, especially the Sessional Address which presaged it. The budget is long on the description and diagnosis of the nation's economic problems, but very short on prescription and cures for them. One could sympathise with the Minister of Finance when in his verbal presentation in Parliament, he kept lamenting over the tattered legacy that the government and the whole nation had inherited from the years of military maladministration.

Realism and Urgent Problems

But in the end, one has to apply more dispassionate criteria in judging their performance. After all, President Limann did ask for the people's mandate six months ago to solve these problems, and his Ministers sought office on the promise that they could cope with that task. It seems that it was only afterwards that they began to appreciate the true dimensions of the assignment they had undertaken. The budget shows that they have not yet thought through or accepted the really radical - and tough - decisions that are required to discharge that assignment.

Ghana's economy is to be compared to a war-shattered economy. To rehabilitate it, the government has to lead the nation to accept a certain limited number of high priority objectives which will be pursued with single-minded tenacity. That means not only knowing what we can have but, equally importantly, what we cannot have and must learn to do without.

Listening to the sessional address, many were struck by the diffuse rambling that strayed as far as the eventual establishment of a colour television service for Ghana. This impression of a lack of selectivity or sense of priority was reinforced by the subsequent travels of the Minister of Trade in search of enticing goods for a bonanza Christmas which most Ghanaians were prepared to accept that we could not afford.

The most urgent economic problems concern:

- (i) the killing rate of inflation which is the result of
- (ii) prevalent shortage of goods which in turn is
- (iii) attributable to depressed domestic production and an insufficient capacity to import;
- (iv) high unemployment.

How does the budget contribute to the solution of these problems?

In the seven and half years of military rule, the government recklessly continued to pump more and more money into the hands of its own departments, its employees and other private persons regardless of the availability of goods to purchase with it. By 1977/78 and 1978/79, the government was pumping nearly two billion cedis of new money every year into the economy as a result of its own budget deficits. Both the President and the Minister of Finance have repeated that the financing of the budget deficit through the banking system was the main source of inflationary pressure which had reached more than 100% per year by 1978. Some estimates put the rate of increase in prices much higher. Having accepted this analysis, the government nevertheless proposes a budget in which recurrent expenditure this year is deliberately planned to go up another 31% above the level of 1978/79. It can by no stretch of the imagination be claimed that the government has come to grips with the task of controlling the forces of inflation when its own current expenditure is allowed to increase by one-third in one year.

This year, the load of interest payments on the debt that has been accumulated by the government through successive increases in the size of its budget deficit, has risen by more than 50% to C725 million. As the Minister pointed out, this debt service burden is only slightly less than the total of C900

million which is all that the budget could afford for the development of the country during the whole year.

Problem of Expenditure on Government Employees

Having recognised that expenditure on personnel has put the budget on an endless upward escalator, what does the government propose? There is only a vague scheme to redeploy messengers and clerks on a voluntary basis into other employments. Everybody knows that a young man with basic literacy working for an assured monthly salary in a Ministry, even on the minimum wage of four cedis a day, is much better off than a mature farmer whose typical output of ten loads of cocoa a year at the present producer price may yield him C800 net plus C400 for the whole year to his labourers. Industrial establishments are over-manned and cannot take on more labour however these messengers are retrained. One scarce resource of which the public service takes too much of the nation's supply and thereby denies an adequate share to the productive sectors, is skilled, high-level managerial and technical personnel. In tackling this problem, the budget only makes a weak proposal for taking a census of the existing manpower strength of the civil service. In paragraph 84 of the 1979/80 Budget Statement, it is stated:

"Accordingly, all government agencies including Ministries and Departments, Boards and Corporations, Universities, C.S.I.R., Ghana Education Service, Local Authorities, Judicial Service and all others that subsist on Government subventions are required, without exception to submit in triplicate, to the Finance, Budget and Monitoring Division of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, the names of employees arranged in order of seniority with such personal particulars as age, date of appointment, grade and salary, among others, of all Established, Non-established and monthly-rated personnel on their establishments as at 1st December 1979. The information should be submitted not later than 15th February, 1980".

Interestingly enough, the same request was made by the Acheampong government in the budget of 1976/77 as follows:

"To provide proper basis for the preparation of subsequent government budgets, it has been decided that all government agencies, including Boards and Corporations, Universities, C.S.I.R., Ghana Education Service, Local Authorities, Judicial Service and all other agencies that are financed from Government subventions should, without exception, submit in duplicate to the Budget Division of the Ministry of Finance, and with copies to their respective Ministries

and the Establishment Secretariat, nominal rolls of all Established, Non-established, and monthly-rated personnel on their establishments as at 1st July, 1976. This information should be submitted not later than 15th December, 1976".

The fact is that both the military governments and, seemingly, the new civilian government have taken a fatalistic attitude towards the huge size of the state bureaucracy. Ghana, with a population of barely 12 million people, is carrying 290,000 public servants on the Central Government budget. This figure was given by the Minister himself. The United Kingdom, which has a population of 50 million, employs 780,000 civil servants to run a fully fledged welfare state, i.e. two and a half times the size of the Ghana establishment. Yet in the U.K. where the government has come to grips with the problem, definite targets for the reduction of the state establishment have been set and are being implemented. This is the sort of decisive policy

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move which one has missed in this budget.

Weak Budgetary Approach

It is notorious that our governments regularly over-estimate revenues and underestimate expenditures. Subsequently, the budget deficits as estimated at the beginning of the financial year always prove to be much lower than eventual out-turn. Thus in 1978/79, the government anticipated to raise only C500 million from the banking system, i.e. by printing currency. In the event, it raised C1,317 million. This year the government claims that it can raise an additional C500 million in customs duty simply by cancelling adhoc exemptions. This is so patently unrealistic that it is not even reflected in its own reestimate of the budgetary situation taking into account the measures proposed in this budget! It is indicative of the weak approach of the new government to the fight against inflation that it considers a total budget deficit of C1.9 billion in the last financial year of its predecessors as a relatively good showing:

"Taking into account the precarious economic conditions under which the 1978-79 Budget was operated, the resultant total deficit of C1.86 billion, nearly the same level as that of the previous financial year, indicates quite a good effort in curbing the forces of inflation".

That was in a year in which only C800 million was spent on development. Somewhere, some time, the government is going to have to grasp this nettle and discipline its own appetite. The increases in taxation on petroleum products and on self-employed persons have generated a lot of political controversy. It is more important to look at the problem from another point of view. Contrary to the traditional practice, Parliament did not have before it printed departmental estimates detailing the purposes for which the government was seeking the appropriation of C5.7 billion this year to finance its activities. So there was no basis for justifying in detail the increases in taxation that were proposed. All that one has to go by is the Minister's statement that the rise in the bill for supporting its civil servants is the principal cause of the increase in government expenditure.

Taxation, Inflation and Government Conception of Subsidies

The story about government's subsidy of petroleum products remains quite confused. The claim is that government was paying a subsidy of C40 million a month on petroleum products consumed by private Ghanaians and industrial establishments. And it is further alleged that even after the sharp increases, ranging from 115% on petrol to 250% on kerosine, that have been made in the pump prices of petroleum products, kerosine continues to carry a subsidy of 50 pesewas a gallon. As far

as it is known, the Oil Companies have continued to pay taxes to the governments on petroleum products distributed by them and one has not discovered the item in the expenditure accounts of government which represents the claimed subsidy of nearly C½ billion per year up to the middle of this 1979/80 financial year. Significantly, in reestimating government expenditures to take account of the proposed tax changes, no corresponding reduction of C½ billion is shown. Be that as it may, these increases in prices must be viewed not simply in terms of the payment or non-payment of subsidies. After all, the very essence of modern budgetary practice is that monies are collected from some segments of the population and the economy in order to subsidise services that are provided in some other sectors. We continue to subsidise, for instance, education and certain agriculture enterprises on the basis of an assessment of their social importance. There are also large subsidies paid by the government on the housing, transport, and other perquisites of senior public servants. It is clear that the increases in the prices of fuel at a time when the supply of consumer goods is very short and the transport system is in a state of near collapse, are bound to generate inflationary pressures that could well break out of the control of government. The taxes that are proposed to be levied on self-employed persons also show large increases that have been the subject of comment. For an economist, the disturbing aspect of these increases in taxation is not so much their absolute size as: (1) That they are absolutely indiscriminate as between different sizes of establishments that go under the same name: fish dealers, dress makers, carpenters, seamstresses, goldsmiths - these are all generic terms which cover a wide range of sizes and types of economic enterprise. (2) These changes will give another upward twist to the inflationary spiral. (3) They will not achieve the purposes of extracting due contribution of tax revenues from those who have made most money from the recent era of inflation. The main beneficiaries of this inflation have been speculative traders who bought and sold, on a quick turn-around basis, commodities that were in short supply. In the prevailing situation of continuing shortages, these people will continue to make their speculative profits and the budget proposals will not touch them in any way.

Feeding the Nation

In spite of the proclaimed decision to make agriculture the cornerstone of the government's policy for the next two years, the budget statement discloses few new departures in the scale or the direction of government support of agriculture such as can give us any realistic hope of a rapid increase in food production. Many worthy schemes are

to be put into effect, and hopefully by the end of this government's tenure of office some of them may have begun to yield results. But the immediate problem of feeding the nation is how to make the existing farmers on their existing farms and with their existing technology, increase their output substantially in the next two years. Farming implements, adequate labour, seed and assured marketing hold the key.

In the forest areas, between now and April is the period when bush clearing will be completed and the acreage that can be planted in the next crop season would have been determined. If there are no cutlasses or sufficient labour now, there is no chance of increasing acreage and output unless the weather proves exceptionally favourable. In the savanna areas, the question by next April to June will again be whether there are enough hoes and labour to increase the acreage. From the sessional address, it seems that the government intends to spend a lot of money on its own agricultural stations "to enable them to be used as Farm Supply Centres". It seems that the government is also intending to increase state trading in farm produce. The President declared, "These centres will also be used as purchasing points for buying farm produce"

What we need is that all the additional money that government can spare for the support for agriculture will be applied directly to enable the farmer to produce more, to remove the bottlenecks on transportation and to improve the established food marketing system, rather than to improve working conditions in the establishments of government which oversee food production at a distance.

One particular illusion which illustrates our unreadiness to deal with immediate objectives concerns the plans for the development of irrigation. An allocation of nearly C43 million to the Irrigation Development Authority is no doubt a worthy investment for the long term future. But it is prompted by the erroneous idea that Ghana cannot achieve food security until a substantial proportion of our food is grown under irrigation in order to avoid what is considered the inadequacy and unreliability of our natural rainfall. The fact is that enough natural rain falls every year on enough good arable land in Ghana to feed a population many times larger than our present 12 million, and at a standard of nutrition that is many times better. A decisive push to produce vastly more food than we do now need not wait on the widespread provision of expensive irrigation facilities. Not even the U.S. could afford to think along those lines.

In the first ten years of its existence (1965-75), the Agricultural Development Bank, whose remit

is to assist all classes of Ghanaian farmers except the cocoa farmers, lent around C94 million to all its clients. Out of this total the pressure of government policy in favour of mechanised, large-scale farming and of state-controlled agriculture had compelled it to allocate more than C25 million towards those sectors in the period 1972/75 as compared to C34 million that it had lent to all the millions of private producers of staple food crops in ten years. The advisers and pressure groups who led the SMC government to push for that pattern of lending, are, unfortunately, the same sort of people who now wield influence over policy. So it is not unreasonable to assume that similarly disproportionate shares of both the C148 million of budgetary and the unspecified millions of extra-budgetary funds will be allocated to those sectors. In the opinion of this reviewer, that will be just so much money down the drain as far as immediate agricultural priorities are concerned.

Ghanaian agriculture has taken two wrong turnings in the choice of production technology that have made it more import-dependent and hence more vulnerable in the present economic climate. In 1961, after Nkrumah and some of his top political colleagues had visited the East European countries and Russia, they came back hooked on mechanised and large-scale state farms as the modern answer to the problem of rapid agricultural development. Again in the period since 1968, the development of Ghana's best potential bread-baskets in the savanna area has been hitched to the highly mechanised cultivation of rice on very large-scale farms. In place of these, one looked in vain in this budget for a bold programme to mobilise the available labour power of young unemployed and school-leaving Ghanaians to help increase acreage and improve maintenance practices on our traditional small-scale farms. In the absence of any plans for such mobilisation, one is forced to conclude that as far as concerns an increase in acreage as the most direct way of any improvement in the food supply situation, and hence in the present severe pressure on the cost of living of all classes of Ghanaians, will be a fortuitous act of God, not a result of policy decisions or budgetary management.

It is admirable that the office-bound and inward looking Seed Multiplication Unit of the Ministry has been turned into a commercial Ghana Seed Company. But it is a mark of rather loose thinking to claim immediately that "The company shall produce adequate amounts of seeds on its existing farms to meet the seed requirements of the country for maize, rice, vegetables and groundnuts". Surely, that happy millennium will not be achieved for some years yet. By assuming it away the planners

of the budget can so easily prevent constructive thinking on how to attain just that eventual target.

The foregoing detailed remarks on the proposals of the budget in respect of food production are not only based on the intrinsic importance of that sector in the immediate programming for the reconstruction of the Ghana economy. They should, we hope, illustrate the gap between what our situation requires and what the budget proposes.

The Foreign Sector

Ghana has become ever dependent on foreign exchange earnings to meet not only a growing demand for the imported consumer goods that go to satisfy a rising standard of living, but also the requirements of our so-called import substituting industries which typically only add 10-30% of locally produced value to a base of imported raw materials, equipment and components. So what help does the budget give to exporting sectors to raise their foreign earnings capacity?

In the competition for immigrant labour upon which Ghana's cocoa and coffee industries both depend, we have not only lost out to those of the Ivory Coast because producer prices, and hence the labourer's traditional one-third share, have been higher. In recent years the shortage of basic consumer goods to use here or to take back home has been so complete that it has become increasingly pointless for an immigrant worker to come here and earn cedis. They have gone to the Ivory Coast and other areas where their wages could be converted into the desired consumer goods at will. Consequently, we need to improve the access of our own farm workers to basic consumer goods at reasonable prices as a means of checking the growing lag between the production and the demand for food and other items. And we need the same measure as a means of attracting immigrant labour to increase the volume of agricultural production for exports and for domestic industry.

Keeping down imports of consumer goods makes conventional good sense and this is adopted by the budget makers. But in our present situation we have to recognise that we cannot increase food production for domestic use or the production of export crops and of raw materials for local processing without a significant improvement in the supply of basic consumer goods to the farming population. This dilemma is not recognised or addressed in the budget. Instead, what one saw in the immediate post budget period was a scramble by the President and his Ministers to somehow assuage the demand for urban-oriented, or even luxury, consumer goods to meet ill-considered electoral promises. In the light of its actual performance so far, it is difficult to believe that the

government will be able to stick to its professed priority for the input of the export sector as for basic items of mass consumption in the import licensing programme.

Timber Exchange Rates

Given the strangulating effect of inadequate foreign earnings on the economy, the impossibility of raising cocoa output in short order, and the time it will take to implement the proposed rehabilitation programme for the mines, the government inexplicably refused to take the only escape route available which was to suspend the ban on the export of 14 prime species of logs. Dr. Limann himself had referred to 15 unfinished timber processing facilities. In any case most of the factories both old and new are only sawmills which cannot optimise our potential export earnings from prime logs. All the evidence points to the fact that the ban was prematurely imposed and has only dried up a major source of foreign exchange for Ghana. Yet the government could not bring itself to change that policy. Instead the budget resorts to pie-in-the-sky sentiments like:

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"External financing proposals for the build-up of processing capacity to support the policy on the ban of export of specific species of logs will be favourably considered if the terms of such financing are reasonable. Government will also encourage local research institutes and manufacturing industries to produce some of the imported inputs like glue and minor spare parts locally and will speed up current negotiations with the World Bank for a long-term loan and technical assistance to rehabilitate the industry".

The Exchange Rate

In justifying the cancellation of the export bonus scheme the Minister claimed that unlike 1973 when it was needed to compensate for the effects of an over-valued cedi, it is now no longer necessary since the devaluation of September 1978 had established a "satisfactory" exchange rate. This curious statement flies violently in the face of the most common knowledge. The bankers of Zongo Lane certainly do not think so: the discount against the Cedi today is much wider than it has ever been. Besides, there are many indications that the IMF and other bodies do not accept that Ghana has achieved anything like an equilibrium rate of exchange. Or is this the normal denial of devaluation stories until the very moment of devaluation? If so, it is particularly unconvincing. But it also serves to reinforce the impression of a failure to grapple with difficult problems.

Local Government

The framers of our new Constitution placed great emphasis on the strengthening of local government as a means of consolidating democracy at its grass roots. Dr. Limann promised Parliament in November 1979 that he would "adhere strictly to the policy of decentralisation of authority as envisaged in the Constitution", by revitalising local government as part of his own policy of "participatory democracy". In his December 1979 budget he could only find C22 million out of a total spending of nearly C5,700 as grant in aid for all the 64 District Councils and the hundreds of town and village development committees in Ghana. Obviously, concrete action to build a meaningful system of local government has been indefinitely postponed despite all the nice protestations.

Conclusion

From the above examples, it seems fair to describe this first budget of the PNP administration as a budget of deferred decisions and missed opportunities. The country will pay dearly for some of its evasions. For instance, in the additional inflationary pressure that will be exerted by all the new money which has to be printed to finance the deficits

of a government that cannot curb its own spending. Regarding some of the others, one can only hope that the government will have braved itself up to taking the required decisions by the time budget day comes around again in June.

The Minister of Finance can perhaps fairly claim that he had only two months to produce a budget for a governing political party with whose personalities and policies he had scant connection before October. Dr. Limann whose budget this really is, in law and politics, can have no such excuse. He stood for election on a party platform which was supposed to be addressed to the problems of the country for three months and after being elected had another three months of preparation during which he received the most thorough briefing that any Head of State of Ghana has ever had before taking office. He must score very low marks for performance as shown by this budget.

Politics

TOWARDS A NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION

By

Kodjo - Ababio Nubuor

This article attempts to discuss the origin, formation, achievements and problems of the **People's Revolutionary League of Ghana** - a new organization of the Ghanaian working people which sees itself as a qualitative step in the working people's struggles in Ghana. The first part of this piece shall delve into the origin and formation of The League whilst the second part shall take up its achievements and problems - all this in the light of revolutionary theory and practice.

Let us add that in addressing ourselves to the formation of The League we shall inevitably deal with the aims and objectives upon which is predicated the revolutionary mission of that organization; whilst in the second part we shall take Professor Kwaku Folson to task on his view, reported in the **Daily Graphic**, that the prospect for human rights in Ghana, as enshrined in the Third Republican Constitution, "is very bleak because no one is prepared to defend his rights". In the course of this exercise we shall not refuse to spare some time combating certain pseudo-revolutionary theories based on the philosophy of inaction and expose so-called human rights organizations of the forces of conservatism and reaction that parade under the banner of abstract democracy.

GENERAL LEGAL COUNCIL

(Ghana School of Law, Accra)

VACANCIES

Applications are invited from suitably qualified Ghanaians for appointment to the following posts

1. LECTURERS:**QUALIFICATIONS:**

Candidates must be graduates and must be professionally qualified either as barrister or solicitor. Preference will however be given to those who possess teaching experience.

DUTIES

Include teaching of subjects in the professional Law course which intending practitioners are required to complete before qualifying for enrolment, viz: Criminal and Civil Procedure, Law of Evidence, Company Law, Insurance Law; Family Law, Industrial Law, Interpretation of Deeds and Statutes, Conveyancing and Drafting and Legal Accountancy. Successful candidates will also have reasonable opportunities for doing writing and research on legal subjects of value to the school.

SALARY:

Negotiable but attractive.

2. ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY:**QUALIFICATIONS:**

Candidates must satisfy the following requirements:—

- (i) Must be confirmed officers with not less than 3 years continuous and satisfactory service as Administrative Assistants or Private Secretaries in the Universities;
or
- (ii) Must have served in Governmental or non-Governmental Organisation of good repute for not less than five years in the Senior Executive, Administrative or Private Secretary grade ; and
- (iii) Must possess the minimum educational qualification of School Certificate with credit in English-Language or the General Certificate of Education (Ordinary Level) with passes in at least five subjects including English Language, or an equivalent educational qualification; or
- (iv) The Final Certificate of the Chartered Institute of Secretaries or the Final Certificate of the Corporation of Secretaries.

Ability to type (and possibly take shorthand) will be an advantage.

SALARY: Negotiable but attractive.

DUTIES:

Staff in this grade will be required to perform work covering a wide field requiring in different degrees qualities of sound judgement, initiative, resource and precision. Duties of an Assistant Administrative Secretary may be of a general executive nature; they comprise the critical examination of cases either within or outside the scope of approved regulations or general decisions, the initial investigation of matters of complexity and execution of specific assignments.

3. ACCOUNTING OFFICER:**QUALIFICATIONS:**

Candidates must possess any of the following qualifications:—

- (a) Final C.I.S.
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- (c) Section III of A.C.A.
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- (e) Intermediate C.A. (Ghana)

or

Must possess the Intermediate C.I.S. or Intermediate A.I.A. or Section II of A.C.A. or section II of I.C.M.A. with at least 3 years experience as Senior Accounts Clerks or in analogous grades in a higher educational institution or commerce and industry or the public service, and practical knowledge of the preparation of Final Accounts.

DUTIES:

The successful candidate will be required to perform work relating to the control of expenditure the efficient collection of revenue and the maintenance of detailed accounts of all such financial transactions. He will be required to take charge of, and direct the work of Accounting Section of the Council. He will also be expected to instruct, supervise and train Junior Staff under him. He will be expected to prepare statements of accounts, check and verify current accounts, Bank Accounts, etc. and to attend to correspondence connected with accounts.

SALARY:

Negotiable but attractive.

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- (i) Candidates must possess the minimum educational qualification of School Certificate with credit in English Language, or the G.E.C. Ordinary Level with passes in at least 5 subjects including English Language or an approved equivalent;
- (ii) Must be able to type at the rate of 50 words a minute for 10 minutes and take shorthand at the rate of 110 words a minute for 5 minutes and must have passed an examination in Elementary Secretarial Practice conducted by the Government Secretarial School and must have a Certificate to that effect;
- (iii) Must possess a sense of responsibility initiative, integrity and discretion, and a good working knowledge of office routine and be able to take minutes at meetings.

DUTIES:

General secretarial duties including high speed shorthand writing and typing, arranging interviews and papers for meetings and routine correspondences on his own initiative; dealing with enquiries and supervising the work of subordinate Staff.

SALARY:—Negotiable but attractive.

NOTE: Further particulars may be obtained from the Secretary, General Legal Council, P. O. Box 179, Accra, to whom all applications should be directed. Applicants in the Public Service should submit their applications through their Heads of Departments. Only copies of any supporting documents should accompany applications.

Leftist Organizations

For some years now, at least since 1974 when the National Congress of the National Union of Ghana Students (NUGS) declared scientific socialism as its guiding policy, there have been much discussion and academic rhetoric on the need to form a mass organization of the working people of Ghana with an orientation towards a fundamental transformation of the socio-economic-political framework of the society. Attempts in this respect led to the formation, on the University Campuses, of Marxist study groups, which during the period of the NRC/SMC, could only operate in clandestinity. These study groups played no small role in keeping the NUGS consistent with its declared policy of scientific socialism.

But the NUGS was not the only organization that emerged. For, among the intellectual higher ups in Ghana, a Socialist Society of Ghana had also emerged only to be undermined by the philosophy of unscientific phobia and inaction propagated by the lawyer section of it as also it was destroyed by government infiltration. Well, given its elitist character no wonder it collapsed through such circumstances. There was also the African Youth Command, which still operates, with branches whose presence is mainly felt in the educational institutions. It also has socialist pretensions.

Organizations such as the above were and/or are based mainly in educational institutions. Their links with the working people, with the partial exception of the African Youth Command, are either non-existent or extremely negligible. In contrast to these organizations, however, there have been individuals and groups, with socialist orientation, of course, who have sought not only to establish links with working people but concentrate their activities mainly amongst the working people. The individual activities led to the emergence of study groups amongst very few workers who saw such individuals as something of intellectual revolutionary giants, free, however, from practical revolutionary involvement.

Working People's Groups

Of the groups working strictly within the working people, there is this group which has a history of a chain of organizations which ended up, in its strict scientific socialist form in the Socialist Revolutionary Youth League of Ghana (SRYLOG). This organization of a few hardened revolutionaries, registered with the Ghana National Youth Council, had previously been occupied, in its intellectual moments, on the production of articles on issues currently agitating the minds of working people. It had found it difficult operating in practical terms (within NRC and SMC conditions which

could only afford opportunities for the distribution of clandestine leaflets) amongst workers and as such operated as a pressure group making its mark through youth mass organizations. Recently, however, the SRYLOG has established a mouthpiece, KPETEKPLE (FIREWORKS), which it calls "organ of the revolutionary theory and practice of the Socialist Revolutionary Youth League of Ghana (SRYLOG) Marxist-Leninist".

But the KPETEKPLE is not the only mouthpiece owned by an organization with scientific socialist pretensions. Other publications include the DIRECTION, which, though not proclaimed to be the mouthpiece of any group whatever, is nevertheless the mouthpiece of a section of the mass of study groups that emerged on the campus of the University of Ghana, that is, the law lecturers and some of their students and friends section, who constituted themselves into the ill-fated National Affairs Discussion Group in May/June, 1979. These two mouthpieces reflect a conflict within the revolutionary process in Ghana, between the SRYLOG and what we should call the DIRECTIONIST BLOC.

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA INSTITUTE OF AFRICAN STUDIES

Applications are invited for the post of:

DIRECTOR

Candidates should have considerable experience in directing research into the cultural heritage of Africa and in particular Ghana.

Administrative experience will be an advantage.

Salary: C12,384.00 per annum for candidates of the standing of full Professor.

Appointment is normally up to five years in the first instance.

Further particulars and forms of application should be obtained from the Registrar, University of Ghana, P. O. Box 25 Legon, Accra, Ghana or the Senior Assistant Registrar, Universities of Ghana Offices 15 Gordon Square WCIH OAG, with whom applications (TWELVE COPIES) should be lodged not later than 31st January 1980

The nature of the conflict between these two groups is best illustrated by citations from the respective mouthpieces. In its maiden issue, DIRECTION states as a matter of policy that it "will devote its columns to three main issues: first a scientific and critical analysis of the actual nature of the socio-economy of Ghana and its historical roots, because it is only when we understand a thing that we can consciously change it; secondly DIRECTION will make critical comment on major economic, political and social developments in the country in order to help enrich our readers' understanding of our society; and finally we shall discuss and comment on important African and international issues, for Ghana is affected, in no small way, by developments elsewhere in the world" (emphasis added). The task DIRECTION set itself is solely **intellectual**.

On the other hand, KPETEKPLE sets itself a double task as follows. In the first place, it describes itself as an "organ of revolutionary theory and practice". On the front page of its maiden issue it freely quotes Kwame Nkrumah thus: "Revolutions are brought about by men who think as men of action and who act as men of thought"; and also, from Dimitrov, it freely quotes thus: "..... the Press is a powerful weapon; in the hands of the capitalists and their agents it is aimed at misleading, splitting and enslaving the working people; in the hands of the proletariat it is an instrument of education and culture, a weapon in the liberation struggle of the working people".

Following upon these free quotations, the SRYLOG publishers of KPETEKPLE state in the same issue as an editorial policy that "we see the task of KPETEKPLE as expounding the truth which only is worthy of its revolutionary standards and also in fulfilling the role of an authentic revolutionary organ which Lenin pointed out in his precise statement that: 'The role of a newspaper..... is not limited solely to the dissemination of ideas, to political education, and to the enlistment of political allies. A newspaper is not only a collective propagandist and a collective agitator, it is also a collective organizer'."

The conflicts between SRYLOG and the DIRECTIONIST BLOC as reflected in the citations from editorial statements of policy can be seen in their significance when it comes to determining what to do within given practical situations. Thus, for instance, whereas SRYLOG was of the view that the conditions created by June 4th afforded revolutionaries with the opportunity to build an organization, with which only a genuine revolution can succeed, the DIRECTIONIST BLOC held that such conditions had rather unfolded great opportunities for more **intellectual** endeavour.

To quote, DIRECTION states in its second (July/August) issue that "Fortunately, the June 4th uprising has created more favourable conditions for all democratic forces and patriots to mobilize themselves and deepen their political understanding of our conditions, and these must be seen as the **main** responsibility that the present situation places on all progressives and patriots in the country" (emphases added). That is, more than ever before revolutionaries have great opportunities to gather themselves together to enrich their **minds**, and that these are their main responsibility. More study groups for more discussion! No doubt within present conditions the Directionists are running a 'clandestine' 'Marxist' study group at North Lashbone!!

The KPETEKPLE, states in its very maiden issue that with the conditions created by the 'June 4th Revolution' "the challenging but golden opportunity arises for the progressive, democratic and revolutionary forces in Ghana today! Our task now is to politically educate, organize and mobilize the broad, overwhelming masses of the Ghanaian people, especially the workers and peasant-farmers, in order to build the June 4th Revolutionary Movement into a massive, powerful and invincible bastion of iron (that is, a strong organization) with which to forge ahead the struggle and develop it to its logical conclusion of a new-type People's National Democratic Revolution". Any wonder then that the motto of KPETEKPLE declares: "Give us an organization of revolutionaries and we shall transform Ghana!"

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

- J. H. Mensah: Chairman and Managing Director, Development and Management Consultants (Ghana) Ltd., was Finance Minister in the Busia regime. He is a leading member of the Popular Front Party.*
- T. Kodjo-Ababio Nubuor: Graduated recently in philosophy and history at Legon, and is currently the General Secretary of the Central Executive Directorate of the Central Committee of the People's Revolutionary League of Ghana.*

Origin of People's Revolutionary League

It is this conflict within the ranks of that section of Ghanaians dissatisfied with the state of affairs of their society that provides the background to the origin of the People's Revolutionary League of Ghana (The League). For, it is nothing but the product of that conflict - being the SRYLOG'S attempt to prove the correctness of its theoretical positions on the June 4th Uprising. In the foreword to The League's publication, **Towards Revolution In Ghana The Struggle, Our Struggle**, a collection of articles, The League states that "The collection is.....reflective of the views of a section of the revolutionary forces in Ghana, that section which sincerely believes Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's dictum that 'Practice without theory is blind; and theory without practice is empty! And it is in order to test the correctness of such views in social practice that the People's Revolutionary League of Ghana was conceived and formed on August 11th, 1979'".

From the above it should be clear that the People's Revolutionary League of Ghana, conceived in a historical and dialectical perspective, owes its origin to the practical struggles both against the raw forces of conservatism and reaction and within the forces of revolution (the accelerative and retardative forces); but not due to a certain great intellectual discovery by some philosopher king from whose phantastic abstract pre-occupational mental fumbblings the concept of The League dropped - pending its material realization, as it has been realized, by some philosophical slaves. It has emerged through the consistent and persistent efforts by "men who think as men of action and who act as men of thought" within specific concrete historical circumstances.

This last reference to men thinking and acting within specific concrete historical circumstances introduces us to the question of the **formation** of the People's Revolutionary League of Ghana, the discussion of which will neatly bring home the point that unlike the SRYLOG, which is strictly and purely scientific socialist, The League is a mass revolutionary-democratic organization with an orientation towards a National Democratic Revolution directed against all foreign domination of the Ghanaian economy and society. This anti-imperialist orientation permits The League, unlike the SRYLOG, to take a common stand with groupings like the Ghana Manufacturers Association, Institute of Ghanaian Business Executives and the Ghana Stationery and Book Sellers Association on **specific** issues against exploitation of the country.

This orientation was not abstractly conceived independently of the concrete conditions as they

obtained in August, 1979, that is, under the rule of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC). No, it was these conditions rather that determined that orientation. There was news of foreign nationals resident in Ghana having secret meetings to discuss means of sabotaging what was seen as a raging working people's revolution that was aimed at the **e m a n c i p a t i o n** of the worker and therefore the whole society. The Western countries and Japan were seen in their respective propaganda and **e c c o n o m i c** strangulation of Ghana in the wake of the positive **J u n e 4 t h** uprising as enemies of the nation.

Certain local organizations and associations that came out against the 'revolution' exposed their neo-colonialist nature, their dependence on and attachment to the enemies of the working people. Since members of such organizations were also known to belong to the political parties and were either already elected as parliamentarians or suspected to have great chances of being appointed ministers of state, a real fear, now justified, was aroused concerning what might be the fate of the gains of June 4th after the AFRC which had determined to relinquish political power left the scene.

It was these concrete anti-June 4th activities and the subsequent fears excited in the breast of working people and revolutionaries that dictated to the latter the need to organize themselves against the negative forces of reaction. In fact, the extent of the said fears was such that just two days after the formation of The League, a letter, dated August 13th, 1979, was prepared and addressed to the **C h a i r m a n** of the AFRC requesting that The League and organizations

OBSERVER NOTICE

PRICE OF LEGON OBSERVER

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like it be legalized before the AFRC left the scene. To quote from the letter, which was however not sent due to some considerations, The League pleaded thus: "we humbly request your office to sign a decree that gives legal approval to all organizations like ours to operate without any reactionary obstruction from any future government of this dear country of ours".

The urge to organize stemmed from the objective realization that calls by the Chairman of the AFRC to the working people to stand up for their rights could not be responded to positively due to the absence of an organization. People wanted to possess identity cards showing their attachment to some organization before they would even insist on buying at the control price. It was this special circumstance, created by the AFRC'S own example with students on holidays, that gave the clue as to how the organization of the working people could be started and built up against June 4th reactionaries. The realization was materialized when the premier branch of The League was formed at Korle Gonno, a suburb of Accra, to check violations of the control price and 'kalabule' in general. Over two thousand people have since become members, with five solidly built branches, many nascent and budding branches all over the country and efforts to open up more.

Aims and Objectives

It was within the circumstances of its formation that The League had to prepare its aims and objectives. We quote the entire aims as follows: "(a) To safeguard the democratic gains of the June 4th movement and to promote and accelerate the revolutionary process set in motion by that movement; (b) To protect and uphold all democratic decrees passed by the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) against the onslaught of any government, parliament and judiciary in Ghana, whilst relentlessly fighting against all old, new or potential antiworking people's legislation; (c) To ultimately aid the emergence and development of people's economic, social and political institutions in replacement of their anti-people alternatives".

In order to attain these aims, The League sets itself the following objectives: "(d) To organize ourselves at a nation-wide level and bring under our fold all progressive, democratic, and radical groups and individuals who think like us and are dedicated to the elimination of foreign domination of our economy; (e) To attract membership from all existing political parties and associations and such membership as will be opposed to foreign dominators of our economy and their local appendages; (f) To organize cinema shows, public lectures, talks, symposia and seminars, respectively, on hot

and present topical issues and socio-economic-political institutions to maintain the tempo of the revolutionary process; (g) To arrange within our organization, Study Groups to address ourselves to problems regarding the science, practice and concrete problems of the Ghanaian revolutionary process; (h) To organize rallies that shall be part of a mass political education endeavour; (i) To seek to work with all progressive, democratic and radical groups and organizations that work for peace, progress national self-determination and detente at the national and international scenes in the pursuit of our revolutionary endeavour; (j) To undertake propaganda and agitation through pamphlets, leaflets, newspapers, the organization's mouthpiece, etc., on all matters affecting the working people of Ghana".

How far, in practical terms, has the People's Revolutionary League of Ghana pursued these aims and objectives, and, what are its problems in the process? The second part of this humble piece shall address itself to these questions.

Notebook

CRITICISM AND SUBVERSION

In the dying days of the past year the Popular Front Party Parliamentary Leader, Mr. Kwaku Baah, criticised and made some allegations against the government at a press conference called jointly by the PFP and the Action Congress Party. (According to one account, the Social Democratic Front also joined in the calling of the press conference). He maintained that there was a widespread feeling of despondency and insecurity, pointing out the dangers involved in this. He claimed that the government had been making too many conflicting statements. He criticized the way the Chief of Defence Staff, the Commander of the Army and the Inspector General of Police had been retired amid charges and counter charges. He called for the resignation of the Minister of Trade for the misleading statements he had made over the Nigerian gift of essential commodities. Finally, Mr. Baah criticized the budget proposals suggested that the prices of luxuries like beer, liquor and cigarettes should have been raised instead of allowing the prices of petroleum products to rise so steeply, and charged that the Ministry of Local Government had placed order worth more than C13 million for trucks with the firm of a prominent PNP member.

The press conference called forth two immediate responses from the PNP, one from Mr. Kofi Batsa, Chairman of the Publicity Secretariat of the PNP, the other from the Secretary of the PNP youth

wing. They both vigorously denied the accusations of Mr. Baah and rebutted the criticisms. Mr Batsa maintained that the PNP government preferred to take harsh measures to correct the faults in the economy right from the start rather than the example of the Progress Party in waiting until it was too late. He accused elements in the opposition of hypocrisy in criticizing the government's firm measures when they had supported similar measures by the PP. He claimed that no amount of

taxes on liquor, beer and cigarettes could skim off as much purchasing power from the economy as the removal of subsidies from petroleum products. He denied the allegation that the government had ordered trucks through a firm belonging to a leading PNP member. Finally, he derided the opposition for being peeved by the fact that the Nigerians they threw out of the country are the same people who are now helping Ghana.

We regard all this as healthy political in-fighting. An aspect of the PNP response however strikes us as being reprehensible. Mr. Kofi Batsa implied in no uncertain terms that Mr. Baah's criticisms constituted an attempt to subvert the state. The secretary of the PNP youth wing also impugned the motives of Mr. Baah and implied that he wanted to disrupt the economy. And now it is reported that the Government Chief Whip has also maintained that criticisms which create ill-feeling against the government are an invitation to the army to take over the government.

It is important at the start of the new constitutional experiment to remind members and supporters of the government that the democratic experiment we are embarking upon is founded on the legitimacy of criticism and freedom of speech. It is necessary to remind ourselves that no criticism in itself constitutes subversion. It is also unfortunate to give the soldiers the impression that if the opposition levels criticisms against the government this is an invitation to them to stage a coup. It doesn't matter how wild criticisms of government are, it is not for either the army to remove the government or for the government itself to question the motives of the critics or to stifle them, for the latter is the natural consequence of equating criticism with subversion. Change of government and assessment of whether criticism is constructive or destructive are strictly within the competence of the electorate and no one else.

TUNA FISHING

Fish has become a very important component of the diet of many Ghanaians. One of the major problems inherited from previous military regimes by the present Government is the failure to renegotiate the expired fishing rights of Ghanaian boats overseas. We are reliably informed that the present Government is urgently looking at this problem.

However, one other problem that the Government ought to seriously examine is the tuna fishing industry. Tuna is fast becoming a very important export commodity. It is estimated by some experts that if the tuna industry is properly nurtured, it could rank very high indeed as one of the country's major sources of foreign exchange, and provide as well a valuable source of protein for Ghanaians. At present there are four major participants in this industry in the country, namely, Star-Kist International, Afko Fisheries of South Korea, Mankoadze Fisheries and the State Fishing Corporation. There are other firms which are trying to get into this industry. The agreements of some of the firms currently operating in the industry are due for renegotiation. We are of the opinion that some of these agreements are exploitative, and are not in the best interest of the nation.

We also understand that there are moves at the international level to form a sort of international Tuna cartel aimed at protecting both the fishes from uncontrolled exploitation and also "protecting the interests of tuna-producing countries". Ghana, with an infant tuna industry, may wish to join such an organization. But therein lies the danger. We are informed that one of the proposed aims of such an organisation will be to ensure that tuna is caught only when it reaches a certain weight or size. Ghana is one of the world's major breeding grounds for tuna. But when the tuna grow to a certain size, they migrate to other waters. A situation may therefore arise whereby Ghana, by virtue of being a signatory to such an international agreement, may just have to sit and watch while tuna that breed in her territorial waters merely move to other countries to be exploited, simply because international law debars from fishing tuna of a certain size and weight.

We wish to caution the government that there is big money at stake in all this. The Government ought to watch its steps carefully so as not to be the loser in the end. All agreements that are due for renegotiation, and any new ones that are yet to be signed, should be thoroughly scrutinized so that whatever decisions that are taken will be in the long term interest of Ghana.

READ THE
"LEGON OBSERVER"
 ALWAYS

Letters

Hope and Prayer for 1980

SIR - The Limann Administration finished off the year 1979 badly. After making statements like "super Christmas for Ghanaians" and "I have no date with Christmas", the members of the Limann Administration also gave Ghanaians the option to side with it or with the two brigadiers on the latter's unpopular retirement on the unconvincing and unproven ground of personality conflict between the two brigadiers!

I would have preferred letting "sleeping dogs lie" had it not been Mr. Buah's lie of the year and the PNP's stand that the "less said about it the better". What is Mr. Kofi Batsa about? That we should sit unconcerned for Ministers of State to tell lies? And yet the Minister of Trade and Tourism had the guts to receive as gifts goods for which the Government had paid one million naira cash!

We are all aware of the enormity of the problems facing our once prosperous country. Limann and his men need our co-operation and sympathy to be able to tackle the problems. These would be forthcoming only if they are truthful and sincere with us. The AFRC enjoyed our support in the face of all kinds of manoeuvres after the last execution because it was sincere and truthful!

So my fervent hope and prayer for 1980 is that Limann and his ministers and the PNP top hierarchy as well will turn a new leaf. Bluntly put, they must not let the lies of 1979 follow them into 1980!

Social Security Bank Ltd. Yaw Kyei-Peprah
Accra.

THE RETIRED YOUNG OFFICER

SIR—I have been impressed that in the spirit of the age you went to the Jail-Break-in Commission with your lawyer to say your piece in respect of the break-in. I wish to congratulate the commission and yourself and your lawyer that this has been done. On the other hand, I wish to remind Ghanaians that others against whom allegations were made were denied lawyers at their trials, even in cases that led to the deaths of at least six sons of Ghana. May their deaths not be laid to your charge by Almighty God. May the contrast between the prosecution of justice by the A.F.R.C. and that of the Limann Government teach Ghanaians the need to be consistent in standing for the principles of justice, fair play and

equity and generosity even to our opponents, under any regime. May all those who died and all who were and are imprisoned, having been denied the assistance of advocates and lawyers forgive the angry and heady Ghanaians and those who led the exercise. May Ghana never again hold kangaroo courts. In the city of Hiroshima there stands a plaque to commemorate the many who died when the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima in 1945. The words of the plaque are apposite here

Rest in peace
for the error
Shall never be repeated.

Shall never?

Dept. of Study of Religions,
University of Ghana John S. Pobee
Legon.

The Police and Demonstrators

SIR - On January 11, 1980, Southern African students in Ghana demonstrated against the presence of South African troops in Zimbabwe.

Policemen rushed on the peaceful demonstrators, beat them up mercilessly, seriously injuring some of them.

When will the police (those who issue the orders and those who carry them out) learn their lesson? Have they forgotten the many serious clashes with students of the three universities and some secondary schools? What about the latest one, the Apam incident, which earned a Deputy Superintendent of Police his sack from the Service? Or is it a mere dislike for students? I believe policemen should rather guard and protect peaceful demonstrators and not manhandle them.

Please, Inspector General of Police, talk to your boys and educate them, at least, on how to disperse demonstrators. They need it badly.

School of Journalism and
Communication Kwasi Ofori-Mante
Legon.

Ghana Atomic Energy Commission

SIR - The government has got to come to the aid of the broad masses of workers of the Ghana Atomic Energy Commission immediately.

Here one can see people who are on police bail for alleged criminal offences sitting on so called disciplinary committees to "discipline" junior workers who dare to question their presence there.

Here is a case where radical, progressive junior workers who attempt to unearth the questionable activities of high officials of the Commission are booted out with impunity.

Yes, here is Ghana's reactor station without any atomic reactor but seething with professors, professing nothing; professors who are only interested in gallivanting around the globe attending conferences with the tax-payers hard earned money.

Government must step in immediately by setting up a Committee to investigate all aspects of the Commission's operations since its inception. It may discover that the Atomic Commission has become an inexhaustible gold mine for those at the top.

Ashonman Village,
Off Kwabenya, Accra.

Nii Lantey

Remuneration in the Public Service

SIR - In "Remuneration in the Public Service" by Mr. Ato K. Ahwoi (Legon Observer Vol. XI, No. 13), we are not told how the data reproduced in the article were collected or from what sources they were compiled. In the circumstance, one is tempted to view the data and the conclusions with some suspicion.

Though Mr. Ahwoi talked about taxes, he did not find it expedient to include the tax burden of the category of personnel in his discussion. It would have been interesting to the discussion to have included their tax burden since the tax structure appears to take some fringe benefits into account, however imperfectly.

Furthermore, his view that "a good wage policy is one which starts by determining how much it would take to enable the ordinary man to exist as a human being" may be socially desirable but may not be economically feasible. However, we should be mindful that the main factor relating to salary and wage determination is the supply and demand for labour 'goods'.

P. O. Box 106,
Koforidua,

Samuel Asare

For the Record

JANUARY 4, 1980

Campaign Against Volta River Blindness to Cost \$106 Million Over Next Six Years

Operating costs of a programme to rid the Volta River basin area of onchocerciasis, (river blindness), a parasitic disease that is the major cause of blindness in tropical Africa, will be financed from 1980 to 1985 by a budget of \$106,749,200, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The WHO said this amount is double the figure - \$53.5 million - that funded operations during the first stage, from 1974 to 1979.

Pledges for the second phase estimated at between \$85 - \$90 million were announced at a meeting of the programme's Joint Co-ordinating Committee held in Geneva recently. The meeting was attended by representatives of seven African countries, Upper Volta, Benin, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger and Togo, plus donor countries, including Belgium, Canada, France, Kuwait, Japan, United Kingdom, the U.S. and the programme's four sponsoring agencies: The FAO, the UNDP, the World Bank and WHO.

As well as being a threat to health, the WHO report said "the disease has caused man to desert the infested valleys, and has been up till now, a complete barrier to agricultural development in the savannah countries of Africa".

JANUARY 7, 1980

Ghana's Oil Bill to Rise?

Ghana's crude oil import bill will rise to £1 billion a year if the increase of the commodity from £26 to £35 per barrel announced by Libya and Nigeria is confirmed.

This was announced by Prof. Benneh, Minister of Lands, Natural Resources, Fuel and Power at a party organised in his honour by Berekum-Jaman Citizens Association in Accra.

JANUARY 8, 1980

Aliens Not Deported

The Deputy Minister of Interior, Mr. Antwi Nimoh, said in an interview that foreign nationals who were denaturalised by the erstwhile AFRC will not be deported from Ghana.

Instead they will be classified as aliens who will be required to comply with the laws regarding the stay of aliens in the country as from January 21.

JANUARY 8, 1980

Committee to Review C400 Deposit

A committee has been set up by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to ascertain if there is need for the C400 'repatriation deposit' demanded from applicants of passports.

This was announced by Dr. Chinebuah, Minister of Foreign Affairs, when he visited the Passport Office in Accra.

JANUARY 9, 1980

Kingmakers Destool Mamponghe

The Kingmakers of the Ashanti Mampong Stool have destooled Nana Atakora Amaniampong II, as Mamponghe, after performing formal customary rites before Otumfuo Opoku Ware II, Asantehene, at the Manhyia Palace in Kumasi.

The destoolment followed the dismissal by the Special Tribunal of a petition filed by Nana Amaniampong, against his disqualification from holding public office.

JANUARY 10, 1980

Unicef and Rural Health Care

The United Nations Children's Fund has donated 20 Renault Saloon cars to Ghana to be used for primary health care in the rural areas.

The Minister of Health, Mr. Ansah, has taken delivery of eight cars, being the first batch of the 20 cars.

In a speech, Mr. Ansah, predicted that by 1990, Ghana should have achieved basic health care for 80 per cent of its population under specific objectives of the country's health policy.

JANUARY 11, 1980

MP for Special Tribunal?

Mr. J.V.L. Mensah, Member of Parliament for Nzima West and former Chief Executive of the Ghana Supply Commission, may appear before the Special Tribunal any time from now to answer charges of alleged offences against the state.

The Special Prosecutor of the Tribunal, Mr. J.E.K. Appiah, said Mr. Mensah was one of the persons referred to the Tribunal by the erstwhile AFRC for alleged offences against the state.

He said Mr. Mensah had already furnished him with all his particulars to enable the Tribunal contact him.

JANUARY 11, 1980

5 Denaturalised Ghanaians File Writ

Five out of the 107 foreign nationals who were denaturalised by the erstwhile AFRC have filed a writ at the Supreme Court challenging the AFRC decision.

They are Abdul Latif Danawi, Ahmed Danaui, Azmi Sbaiti, Adnan Mohammed El-Ashkar and Ismat El-Massi.

In a statement of claim attached to the writ filed by Mr. E.D. Kom, their counsel, the plaintiffs asked the court to declare null and void and of no legal consequence the AFRC Decree 42 which deprived them of their Ghanaian citizenship.

JANUARY, 11, 1980

Clerks to Head District Councils

District Councils in the country are to be headed by clerks of council not below the rank of Principal Assistant Secretary.

This was announced by Mr. K.S.P. Jantuah, Minister of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives, when he went to Tamale on a familiarisation tour of departments under his ministry.

JANUARY 12, 1980

Press Commission Bill Awaits Debate

A Bill which seeks to establish the Press Commission is to be submitted for debate when Parliament resumes sitting on January 16.

The bill is in the name of Mr. Kwaku Baah, P.F.P. Member of Parliament for Nkwakaw.

JANUARY 12, 1980

Ghana Cedi Coins on Sale in Upper Volta

Ghana's one cedi and fifty pesewa coins are being sold in the Republic of Upper Volta.

Mr S.H.K. Larweh, manager of the Ghana Commercial Bank at Lawra, told the Ghana News Agency that a cedi coin costs C8 while a 50 pesewa coin sells at C5.

He alleged that the coins are melted and used as jewels such as necklaces and earrings.

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