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EDITORIAL

THE PROBLEM OF BUILDING A DEMOCRACY AND THE ISSUE OF DISFRANCHISEMENT

THE POSITION that certain elements of the old regime should or should not be permitted to have in the future political system of this country, after N.L.C. rule, has been the subject of quite acrimonious debate in recent weeks. Some people advocate disfranchisement and disqualification of these elements, while others would only support restricted grounds for disfranchisement. The debate raises certain issues: first, who are to be affected, and for what reasons? And secondly, in respect of what rights are they to be so affected?

The categories of people suggested for disfranchisement and disqualification are former Ministers, Regional and District Commissioners, Party Secretaries and Activists, the "socialist boys and ideologues", and other high-ranking members of the disbanded C.P.P. And the reasons for which their disfranchisement and disqualification are advocated are: that they abused the trust of the people (by "disfranchising" them, for example); they subverted the rule of law and democracy; and even now they continue to be persons who do not share democratic ideals.

Several difficult problems arise here. For example, the concept of "abuse of trust" is not capable of such precise definition as can provide a measure for assessing political misconduct objectively. And, again, while those falling within some of the categories above can be readily identified, it is not so easy to determine all those falling within other categories, such as the "socialist boys and ideologues", the "activists", and the "high-ranking members of the Party." Furthermore, nobody can seriously claim that these elements were the only people who were guilty of the acts specified. There were many non-members of the Party who contributed in no small way to our loss of freedom. What are the reasons for excluding such people from the punishment advocated? Take, for example, the operation of the Preventive Detention Act: what is to be done about those policemen who obeyed orders from men clearly without authority and detained many innocent men for years?; or the judges who counselled the passage of the Act and upheld its validity in the face of serious doubt? It might even be asked, and quite pertinently: did not the Opposition's boycott of the elections to the Regional Assemblies in 1958 facilitate the progress towards totalitarianism? And what is to be said about all those who, in the last mad days, seized every available opportunity to swear their loyalty to the *person* of the dictator, and glorify him for his "good" deeds? Clearly, it is not easy to apportion blame for responsibility for our past failures—which is at

CORRECTION

Vol. II, No. 19, page 20, col. 1. The first sentence of the third paragraph should read as follows: "Thus, it would be difficult altogether to deny that the editor's dismissal was caused by forces behind the scenes. . . ." [i.e. Omit "not" between "was" and "caused"]

least one reason why we should proceed with some caution.

Next, we take the issue of the rights of which the ex-C.P.P. elements are to be deprived. Implicit in the debate are three rights in respect of which the disfranchisement and disqualification are to apply: the right to vote; the right to stand for elections; and eligibility for appointment to public office.

The right to vote and the right to stand for elections are fundamental rights in any truly democratic society. Every citizen of this country is entitled to certain political rights, which include the right to participate in the government of the country, and the rights connected with the criminal process. Now, if the Independence Constitution, which is generally accepted as democratic, and the electoral laws of the pre-Republic days, are any guide, disfranchisement must be based on criminal acts which are of a fraudulent nature, or which concern elections, or which carry a certain type or degree of punishment, or which involve professional misconduct. And as for eligibility for appointment to public office, this is governed by a host of laws and civil service regulations; and, in any case, much depends on the particular government in power.

To say all this is not to discount the very real fears of many people, based on an experience too recent to be so soon forgotten, that should our erstwhile tormentors *somehow* regain power, life would be more terrible than before. Such fears, even if not genuine or shared by all, must be acknowledged and allayed. If we are not to generate cynicism and disappointment among our people, those elements known to be guilty of criminal offences must not go unpunished.

However, in seeking redress for past wrongs, and in our desire to secure our liberty and guarantee democracy for the future, we must be careful lest we take convenient short-cuts today which will defeat the purposes of the coup, endanger the very objectives we wish to promote, and establish a dangerous precedent. That is why we are inclined to doubt the wisdom of disfranchisement and disqualification.

We believe that unless our people are to be declared unfit to work a democratic system of government, the choice of representatives must be left to them. What we can do is to educate them as to the alternatives and issues. If we wish to ensure that the undesirable and untrustworthy elements of the C.P.P. are kept out of power, the N.L.C. should be urged to be less slow, and the Attorney-General's office less negligent, in prosecuting the guilty ones for criminal acts committed by them; for, the evidence being unearthed daily by the commissions of enquiry suggests that, in many cases, convictions could be secured.

Ali Mazrui replies his many critics of "Nkrumah—the Leninist Czar" in Transition 32



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The Economy

THREE LEADING ISSUES IN AGRICULTURAL POLICY

By

S. La-Anyane

ASSUMING that there exists a national policy for agriculture in this country, a citation of the principles upon which a sound public policy to improve production and marketing and consequently farm incomes can be built, depends to a great extent upon the realisation that the Ghanaian economy functions not only as an organic whole but that Agriculture is currently the heart of this organism, the vital segment or centre of gravity of the economy. Perhaps, this fact is too well-known; but unfortunately it is often neglected in the matter of actual policy formulation.

The three important problems which afflict this vital organ and which constitute the basic symptoms of the ailments superficially registered in other tissues of the economic body concern the systems of agricultural production, marketing and farm prices, and the reliance on food aid.

System of Production

The two main systems of agricultural production are small-scale peasant farming, which may be on a settled or shifting cultivation basis, and plantations or large-scale agricultural production. Since World War II the latter seems to have gained favour with policy-makers as the more efficient form of organisation that would accelerate the economic advancement of the agricultural sector. Many large-scale capital-intensive projects have been launched for the field production of cash crops and livestock. State farms, corporation farms, settlement farms and government-sponsored plantations have all been established in a bid to hasten the rate of increase of agricultural production. Twenty thousand acres of the Accra plains made up of four contiguous units of five thousand acres each will be devoted to the production of milk, cheese and butter and a variety of food crops. This is the limit. This fantastically huge farm enterprise will produce cheese and butter to feed a people who have not succeeded in producing enough of the basic local foodstuffs to feed themselves adequately.

As a form of farm organisation, plantations became important in this country when the British began their energetic exploitation of the resources of the western region at the turn of the present century. In those early days the colonisers had little choice in the form of the

system of production of tropical crops that were in demand in Europe. Concurrently, peasant production was encouraged by government in competition with the plantations. The cocoa plantations of the western region collapsed in the face of peasant competition. The oil palm and rubber plantations have remained till this day.

The question today is whether or not large-scale plantation methods and the establishment of State farms and Settlement farms are the best means for achieving the rapid economic development sought by this country.

The view held by many policy makers seems to be that plantation production is more efficient than existing methods adopted by peasant producers, and should therefore replace the latter. Some of the arguments are that it is much easier to assure high standards in plantation production than to educate thousands of illiterate peasants up to such standards. Size itself makes possible economies of operation by the use of labour-saving machinery. Processing equipment can be employed to best advantage when concentration is on a single crop and the volume of production is large. Plantations and large-scale enterprises will ensure increased production and regular supply of foodstuffs to the markets. They are better informed and better able to judge future market requirements. They can command the capital necessary to set up large-scale units, provide the required machinery and equipment, and employ technical and operational personnel of competence.

These advantages of plantation production are, in real fact, theoretical. In practice, these many superior qualities of the system do not contribute to making the cost of plantation production lower than peasant production. The original consideration is cost of production, which alone must decide the relative efficiency of a system of agricultural production in the present state of our economic development. It has been demonstrated that improved peasant husbandry methods offer the best prospects for the lowest cost of production in this rather important stage of economic development in this country.

The problem of choice between the plantation and peasant form of organisation is a dynamic one. The plantations were successful in the colonial era; they may become successful once again at some distant future date. In the present stage of economic development, however, the peasant system and relatively small- or medium-scale enterprise prove to be more efficient than the large-scale plantation. We may foresee alternatives to both the plantation system and peasant type of

farming in which we may attempt to combine the best features of each and overcome the weaknesses of both.

2. Marketing and Farm Prices

The current inflationary price tendencies have reacted adversely against the economic development of this country. The consumer price index has risen since 1963 by about 48 per cent in the urban areas, by 52 per cent in the rural areas, with a national average increase of about 51 per cent. There has been a considerable decline in real incomes as a result of this situation. Local food has become relatively the most expensive commodity in this country, largely as the consequence of the widening gap between supply and demand for foodstuffs.

The solution that is immediately offered is to increase food production directly by the adoption of large-scale farming methods. The more realistic remedy over the short-term lies, however, in the reorganisation and improvement of agricultural marketing. An effective marketing arrangement will preclude the mass of unnecessary expenditure on production schemes, since the marketing scheme will itself induce enormous increases in existing production at no extra cost to the country. Essentially, the whole problem of agricultural development in Ghana revolves round market opportunities, either locally or abroad, for farm produce.

Transportation

Studies carried out in this field emphasise the importance of transportation in agricultural marketing. An adequate network of feeder roads is necessary to induce increases in the supplies of foodstuffs from all the rural producing areas. In some parts, especially in the forest belt, the construction of feeder roads alone might not be sufficient. Farm roads are required to link the farms with the feeder roads, as these farms are generally many miles from the roads. Associated with the problem of transportation is the question of the numbers of roadworthy vehicles and their proper maintenance.

Other Marketing Functions

Transportation is but one of many marketing functions. There are other business activities involved in the flow of goods and services from the point of initial agricultural production until they are in the hands of the ultimate consumer. These functions include the assembling of the agricultural raw materials, their processing where necessary, storage, grading and standardisation, packing, financing and adequate market intelligence.

Many of these marketing functions are not performed in present-day marketing of agricultural products in Ghana. This in itself is an indication of the backwardness of the local market structure.

The marketing functions are performed by "middlemen", especially market women. They take a risk, and for that reason, are interested in profits, which are the returns for risk-bearing and entrepreneurship. The relatively small proportion of the retail price for foodstuffs that is actually returned to the farmer is a common grievance among farm people. The services provided by middlemen and women absorb much of the difference, but wasteful and inefficient handling methods are also responsible for part of it. The reduction of marketing costs by the elimination of unnecessary services enhances consumer demand through lower retail prices, without any comparable reduction in the prices received by the farmer. To a large extent, the market women have been responsible for low producer prices and high consumer prices because too many of them are performing marketing functions for which they are not needed today. Further, they have formed themselves into monopolistic groups or rings at the wholesale level which explains much of the high consumer prices of local foodstuffs and the poor quality of produce.

The remedy to these marketing problems does not lie with a food marketing board or any such monopolistic institution, but with large numbers of small co-operative groups operating independently.

3. Food Aid

Ghanaian agriculture has not created an abundance in the basic needs of human beings for food and fibre. Sixty per cent of the economically active population has not been able to feed the population adequately. In other countries, for example in the United States of America, fewer than ten per cent of the labour force, using only two-thirds of the country's cropland acreage, now provides for all its people—enough to spare and to share. The American consumers now enjoy a greater supply and variety of better food at lower real cost than any other people in history.

This is not all. Ghana receives food aid from developed countries. An African Head of State has said that foreign aid means foreign domination. It is, however, generally agreed that large food transfers from developed countries—involving both aid and trade—can play a crucial role in those countries that find it difficult to increase the per capita production of food to that level required in the development process. Fortunately

Ghana is not in this category of developing countries. Ghana has the immediate potential for producing enough food to feed its population adequately. This is clearly evidenced by the surpluses of maize, plantain, cassava, tomatoes and other vegetables that abound in the remote rural areas. The reason why foodstuffs are in short supply in the urban centres is, as explained, because of the inefficient organisation of the marketing of these products. We would gain far more and keep the agricultural sector of the economy in proper balance by improving our local marketing structure with the funds, available now and in the future, used for food imports.

Food aid as a form of foreign assistance may be of benefit in emergency conditions and to the extent that it acts as a substitute for commercial imports, freeing foreign exchange for more pressing uses. To the extent that food aid represents an addition to quantities that would have been imported in any case, it must result in lower agricultural prices. The benefit to be gained from food aid is important if we assume that such aid represents an addition rather than an alternative to other forms of economic assistance.

By and large, there seems little doubt that the growth-promoting effect of food aid is limited. The long-run benefits in promoting economic development in Ghana will be much greater if priority is given to strengthening the food-producing capacity of the country rather than importing surplus agricultural commodities from developed countries. It must also be recognised that food-aid consignments that are not in substitution for commercial food imports but replace or compete with domestic production, as for example maize, sugar, rice and non-food agricultural imports like tobacco, are likely to have a negative effect on the economic development of the country.

It seems rather doubtful whether large food-aid shipments into Ghana would have such favourable impact on the rate of economic growth as to offset the negative effect on farm incomes. There is a real danger that the principal impact of the additional food supplies would be to stimulate some increase in urban consumption and in some degree to affect adverse domestic production. We must contrast this type of danger to a kind of foreign assistance, such as the supply of fertiliser, capital items and technical advisory services, that aims at strengthening the agricultural organisation needed to enhance agricultural productivity. This form of assistance can often have an impact far greater than the market price of the aid resources because they help to break the bottle-neck to

more utilisation of existing labour and land resources. The importation, not of 20,000 bags of maize, but of 2,000 proven farmers and machines, operating individually, from the semi-arid parts of the developed countries to transform our northern savannah and Accra plains into prosperous farmlands for 5 years—a kind of transformation which has been achieved under more trying conditions in the newer parts of the Western world—would accelerate Ghana's economic development far more rapidly and in a more lasting manner than the palliatives offered by food imports. These technical aid farmers would hand over to literate young farmers trained in our colleges and universities after their 5-year period of freehold individual farming and leave the country, having worked themselves out of their local farming assignments.

In sum, measures to increase the technical efficiency of our agriculture must be given priority over what appears to be the easier remedy of accepting food aid from countries with surplus food problems of their own. We must learn to improve the technical efficiency of our farming by increasing our productivity and meeting our food requirements without importing food items which can be produced locally and which therefore contribute to the creation of imbalances in the agricultural sector of the economy.

FOOD, NUTRITION AND AGRICULTURE—I

By

F. T. Sai

(Professor, Ghana Medical School)

ABOUT sixty to eighty per cent of our working population is engaged in agriculture, and a large fraction of these is producing only food crops. Many families just grow enough food for their immediate needs and sell any extra for clothing and other necessities of life. Food consumption levels are below theoretical requirements for many people, all or most of the time. There are groups or regions where quite severe shortages in quantity and quality of food occur all the year round. The result of this is under-nourishment, which interferes with the capacity for work. There is a vicious circle, in this country as in all underdeveloped areas, a vicious circle of lack of suitable food—undernutrition and malnutrition—low working efficiency—low production of food—lack of suitable food—which has to be broken if we are to develop.

It is only in recent times that the nutrition of the individual as a national policy has been recognised. In fact, in Europe and America, direct

government involvement in the feeding of the people has only been in times of war. However, the last war demonstrated not only the need for a government-directed policy on food and nutrition but also how beneficial it can be. The war demanded of Britain a very scientific food and nutritional policy, and though the actual quantities of food available were less yet the nutritional status of the citizens actually improved. Although we are not at war, yet we are in the midst of rapid economic and social changes.

There is tremendous investment in industries, roads and buildings, education, etc. The need to earn enough foreign exchange to support these programmes is a constant source of worry. Yet food imports have swallowed up large sums of foreign exchange; our attempts to cut the huge expenditure on food imports only resulted in chaos. There is, therefore, a need to evolve a scientifically based food and nutrition policy which will ensure satisfactory consumption levels for all which, at the same time, will conserve our meagre foreign earnings.

Two basic issues are Demography and the Food Balance sheet.

Demographic Factors

The population of Ghana is estimated to be increasing at the minimum rate of 2.6 per cent per annum. Rates as high as 3 per cent and over have been obtained for some parts of the country. This means that in less than 25 years, the country's population will double. There is a shift of the population also from the rural areas into urban conglomeration: whereas in 1948 only 13 per cent of the population was living in towns, in 1960 the percentage had increased to 23. Some of the towns are growing at the rate of 7 to 10 per cent per annum, several times the rate of normal demographic increase. **This means simply that since it is the young able-bodied who usually migrate from rural areas into towns, the manpower available for farm work is constantly decreasing.**

The structure of the population too is such that 45 per cent is under 15 years of age (and they are to be classified as non-productive), and of these about half is under 5 years of age. There is, therefore, a situation where a large childhood population with its disproportionately high requirements for nutritious foods has to be maintained by a relatively small male adult population.

Food Balance Sheet

A food balance sheet is a statement of the amount of food, and therefore of nutrients, avail-

able to a given population in terms of nutrients per head per day. This comprises all the food produced and imported for human consumption. Its measurement is imperfect, yet it is very useful because if a food balance sheet shows nutrients availability clearly in excess of requirement, then there is a need to explain any evidence of under-nutrition and malnutrition on bases other than lack of production. This very easy method of assessing the adequacy of food production is not available in Ghana; and the first need for a useful food policy will be to produce an accurate agricultural census and continuing assessment of the state of food production and supplies.

Any rational food policy will demand a knowledge of the nutritional status of the population, food consumption and dietary habits and some idea of food production, storage, processing and marketing. For example, in Ghana, large numbers of women do quite heavy manual work on farms, for the extra energy output, their food intake should be increased. Young children have to share their food with loads of helminths (worms); they also suffer from frequent fevers, and allowances must be made for this food drain.

Nutritional Status of the Population: Growth Rate of Children

Birthweight of children is believed to be related to maternal nutrition. It has been found that the birthweight of Ghanaian children born in the old Korle Bu maternity hospital was about 1 lb. less than that of children of Ghanaians and Europeans born in the Ridge. There were no differences between the Ridge type Ghanaians and the Europeans.

Children throughout the country grow satisfactorily during the first 6-9 months of life while they are on the breast. After this there is a marked retardation of growth and groups of children aged 1-4 years are usually shown to be between 40-50 per cent to be underweight relative to their age—some of them severely so.

The growth rate of large numbers of school children has also been found to lag behind that of Western European children. What is more the curve shows a dip at about the time of puberty showing that the extra food required for the growth spurt and development of organs is not being provided.

Adult Stature

Adult physique and its changes by season are an indication of nutritional state too. Generally the coastal adults have a height weight ratio

judged to be satisfactory. The forest belt population even for their smaller height are generally underweight, while the taller northerner has the most unsatisfactory height weight ratio of all. During the periods immediately before the harvest the northerners lose considerable amount of weight—on the average 5lbs—while the forest belt dwellers lose some 1-2 lbs. This is believed to be a reflection of inadequate food intake at this time.

Dietary Intake Studies

On the whole calorie consumption seems to be almost adequate. It is about 10-15 per cent less than estimated requirements. However, this average masks violent seasonal fluctuations. During the harvest many would be consuming 120 per cent or more of estimated requirements whereas during the pre-harvest time a deficit of 30 per cent to 50 per cent is usual in some northern communities. Although adults may be consuming enough calories children generally may be having 70 per cent or less of their requirements. The urban labouring classes and migrants generally do not fare too well. A problem of some considerable importance to work efficiency is, therefore, how to produce enough calories cheaply for all the population all the time.

The major sources of the calories are important. Over 70 per cent of calories are derived from grains, rootcrops and plantains. In the north where grains are the major supply it would appear as if increasing production would be enough to meet the need. In most of the forest belt, bulky, less concentrated cassava, yams and plantains are the staple. Not only are these crops costly to transport and difficult to preserve but they fill children up before supplying them with enough calories; and for child feeding at least they need to be largely replaced with grain.

Protein is at the heart of the foods and nutrition problem. The staple provides by far the largest quantity of protein in the diet of cereal eaters, and theoretically no gross deficit exists. However, the quality of such protein is generally low in that it is lacking in one or more amino-acids and this restricts its usefulness to the body. The root-crops and plantains contain only 1-2 per cent of protein, and the forest belt dwellers are definitely short of protein. These shortages again are more pronounced in the diets of children.

The foods that yield good quality proteins are in poor supply and are expensive. Fish is mainly obtained in the south. Milk production is very elementary and poultry development is in its infancy really.

Vitamins and Minerals

Large scale deficiencies of the major vitamins are not common. Vitamin A deficiency is serious in Northern Ghana. It would appear from clinical records in hospitals and clinics that reboflavine and folic acid deficiency are serious in the forest belt and especially among the pregnant women. Iodine deficiency causing goitre exists in areas in the North and Ashanti and hookworms are responsible for iron deficiency in many parts.

Actual Diseases due to Nutrition

The presence or absence of diseases directly or indirectly due to nutrition is important. Protein/Calorie deficiency disease are common among children. It is believed that these must contribute substantially to the high prevalence of blindness in Northern Ghana. Goitre is a troublesome disorder in the Bolgatanga, Navrongo, Chaana and Sandema areas. Anaemias of mixed origin are common among pregnant and lactating women.

Vital Statistics

These provide an indirect information on the state of nutrition. Deaths directly attributable to nutrition such as Beriberi, Scurvy and Kwashiorkor are important. However diagnoses require a high degree of sophistication of health services for them to be truly accurate, and in many cases deaths due to these are recorded as other diseases. The death rates of children aged 1-4 are probably the best general index of poor nutrition. Whereas the infant mortality rate in tropical Africa is about 4 or 5 times the rates in Western Europe, the pre-school child mortality is some 40-50 times the comparable rate. The excess is largely attributable to the nutritional difficulties of this age group.

This picture of the food and nutrition problems of the country provides a basis for a food policy, which is outlined in the next instalment of this article.

(To be continued)

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Africa

TOWARDS THE DIGNITY OF BLACKNESS

By
O. Y. Asamoah

AT LONG last the African nationalists of Rhodesia and South Africa have begun a combined armed struggle for the liberation of Southern Africa—the bastion of racism, bigotry and oppression unparalleled in history. This struggle comes at a time when the American negro and the Africans of Portuguese territories are making determined efforts to free themselves. When one realises that there is a common basis for the oppression in all these areas, one does not need to appeal to negritude, African personality or to any emotional concept of doubtful utility as an instrument of political action to appreciate that these struggles are different arenas of a common cause.

Inevitability of Armed Struggle

Criminal British negligence accounts for the tragedy that is shaping up—a tragedy unavowed by decades of peaceful resistance under the leadership of men like Mahatma Ghandi and Albert Luthuli. Peaceful protest was met with death and the closure of all avenues for a dialogue. As a result of Indian and Pakistani complaints over the treatment of Asians, the UN Assembly sought yearly between 1946 and 1961 to promote negotiations between South Africa and the complainants. These efforts came to naught mainly because of South African intransigence. From 1952 to 1961, in dealing with race conflict in general, the Assembly sought unsuccessfully to promote peaceful settlement while calling upon South Africa to conform to her obligations under the Charter. But South Africa ignored these appeals on the basis of the much abused concept of domestic jurisdiction. In 1960 when the Security Council dealt with the matter for the first time, it promoted a mission of the Secretary-General to South Africa for consultations. This mission failed. In 1961 the Security Council advised the formation of a National Convention representative of all races to enter into a dialogue to decide the future. The appeal fell on deaf ears. Only in 1962 and 1963 did the Assembly and the Security Council respectively begin to work in terms of sanctions.

Violence is an inseparable part of government-without-consent, and in 1961 South Africa began to reap the fruits of intransigence. The little violence there was met with further ruthless laws and a show of force. A few weeks ago saw the intensification of the struggle.

A Fresh Look

Curious though it may seem in the light of this history the time is regarded by some as propitious for a "fresh" look at the problem—to start a dialogue. The door, it has been suggested, has been opened by the "torch" lit by Banda in establishing diplomatic relations with South Africa. For what purpose this dialogue? More understanding, and, perhaps, a change in South African attitude. Why is the time propitious? Because, so the argument goes, Africa is impotent to effect a military solution, because Vorster is pursuing a policy of "outgoingness", and because of economic benefits to be gained. This, it has been suggested, is realism.

It is difficult to understand what is "fresh" about an approach tried for decades without success. Even the idea of exchanging diplomatic relations with South Africa was broached by several African states long before Banda. The suggestions were turned down because they came from governments Pretoria considered hostile. I stress the word "hostile" because an essential condition of Vorster's "outgoingness" is the acceptance of *apartheid*. As Allistair Sparks, Foreign Editor of the *Rand Daily Mail*, says in the March issue of *Africa Report*: "He (Vorster) has offered friendship, provided, of course, the African states accept South Africa as it is and—here's the rub—that means *apartheid* and all".

Understanding the "Outgoingness"

Why then the "outgoingness"? As Allistair Sparks further suggests, eight coups in Africa have replaced ideological diehards with "pragmatic" military men more concerned with economic development, and perhaps prone to be attracted by the glittering gold of Johannesburg. These coups, UDI and other events have sapped African confidence. Thus a fresh atmosphere has been created which can skillfully be exploited by South Africa to great advantage. She would like to break loose from her isolation; and how hard she has been trying to improve her image through a reorganized and improved propaganda machine. Those who may be misled by the picture of gold and "stability" painted by this propaganda machine should not forget that it is contrasted sharply with a chaotic and savage black Africa infested with communism. Then as Allistair Sparks again suggests, "a ring of black states economically beholden to South Africa can provide a better protective cushion against the north" and make the Bantustans policy a more attractive commodity at home and abroad. And that is not all. The nationalists will lose support; the UN will look ridiculous; the sanctions policy will receive

a setback; and South Africa will have gained a limitless market for her goods.

Banda's economic dependence on South Africa, Rhodesia and Portuguese territories is real, but the benefits he gets will persist nonetheless without exchanging diplomats with them. The economies of these countries depend on cheap black labour and they cannot afford to expel the Malawians working there only for the failure to exchange diplomatic emissaries. Where then is the realism in an unnecessary course that antagonizes Africa, sacrifices sacred principles of the UN, and violates the OAU Charter?

Man cannot Live by Bread alone

Excessive submission to facts is opportunism, not realism. It is that which explains the stampede among the African states to ingratiate themselves with the nations that dispense with aid and loans. The logical consequence of this is economic wardship. It is as though the choice for Africa is between dependence and starvation, whereas there is a dignified alternative road to progress—self-reliance.

To look at Southern Africa only from the economic angle is to miss the point because, admittedly, the Africans there are economically better off. But as in other historical examples, economic welfare is no substitute for dignity and equality. A fresh look can lead nowhere. It will only serve as in the past to give the racists more time to strengthen their police states and the already powerful military machines at their disposal.

The Enemy is formidable

But how prepared are the nationalist forces to face up to their task? There is as yet little evidence that a sound foundation has been laid for the struggle through political education. The fault is only partly theirs. A host of laws and the physical separation of the races makes it well-nigh impossible to organize politically let alone militarily. Then again a guerilla force organised from without as appears to be the case here can be crippled by a good policing of possible frontiers of crossing; and the successes of the Rhodesian and South African security forces indicate that they have a far better intelligence service.

Meanwhile the leaders of the nationalist forces based in Zambia have begun the customary boasts of great achievements. They might talk less and think and plan more. No amount of talking will conceal the problems of guerrilla action in a terrain that largely provides little cover or whittle away the strength of the opposition or obscure the

fact that only sacrifices comparable to those of the Vietcong can lead to victory. The forces they are up against are formidable and they have powerful allies.

Implications for Neighbouring Countries

Those countries like Zambia whose territories nationalist forces would use for training or transit purposes should be prepared for economic sanctions and punitive military raids. Zambia is reported to have denied helping the nationalists. She had better learn that no amount of disclaimers will save her. Whether she likes it or not she has to arm herself to make such raids costly or prohibitive. She also has to accelerate measures to lessen her economic dependence on Rhodesia and South Africa.

International Repercussion

Armed conflict in Rhodesia and South Africa raises disturbing implications for world peace and security. As the group of experts (which included Sir Edward Asafu-Adjaye), established pursuant to a Security Council resolution of 1963 to assist South Africa to seek an orderly transformation, reported:

"Violence and counter-violence in South Africa are only the local aspects of a much wider danger. The coming collision must involve the whole of Africa and indeed the world beyond. No African nation can remain aloof. Moreover, a race conflict starting in South Africa must affect race relations elsewhere in the world, and also, in its international repercussions, create a world danger of first magnitude".

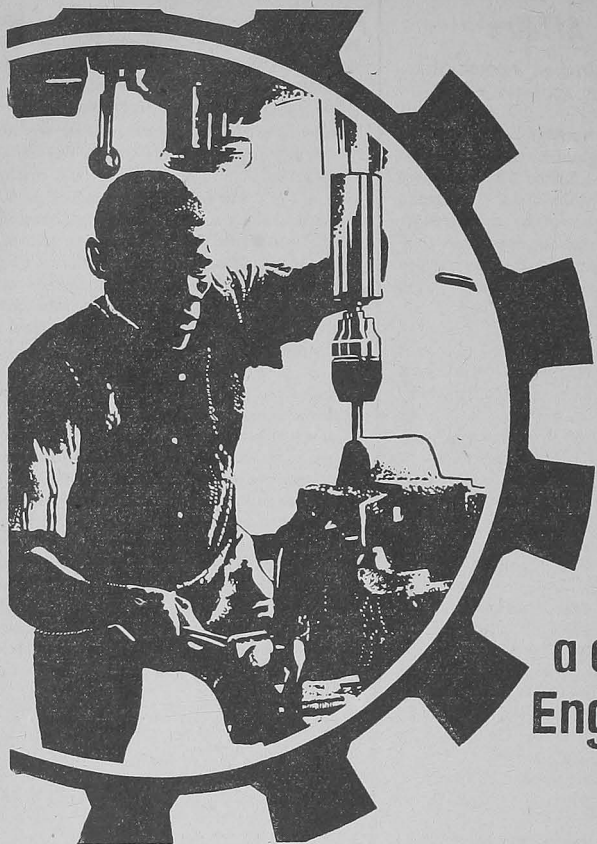
The conflict will test the tenuous bonds of unity forged by the OAU and will, because of inevitable communist military aid, draw ominous dark clouds of the cold war.

Conclusion

Freedom for Southern Africa will mean the end of the first phase in the struggle for the dignity of the black race. The second phase is the psychological reconditioning made necessary by a long history of slavery and colonialism. If we can believe in the friendship of those countries which created or abetted and now sustain apartheid, and if the Afro-American can go to Vietnam to fight in the name of "democracy" which is denied him, you can understand the magnitude of the psychological damage. For those countries born out of violence, such psychological reconditioning is less difficult.

"...violence is a cleansing force. It frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect".

Frantz Fanon.



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International Affairs

THE UNITED NATIONS: CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE AND WILL

By
K. A. Karikari

THE Twenty-second regular session of the General Assembly of the United Nations opened on September 19, 1967, in New York. The agenda contains 91 items which will be considered in plenary session or in one of the seven main committees. A number of these, such as the question of general and complete disarmament, human rights and self-determination for all peoples, are regularly considered by the General Assembly. The question of peace-keeping operations will be an important subject of discussion, particularly with the recent developments in the Middle East. African issues such as the question of the mandated territory of South West Africa, apartheid, the territories under Portuguese administration and the issue of mercenaries in Congo (Kinshasa) will also receive a great deal of attention at the twenty-second session.

In spite of the ceaseless efforts of the United Nations General Assembly in examining many key items on its agenda annually, amazement and concern are often expressed these days that the United Nations seems unable or unwilling to "do anything" about trouble spots like Viet Nam, Rhodesia and Southern Africa. What is the Security Council for, it is asked, if not to stop wars? If the council is blocked by a veto, why does not the General Assembly act? It appears that the history and limitations of the United Nations are not always well understood. This article reviews several of the major developments of the United Nations.

United Nations: Then and Now

Most people forget that the great powers collaborated with some of the smaller powers in writing into the Charter severe restrictions on the powers of the Security Council. Of late, apprehensions have been publicly expressed in West Europe and Latin America that new "swirling" Asian-African majorities in the General Assembly might drag them into adventures against their interests. A narrow mandate is, therefore, conferred on the United Nations. In 1954 the Security Council was conceived as the all-powerful peace-keeping instrument of Five Great Powers acting together, but capable only of procedural action and ineffectual debate if one of the Five dissented. At the same time, the Assembly was conceived not at all as a world legislature, but as a vehicle of parliamentary or multilateral diplomacy, able

to recommend what could be negotiated among the requisite majority but unable to decide or enforce. Today, there is no doubt that the relationship between the Security Council, in which the Great Powers can cast a veto, and the General Assembly, in which a majority rules, lies close to the heart of the continuing United Nations crisis.

The Security Council

Article 24 of the United Nations Charter says: "In order to ensure prompt and effective action by the United Nations, its members confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security". However, members countries have given different interpretations to this clause. The Soviet Union has always slurred over the first clause of this provision, which specifies that the purpose of conferring this responsibility on the council is 'to ensure prompt and effective action'. It has also tended to define the word "primary" as synonymous with "sole"; and while admitting that the Assembly could debate problems involving peace and security, it has insisted that action in this field could be taken only by the council.

The United States fully supports the view that the Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and favours resort to it, in preference to the General Assembly or any other international body, whenever a threat to the peace occurs, but with reservations. First, it emphasises the word "primary" in Article 24 and insists that the Assembly has a residual responsibility when the council is unable to act because of the veto or for any other reason. This widely shared view has since 1951 been implemented by the "Uniting for peace" procedure whereby under certain circumstances all issues are carried automatically from the Council to the Assembly. The second U.S. reservation relates to the application by the Council of Chapter VII of the Charter, which provides for a formal "determination" that a threat to or breach of the peace or act of aggression exists, and a decision as to what enforcement measures to take to restore peace. The U.S. government seeks to avoid, except in the gravest circumstances, the application of sanctions, in the wisdom and effectiveness of which it has little confidence. This reservation has, to the intense annoyance of the African nations, governed U.S. attitude towards action against South Africa and on Portuguese territories in Africa, as well as on Rhodesia.

France under de Gaulle is basically sceptical of the value of international organisations, except

those of a cultural character propagating the French language and culture. The French government is, therefore, much attracted by Article 2 (7) of the Charter. "Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorise the U.N. to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state". France since 1958 has often given the impression that it believes this clause to outweigh all other provisions of the Charter.

The United Kingdom and other Western European States, together with Canada, Australia and New Zealand, share the views about the primacy of the Security Council; but many of them, while not excluding it, are less enthusiastic about resort to the Assembly when the Council is immobilised by a veto. This coolness arises partly from a more persistent inclination on their part to come to terms with the Soviet Union and France, and partly from a lingering resentment at the prolonged anti-colonial vituperation to which many of them have been subjected in the Assembly. It stems more particularly, however, from the fear that the new Assembly majority might involve them in prejudicial crusades in Southern Africa or Asia. They show an increasing tendency, therefore, to keep the focus of action in the Council, even when this means, as it recently seems to, that there will be very little action at all.

The Afro-Asian States, since most of them are small or middle-sized states and vulnerable to attack by larger or more aggressive neighbours have traditionally been among the strongest believers in U.N. peace-keeping capability, and of resort to the Assembly under "Uniting for Peace" when the Council immobilised on any issue. They have, moreover, been increasingly disillusioned by the refusal of the majority of the Council to take radical action on the problems about which they feel most deeply, particularly those in Southern Africa, and have therefore recently tended to concentrate their efforts on those issues in the Assembly where their numbers enable them to obtain sweeping declamatory resolutions, even though such resolutions are unenforceable.

The General Assembly

There have been four major functions which the Assembly has served during the past 21 years. First, it has provided an unparalleled platform for statesmen from all countries, great and small, to address mankind and in this way has given those from small countries particularly a healthy feeling of status, dignity and participation. Second, it has provided these same statesmen with regular

and relatively unspectacular occasions for meeting with their conferees, for taking the temperature of current crises, for negotiating quietly if the temperature is conducive, and for exposure to the realities and complexities of the world, inducing sobriety sometimes from that exposure. Thirdly, the hortatory resolutions adopted each year by the Assembly, though lacking the force of law, express and often enhance the force of public opinion. At the 1965 session nearly one hundred resolutions were adopted, on such varied subjects as Chinese representation, a world disarmament conference, Tibet, peace-keeping, apartheid, refugees, etc. Finally, the Assembly's functions are those concrete actions it takes in order to create, maintain and finance various operations and agencies designed to implement United Nations purposes and principles, such as the U.N. Emergency Force in the Sinai and the U.N. Development Programme.

U.N. Impasse

Where do these conflicting policies and practices leave the Security Council as the "primary" instrument of the United Nations and perhaps of the World community, and for the maintenance of international peace and security?

The Security Council can act effectively when the great powers are in agreement, even if that agreement is partial and precarious. On the other hand, issues involving great power confrontation are either withheld from the council by common consent, as in the case of Berlin, or brought in primarily for psychological or pre-emptive purposes without the expectation of substantial U.N. action, as in the case of Cuba or Viet Nam.

Now, new impediments have emerged and old ones have been given new life since the Article 19 crisis, which provides that the General Assembly has the right to assess members for peace-keeping or any other expenses. What we are now witnessing is a "grand debate"—whether the big powers, in Unison, through the agency of the Security Council, should take exclusive responsibility for maintaining international peace and security while the General Assembly functions as a "glorified debating society" in political matters, or whether an attempt should be made to secure a fair, equitable, and clearly defined distribution of functions of the two principal organs.

In fact, the current crisis mirrors the crisis of 1945 which came close to frustrating the effort to create the United Nations. It is against this background that the United Nations has to function. However, the twenty-first Assembly concluded its work in an atmosphere more hopeful than that prevailing before the session. It is hoped that

progress and not perfection should be the yardstick to assess the accomplishments of the twenty-second session. A number of decisions may be arrived at which are of crucial importance to mankind.

General and Complete Disarmament

There is a general agreement in the United Nations that in the field of disarmament the ultimate goal is general and complete disarmament under effective international supervision. Delegates may focus attention on this objective and thus provide an opportunity for the introduction of new proposals. What is required is the initiating of a process that would produce increasing mutual confidence and stress on the value of a step-by-step approach, including a non-proliferation treaty, an underground test ban, and a cut-off of production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons.

Peace-Keeping

The present Middle East crisis may engage the Assembly once again on the question of financing future peace-keeping operations. While the financing of previous United Nations forces has helped to crystallise differences between the great powers the Committee of 33 has not yet managed to reach agreement upon guide-lines for the financing of future U.N. police action. In the aftermath of the Article 19 dispute, the Committee of 33 has tried to make progress by consensus but, given the strongly-held positions of principle of the Soviet Union and France and the reluctance of most non-aligned countries to exert pressure on these countries, no consensus has emerged. In order to overcome this inertia, guide-lines for the financing of future peace-keeping operation must be arrived at.

Africa

African problems will feature prominently in the deliberations of the twenty-second Assembly. One of the most complex and difficult is the question of South West Africa, a territory originally entrusted to South Africa under the League of Nations mandate. The U.N. has never been able to exercise its supervisory functions effectively, although the question has been debated at every Assembly session since 1946. In recent years the United Nations has taken an increasing and determined interest in South West Africa and has repeatedly asserted the right of the indigenous peoples to self-determination. The present Afro-Asian draft resolution which provides for the establishment of an ad hoc Committee, declares that South West Africa is a territory having an international status. This assembly will have to find a final solution to the problem.

Apartheid may come up again since 1968 is designated the Human Rights Year. The racial policies of South Africa will, therefore, be reviewed.

Rhodesia will dominate the debate on African problems. The African states feel strongly about this question which has been before the United Nations since 1962. The African representatives will demand quick action to deal with the illegal regime in Salisbury.

Under these circumstances, how capable are the Security Council and the General Assembly, jointly or separately, of performing the functions laid down for them in the Charter? The fact is that the United Nations is itself an anomaly, because it is an international organisation with theoretically far-reaching authority super-imposed. Hence, its real power and effectiveness fluctuate widely, depending on the climate of international relations and its own internal temperature. The authority, absolute and relative, of the Security Council and the General Assembly, because of the Article 19 affair and for other reasons, is in the process of painful reappraisal at the moment. This is a good time to examine the health of the two bodies and attempt to determine what confidence or hope can realistically be placed in them.

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Observer Notebook

Hospital Conditions in Ghana

THE state of affairs in some of our hospitals is alarming. We are prepared to accept some excuses, like shortage of drugs, of linen, beds and the like; but there can be no excuse for not keeping our hospitals clean.

The Okomfo Anokye Hospital at Kumasi is not only starved with drugs, linen and other important hospital equipment, but is also dirty and filthy. Our correspondent who visited that hospital recently found the whole hospital in a state of complete neglect. This is a very sad situation, for the hospital cost the tax-payer almost NC4 million to build.

There are cases where patients are left unattended for almost a whole day. Patients, some of them very ill, are found sleeping on benches and on the floors, with nobody showing any concern for them. Nurses and other hospital staff walk up and down by these patients apparently with no time or sense of duty to ask them whether they have been attended to or not.

We have found these unhappy conditions to obtain in our other big hospitals like the Korle Bu Hospital (especially the Poly-Clinic behind the Police Station and Chenard Ward), the Sunyani, Tamale and the Bolgatanga hospitals. Who is responsible for these unhygienic conditions in our hospitals? Is it the hospital Secretary or the Chief Medical Officer in charge?

In contrast to these government hospitals, some private and semi-autonomous hospitals (like the Military Hospital) are kept reasonably clean and neat. The Tetteh Quarshie Hospital at Mampong Akwapim, for example, is a "model" worth emulating by our hospitals. Tetteh Quarshie provides excellent facilities for its patients. Patients can easily see the doctor. They are not kept unduly long at the dispensary. The hospital itself is always clean and the nurses are ever willing to treat patients with respect. Is it impossible for our government hospitals to operate like the Tetteh Quarshie Hospital?

There is no doubt that something is wrong with the administration of all the government hospitals in the country. Something has to be done, and quickly. First, there is a need to create separate semi-autonomous boards for all the big hospitals in the country. Secondly, the hospital administrative machinery should be given more powers than they have now to run the hospitals, so that the Chief Medical Officer in charge of a hospital can devote more time to medical matters. The

present administrative set-up of hospitals in this country needs radical changes.

The problem is so grave that a commission of enquiry is called for.

A Transport Authority for Accra-Tema?

WE have had occasion to draw attention to the poor bus service in Accra and Tema, the hardships this means for the average worker, and its effect on productivity. Without the "tro-tro" which are a very poor substitute, movement would be impossible. There are signs of a new thinking and at a time when the government has taken measures which restrict the purchase of cars, this is encouraging. We hope that this is the beginning of more serious efforts to co-ordinate government policies.

Mr. P. D. Anim, Commissioner for the Ministry of Communications, is reported to have announced government plans to issue licences to private businessmen to run bus services along prescribed routes between the suburbs and some well-defined points in the city. The Commissioner has further announced that large buses being operated by government departments and corporations solely for their employees are to be placed under the State Transport Corporation to run as a supplement to the City bus services.

These are two imaginative steps which show that the government is at last waking up to its responsibilities in this sphere. The operation of privately-owned buses is something which has been tried in places such as Lagos with success. In the absence of enough resources at the disposal of the government and the Accra-Tema City Council to meet public demand, it is wise to allow private capital to take a hand. As for the buses operated by government departments and corporations these are being under-utilised and it is sensible that they be brought in to serve the larger public with whose funds they were purchased. But the government's responsibilities cannot be fully discharged unless energetic steps are taken to implement **quickly and effectively** these policy decisions and unless the scope of the thinking being currently pursued is enlarged.

The Civil Service often ensures the failure of government policies through slowness and inefficiency. The Commissioner is well-advised to supervise personally the implementation of these policies. Such personal supervision will further ensure that the issue of licences or any other responsibilities that will befall either the Accra-Tema Council or the Civil Service will not just provide further opportunities for bribery and corruption.

Since it appears that only those buses owned by departments and Corporations of a certain size will be brought under the State Transport Corporation, the government has to be vigilant to avoid the frustration of its policies through the purchase of more buses of lesser sizes by these bodies. On the other hand, the scheme should not operate so as to undermine punctuality of government employees.

As regards the decision to transfer the buses to the State Transport Corporation, we hope the increased burden to the Corporation and the likely rivalry between it and the Accra-Tema City Council that this will create will not adversely affect the quality of service to be expected. This is not an argument in favour of allowing the Accra-Tema City Council to do the job. Far from it. That Council, as well as certain government departments, needs to be fumigated to get rid of undesirable elements. All we advocate is that the government should guard against overburdening the Corporation until it is sure that it has the capacity to cope with increased responsibilities. We suggest that the government establish a new body, the Accra-Tema Transport Authority, to be solely responsible for public transportation in the area. This is the approach adopted in many countries, with useful results. The problem of transportation, like those of sewage, water and electricity, is too big to be left in the hands of a city administration which in our case is utterly useless. There are many other responsibilities, such as the provision of public conveniences, devolving upon the city administration which it cannot discharge. In these circumstances, its workload should be decreased as a matter of policy.

We hope the government will give serious thought to these suggestions. In the appointment of persons to the new Transport Authority, efforts should be made to avoid the usual government error—the over-utilization of a few favourite men. Energetic and not so overburdened men should be chosen for the job. Apart from the initial capital to be provided by the government to get the Authority established it should be expected to pay its way in the course of time in the same way as other statutory corporations. The suggestion we have made should extend to Kumasi and other municipal areas as and when conditions demand.

The government's attention should also be given to the problem of taxi fares. The *Legon Observer* has had occasion to complain about taxi fares and to offer suggestions for avoiding robbery. The Accra-Tema City Council appears to have done little about these suggestions so far. We would

advise that if and when a Transport Authority is set up the supervision and control of taxis should become its responsibility. Meanwhile an effort should be made to publish a chart of reasonable fares between any two points in the Accra-Tema City area. In the absence of meters this is the minimum that the government can do. The taxis are an essential supplement to the public transportation provided by the City Council. The government should ensure that they continue to play their useful role.

G.N.T.C. Services

IT MIGHT be a good idea if some of the girls in the G.N.T.C. shops were to be given a rude jolt one of these days. In particular reference are the girls at the cosmetics counter of the Ghana House shop who are not only sloppy, cheeky, or indifferent, but also very dim. If they were less dim they would realise that they are only earning their monthly pay out of the money which the customer comes to spend at the various counters. If by their bad service they antagonise these same customers, the customers must naturally take their custom elsewhere; and it won't be long before the salesgirls also go.

This complaint is even more serious because the G.N.T.C. is a state-owned enterprise, supported with the tax-payer's money; where, therefore, we have a right to expect adequate service from the salesgirls; and by so failing, these sloppy girls, in effect, are not only driving away the customers, but are also wasting the tax-payer's money. In short, they are a drain on the country's resources—a state of affairs which we can ill afford, and which cannot be allowed to continue.

Clearly, this is a matter which the management must look into. These girls are supposed to be given no less than six months' training before being stood at the counters, and if after all this they are unable to practise the elementary steps of good salesmanship, such as handing over the customer's balance in a decent fashion, then might it not be said that their training has been inadequate? Secondly, in all shops of the standing of Ghana House, there are supposed to be 'floor managers' or 'floor walkers' whose duty it is to see that customers are not unnecessarily neglected, that salesgirls do not enter into unnecessary arguments with customers, that salesgirls do not misconduct themselves, and that service in general goes on smoothly. These supervisors do not seem to be around much in this shop. Thirdly, does the administration have a scheme of assessing the performance of their employees at all?

It is true the G.N.T.C. has made great strides in its performances regarding distribution of goods—bringing shops within reach of the more remotely placed of our populations; and making some profit over the last financial year. Making some profit was, of course, inevitable since for some time at least the G.N.T.C. was the sole importer of certain essential commodities. In the field of commerce, a Department Store such as the G.N.T.C. is a gold-mine. Fortunes have been made in every part of the world through department stores. The Ghana House therefore has every opportunity to do this for the country, and to become the cynosure of all shops in Ghana—a real show place like any of the Oxford Street shops in London, or Fifth Avenue in New York, where Ghanaians will be proud to take their visitors. This is not asking too much; for, in spite of the prevailing difficult economic conditions in this country, the U.T.C. Departmental Stores, for example, are praiseworthy in this respect—with well-lit, attractive displays—and if the girls occasionally falter, the service is at least reasonable most of the time. If Ghana House cannot create such an institution, then the management should be removed.

So the Scapegoat is Dead

MUCH that has been going on in Nasser's Egypt since the humiliating defeat of the Arabs by the Israelis is either little known or difficult to understand. Enough evidence, however, exists to suggest that behind the apparent calm there is recrimination for the defeat and a struggle for survival by Nasser.

In a war in which air superiority is decisive, striking the first blow is the key to success. This key Israel has used on more than one occasion with resounding success. Perhaps taking a cue from the 1956 Suez episode, Hakim Amer, Commander of the Egyptian Armed Forces and Vice-President of the Republic, is said to have advised that Egypt strike the first blow. This suggestion, so rumour has it, was turned down by Nasser, perhaps for good reason. Western neutrality was then extremely doubtful and it must have been clear to Nasser that in the last resort the U.S. could not afford to allow the extinction of Israel. Then, certain U.N. officials are believed to have assured the Arabs that the Israelis would not strike the first blow. Whether or not such assurance was given either by U.N. or other officials, the Arabs obviously did not believe Israel would strike. Considering Israeli warning that the closure of the Gulf of Aqaba was *casus belli*, that is to

say, an act justifying war, the Arabs were naive, to say the least. Then again, to Nasser the prospect of achieving much that he hoped for (with consequent enhancement of his popularity) without firing a shot must have been blindingly dazzling.

The Israeli success has thrown the Arabs into greater confusion than ever before and presented Nasser with a personal tragedy of the first magnitude which lesser men could not hope to survive. Can he survive it? This is the question posed by the death of Hakim Amer. Whether those demonstrations in Cairo in favour of his continuation in office were spontaneous or not (and this is not a matter entirely without doubt) they were timely since rumour has it that the Generals were after him. This may not be true, but Nasser could not have failed to draw the parallel between his position and that of King Farouk between 1948 and 1952. The 1952 coup, in which he and Amer were some of the ringleaders, was the direct consequence of Farouk's defeat at the hands of the Israelis in 1948. It took 6 years for Farouk to reap the fruits of failure, and Nasser cannot be out of danger yet. But meanwhile he has won a respite by disposing one way or the other of the high-ranking officers who may know of the secrets of his failure. Hakim Amer could not suffer the humiliation of being made a scapegoat. So he committed suicide, or did he? Anyway he is dead, and nothing could emphasize more the utterly untenable position of Nasser at the moment. Amer has done a gallant although unrewarding service to Egypt. He is a victim of circumstances which underline how much the future of his surviving comrade is left to fate, sad as it may be, in the light of the political consequences of his downfall for Africa.

To our Contributors

We would like to remind our prospective contributors about some of the rules governing contributions:—

The MAXIMUM length of articles is 4 pages quarto, typed double-space; letters should not exceed 1½ pages quarto, and should be exclusive to the "Legon Observer".

Lengthy contributions are likely to be delayed or not published at all. Contributions not exclusive to the L.O. will not be published.—Editor.

Commentary

DANGER SIGNALS BEFORE AND AFTER CIVILIAN TAKE-OVER

By

G. Adali-Mortty

LIKE the good hurdler, our leaders of thought and our policy planners must raise their sights beyond the immediate obstacle, if Ghana is not to be overtaken by lurking disasters which may threaten or undermine our national reconstruction.

With the barest of focal effort, even the more colour-blind or near-sighted of our public decision-makers can see the red lights of danger. For ease of effort a few signals are flashed on the screen of national consciousness. Among the factors likely to cause disruption in our ranks are:—

- * An absence of a consensus on broad guiding philosophies and national goals;
- * A shortage of appreciation of the need for preventive organizational controls;
- * Our social propensity to bribe and receive in consideration for common or public services rendered;
- * The perils of future splinter, rival, political parties; or, of charlatans parading as 'independent' candidates;
- * Divisive dangers inherent in rival party-political action and intrigues;
- * Our social propensity to relapse into somnolence, inertia and stagnation.

We shall briefly examine these factors one by one. As and when convenient, we shall strike the balance between the debits and the credits (which is the pretentious way of calling pluses and minuses).

Nil Consensus

As understood in terms of a loyal opposition (or minority representation) in the national legislature, democracy is impossible without some unifying consensus around which programme ideas and targets for social and economic progress of the State can cluster.

To achieve a consensus of this nature, there is need for a time-span sufficient for rival ideologies and social philosophies to engage in open combat, so that eventually a truce can be declared. When, in the end, an accommodation has been attained between different, fractionizing views on life and happiness, then only can the co-existence of rival ideologies become possible.

This is not to say that any, or all but one, of the rival philosophies need to be eliminated totally. What is expected is that a central determinant may be found by which to arrive at an ideological equilibrium at any point of historical time.

Now, this is just what a newly developing nation is in a process of fashioning for itself. The older states quarrel and haggle around a cluster of commonly accepted "national designs." The cluster, that is to say, on which hangs the chances for national survival. The "national design" for the United States of America, for instance, is a universal acceptance of the private enterprise system. However divergent other views on social

progress may be in that country, America is agreed on this one economic system, as the U.S.S.R. is agreed on a state-centred economic system.

So, then, we have quite a task ahead when the ideological combat, too early nipped in the bud by the former regime, is joined between rival, disintegrating factions in this country. Avowedly, the rivalry is going to be rather messy and disheartening. It may even stand in the way of smooth and rapid progress.

One does not know whether the N.L.C. will narrow the fighting arena by decreeing out of court certain creeds such as Mao Tse Tung's or Lenin's, or Trotsky's version of communism; or whether all communism and socialism will be tabooed to clear the way for inter-idea in-fighting. It is hoped that warring factions will employ only the well-known and well-tried fistcuff mode of combat?

Preventive Controls

We lack a due appreciation of the need for in-built organizational controls. We invariably fail to fore-plan preventive measures into organizational systems so designed as to prevent or forestall abuses and corruption. In Ghana, public policy-makers all too often imagine that once an institution has been devised, it will run itself. It is only when abuses and corruption occur, that we hastily mount expensive commissions of enquiry to unearth the rot.

As with our approach to state enterprises and corporations so with our outlook on politics. It never occurred to those in authority to plan organizations in such a way that, by preventive planning and regular auditing and review, the certainty of detection of incompetence, graft and failure could be readily detectable.

We have all been witnesses to the manner in which those whom we vested with authority soon took it into their heads that they were divinely ordained to rule, and to rule for the rest of their lives without reference to those who vested them with that power. We saw absolutism develop. But all that is past history.

It is sad to reflect that mankind has a predilection for taking no notice of history. Thus, despite our recent experience of authoritarianism, and in spite of Lord Acton's prophetic observation to the effect that power tended to corrupt, and absolute power corrupted absolutely, one would not be surprised if the lesson should be lost upon us even now, and when civilian rule emerges.

We might fail to accept as a basis for practical action the fact that no matter who is invested with ultimate power, he will tend to accumulate more and more power into his hands, and will tend to rule corruptly, unless hemmed in by checks and controls. It is checks and balances which make for moral exercise of authority and power, not inherent morality.

For this reason, it would be desirable to inscribe in the constitution for Ghana an entrenched clause which would require a two-yearly rotation of tenure of public office. The clause would make it impossible for any political power holders to remain for longer in the same offices. In a predominantly pre-literate society such as ours, there is the danger of a ruling party destroying rival parties through pseudo-legal attrition, the dispensation of patronage and distribution of "jobs for the boys."

In modern, well-run businesses, there are self-correcting administrative and financial controls. Our state enterprises and other public corporations should be made to learn from private enterprises, and to operate as profit-centred businesses do.

Propensity to Give and Receive Bribes

Ghanaians do not hold a monopoly for graft. We are not any more moral or less moral than other peoples. The prevalence of corruption in under-developed countries is as much a result of our technological and organizational backwardness as of ignorance of personal rights and duties.

Be that as it may, no Ghanaian should deceive himself that there is not today in our midst a roaring trade in bribery and corruption. We know—or don't we?—that recent exposures have done little to deter people in this respect. We know too that it is not possible to wish away corruption without tightening our structural and institutional systems.

It must be admitted that some controls have been initiated recently which are likely to lessen exposure to temptations in handling contract tenders and awarding contracts. However, more can be done. It should be possible to create national, regional and district tender boards so that from a pool of members a number may be selected for individual tender sittings, and so that no contract bidder can know which individual people will be asked to sit on any particular tender evaluation panel.

There are other avenues for graft, reaching down to routine handling of administrative services and the issuing of various licences and official forms. Whilst control over such situations may be more intractable, it should not be impossible to provide safeguards.

There is no reason why a blanket coverage and surveillance should not be provided for in a legal instrument requiring that public officers should be subject to being called to account, if such officers appear to be living beyond their manifest, legitimate earnings. Another preventive measure, especially in the case of legislators, would be to make it mandatory for such people to declare their interests and assets upon their assumption of office. In this way, any act likely to lead to conflict of interests can be detected and checked before abuses of office become serious.

Unless we are prepared to take some such precautions, we had better stop talking wishfully about arresting corruption.

How Many Parties Should Contest Elections?

Even more fundamental is the necessity for defining the margins of electoral franchise. This matter should be settled ahead of time. Misgivings have been expressed in certain quarters concerning which nationals of voting age should be allowed to vote and to stand election. Those Ghanaians who may be found, through the various commissions of enquiry, to have defrauded the country, or to have abused their trust, it is urged by certain people, should be subjected to a period of disenfranchisement within which period they will have ample time to reflect upon their past misdeeds.

These, in my view, are tricky issues the settlement of which must satisfy the claims of justice both to individuals and to the general public. It should be possible to lay down clearly ascertainable and objective crite-

ria by which to determine individual disqualifications. And the dangers of disenfranchisement must be carefully weighed against an open franchise for all.

Having done this, some conditions should be laid down by which to prevent the stalemate such as was exemplified by pre-De Gaulle French politics. A minimum of membership of political parties should be set to achieve which will constitute entitlement to enter the electoral contest.

Since an individual is in no way capable of providing a platform or a manifesto realizable in the life-time of parliament, voters should be insulated against charlatans who may pose as saviours for certain constituencies. Since the implementation of electoral promises depends upon parliamentary votes, no independent candidate can fulfil his promises in the legislature without a backing by parliamentary members. The wastage of votes on such individuals in general elections or by-elections should be prevented by prior legislation.

Divisive Inter-Party Conflict

If it is not possible to guard against the divisive forces which party rivalry unleashes, at least we should be aware of the potential dangers.

If we permit of party affiliations ranged around tribal lines, or if scrupulous attention is not paid to the manner in which election campaigning shall be done, the country may be plunged into strife, the like of which has torn apart the national groups of certain African States. We must not, ostrich-wise, imagine that such things can not happen here.

Apart from regional interests, a continuing imbalance in the development of the various regions of the country is among the factors likely to lead to misunderstanding and political disturbances.

Even the very old nations have still not completely obliterated regional consciousness. A good deal has been achieved in this country since independence in fusing the people of Ghana into an increasingly homogeneous whole. Much remains to be done. It will be foolhardy, therefore, to suppose that, much as educated Ghanaians now think of themselves as Ghanaians, ethnic allegiance and regional rivalry do not exist today. It will take many more decades for urbanization and social mobility to lessen tribal identification and the type of ethnic loyalty which supersedes national loyalty. The primary instinct for survival is so strong that it persists long after national protection of social interests has made the instinct unnecessary.

Unless calculated attempts are made to outlaw the fanning of tribal sentiments, unscrupulous campaigners may stir up latent tribal animosities into social upheavals, to put down which may require shooting and bloodshed.

Associated with this problem is that of personality struggles within individual parties. Such a danger is greater in elitist parties. Hence party organizers of tomorrow must work out a means by which to prevent party leaders from each claiming superiority over every other leader, and waging personality warfare.

Somnolence, Inertia and Stagnation

Partly due to the years of colonial dependence during which period of subjugation our people came to rely upon colonial initiative, and when, indeed, personal initiative was unofficially proscribed and even frowned

down upon; and partly because there was an element of dehumanization of manhood in any colonial situation, leading to an arrest and deflection of the natural direction and progress of social development, our people are only now recovering from the stupor in which they lived. You have only to see how, in many parts of our country, the village folk take no initiative in removing the unhygienic conditions of their lives. Pit latrines and muddy water sheds are viewed as acts of God, as it were, on which it is a taboo to do anything to improve.

Nor is stagnation and social inertia confined to the villages in the countryside and along the coast. See the condition of downtown Accra, Sekondi and Kumasi. Look at the disgrace which we call markets where our food is sold and bought.

In public administration, the impression is created as though the human life span were a thousand years! Was it not the other day when, in our smugness and somnolence, we were taken by surprise by the tragic incident spearheaded by a mere strapping of a junior officer of the Army? Do you not agree that we are given to resigning to complacency?

For example, we are told by statisticians that our population will double itself in twenty-six years. What provisions are we making for housing, school accommodation, hospital beds and the like? I cite these as typifying our supine disposition under challenges of the future.

Equally so is our myopic view of the political kingdom which is in sight. Or, is it that we will just not look up and see its implications?

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Letters

Disqualification of C.P.P. Officials

SIR—In your "Observer Notebook" of 1 September, 1967, it was argued that one reason why ex-officials of the banned C.P.P. other than those who will be convicted by the courts should not be disqualified from holding public office is that such disqualification might deprive the people of Ghana of the right of choosing their own leaders. It was further advocated that on account of the lack of a universally acceptable objective test as to what acts merit or do not merit disqualification, those who will not be convicted of crimes should not be disqualified.

Let us be tolerant by all means; let us, as much as possible, leave the people of Ghana to elect whomsoever they please as their leaders, but let us also remember that it is sometimes necessary, even vital, to help the people overcome some of their own weaknesses: to protect them against themselves.

In 1956, the Jibowu Report made it crystal clear to the people of the Gold Coast that Nkrumah and his henchmen were little more than a bunch of avaricious people with a large capacity for embezzling public funds. If only the Colonial Administration had had the courage to ban these people from holding public office, how different the history of Ghana would have been! But we all know what happened. When, in spite of all that had been unearthed, the C.P.P. found itself again elected by the people, its members not unnaturally accepted the implication that they could go on embezzling public funds—which they did, beautifully! I honestly believe that having gone to the trouble of saving Ghana from the ravages of the C.P.P., the N.L.C. would be seriously undermining its own hard work if it did nothing specific—however drastic—to disqualify these terrible people from holding public office in the future.

No doubt, some will be convicted of crimes, which conviction will lead to their disqualification under existing laws. But it is very doubtful if there are going to be prosecutions for such acts as causing the arrest and detention of people who carried a number of "NO" placards in their cars at the time of the referendum and some of the other disgraceful abuses of power that are being unearthed at the Commissions of Enquiry. One is sometimes shocked by the lack of repentance shown by these former oppressors of the people; and the painful impression remains that, given the chance, these C.P.P. men will do the same things all over again. Nay, they will go one step further. They will make absolutely sure that the army will never again be in a position to stop their abuse of power.

I strongly urge that in addition to those criminals who will be disqualified through the normal processes of law, the N.L.C. should consider that it owes an inescapable responsibility to the people of Ghana to ensure that all the others who abused their trust in various other ways should be prevented from holding public office for a long time to come. As to the definition of terms such as "abuse of trust" and "public office" this is not the place to embark on the exercise; but the N.L.C. should appoint a Committee to study the problem and make recommendations to it.

And as for the argument that those who advocate the disqualification of the C.P.P. today should be wary

wary lest they find themselves disqualified some day for that point of view, my answer is that those who accept it might as well argue that the 24th February Revolution should never have been staged!

Legon

S. Bekoe Mfodwo

Our Secondary Schools revisited

SIR—May I take this opportunity to observe that the letter from the headmaster of Mfantshipim School, Mr. J. W. Abroquah, published in the September 1-14 issue of the *Observer* (Vol. II, No. 18) did not contradict my assessment of some of the problems of secondary school education in Ghana. It rather asked, quite unintentionally, two pertinent and closely related questions: how does one measure standard of education; and was I, in my article on Teachers and Our Secondary Schools, referring to particular schools or generalizing?

The second question is easier to answer: my comments were of a general nature and were not meant to refer to any particular school. In other words, some schools may be performing more or less poorly while others may in fact be performing better than ever. So that it is quite likely that candidates in a given school may be scoring more and better quality alphas than their predecessors. But at the same time there will be schools where the performance of the candidates in the G.C.E. "O" level examinations is worse than before. There are schools where headmasters enforce discipline and ensure good behaviour by the students; there are others where headmasters or teachers are not so responsible, etc. This is how a general statement should be looked at.

Back to the first question. There is no simple, single, unimpeachable answer to it; but a point to be underscored is that one does not measure the standard of education by comparing crude statistics collected for a number of years, showing absolute numbers of successful or unsuccessful candidates. It is more rewarding to show, for a start, what proportions or percentages of the total numbers of candidates are represented by the total numbers of successful or unsuccessful candidates. But these percentage figures could themselves be misleading, so that a more sophisticated statistical manipulation, involving adjustments of all sorts, will be required to make them more meaningful.

There is yet another question to consider: would it be necessary, in order to arrive at a meaningful assessment of the standard of secondary school education in Ghana, to draw distinctions between categories of schools, based on, say, the student/teacher ratio, the quality of the teaching staff (crudely determined on the basis of their diplomas), the mean annual output of students, the nature of the school "learning environment" (if it can be quantified), etc.?

Whatever the method of computation, there is no denying the fact that our secondary schools, all of them put together, are producing more G.C.E. certificate holders than before. But are these successes commensurate with the vastly increased sums of money we have been investing in education? Have we been spending our money wisely in multiplying the number of secondary schools many of which cannot be staffed adequately? Should we have built fewer secondary schools and paid teachers more, etc? These and other questions or issues, a few of which I raised in my article, still have to be answered or faced, whatever our feelings

on the concept of standard of education.

Finally, Sir, permit me to express my alarm at Mr. J. W. Abroquah's comments (hysterical?) on Mr. Ackom-Mensah's article in which it was suggested that headmasters of secondary schools should benefit from a course in school administration. I consider Mr. Ackom-Mensah's suggestion a perfectly sound one. Surely, the fact that the social or political environment in Ghana may not be, or has been, such as to make their work easy does not mean that secondary school headmasters, bursars, or the administrative staff in general do not need the requisite and proven skills that could always be applied very effectively when the social or political circumstances have improved? Common sense alone is not enough, though it is very necessary.

Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A.

K. B. Dickson

Administration of the Bawku (Kusasi?) District

SIR—Mr. A. A. Yakubu of Bawku in a letter on page 15 of Volume II No. 18 of your esteemed journal paints the BAWKU district as a scene of tribal feuds. For obvious reasons, he did not give details. The missing links are as follows.

2. Bawku District is a vast country of CLAN settlements, grouped into 18 CANTONS. Several generations of inter-clan marriages, customs assimilation and a common dialect has made them a homogeneous community. Like the Moshi, Dagomba, Wala and Mamprusi, the clans are members of the great Mole-speaking people. Historically, the clans in the district are grouped into Kusasi and Mamprusi. In reality the inhabitants have no distinguishing features either social or cultural along these groupings. In fact they are not conscious of such labels.

3. Mr. Yakubu knows that when in 1958, local fanatics of the proscribed party capitalized on imaginary differences between Kusasi and Mamprusi, they were in fact using these names as a cloak for political manoeuvres. I recall that Yirimeya Salima, 13th in an unbroken line of Bawku nabus was dis-skinned in spite of a High Court ruling. Abugurawgo, a fanatic of the proscribed party was recognised the Bawku naba. The latter claimed to be surviving son of an 18th century Kusasi chief of Bawku! In Worikambo Canton, Asigri Duut was dis-skinned because he was a stranger—a Mamprusi. His place was taken by his brother Dinko Duut—a Kusasi! In Bugri Canton, Anaba took the place of Awin-Bila. Both are members of the Bugute-Is Clan. In Gaghri Canton, Ayubeogu displaced Atibila as Canton Chief. The two are cousins and of the Zuos-Dim clan. Out of the District's 18 Canton Chiefs, 15 were dis-skinned. In all cases the official reasons were the same: to correct a 400-year-old minority Mamprusi domination of Kusasi. But how on earth can clansmen, cousins and even brothers belong to different tribes? Certainly, the names Kusasi and Mamprusi now have meanings other than tribal.

4. The above situation was normalized by N.L.C. Decree No. 112. All the chiefs of Bawku District are once more privileged to enjoy the brotherhood of the Mole-speaking people under the Nayiri. Mr. Yakubu dare not suggest that we return to pre-24th February days!

P.O. Box 108,
Bawku.

Segiri Dahamall

Ghana and the Nigerian Crisis

SIR—Please allow me to comment on the views which have been expressed on this matter, including your editorial of 18 August.

It is surprising to note that any African can suggest that the disintegration of the Nigerian Federation is not too high a price to pay for failure to prevent the secession of the Eastern Region. Ghanaians' seeming disaffection with the Federal Government is, of course, understandable, in view of the abortive but zealous efforts made by General Ankrah to bring the parties to terms. This, however, should not be allowed to detract from the sense of objectivity which the Nigerian situation demands.

Contrary to what Ojukwu's propaganda machinery has led the world to believe, the massacre of last year, sad as it is, was not the cause of but simply the occasion for the secession. From the moment the schemers of the so-called military coup of January last year lost their control of the Federal Government it became clear that secession, which had been threatened practically since oil was discovered in the Region, was the next move. But the world should not forget that in January last year only leaders from the Eastern Region were untouched in the murders of political leaders. I am not an Hausa, as anybody here can see. But those who judge the Nigerian situation should not ask the Nigerians to forget one sad event and not the other.

Nigeria's contention now, however, is that if the Ibos have become so disenchanted with the Federation that they must leave it, then they should not force the other ethnic groups in the Eastern Region out of it as well into a new country, thus depriving them of the protection which the Federation affords them at present against Ibo oppression. The least that ought to be done is to allow these people to decide freely with whom their future association shall lie. Ojukwu cannot decide for them by an 'Ndaba' of chiefs, as he claimed to have done before secession. This is an instrument of racialists in Southern Africa, and it is even more to be condemned if employed by Africans against Africans.

Observer Notebook of the same issue rightly stated that the remedy is the creation of more regions. It is wrong, however, to say that this came too late. This had all along been pressed on the military authorities by right-thinking Nigerians. Gowon, who is himself from a minority area, accepted this and went on to put it into action. Ojukwu, on the contrary, insisted on a Confederation, which, as the Canadian example has shown after one hundred years of 'peaceful co-existence', cannot erase the source of internal conflicts latent in such a system. No outsider acting in good faith and imploring the Federal Government to resume negotiations can ignore these considerations.

In urging you, Sir, and Ghanaians in general to re-appraise your stand in this matter and remonstrate with Ojukwu to abandon his 'no negotiation without recognition of sovereignty', it is necessary to emphasize that Africa has nothing to gain, and everything to lose, from the fissiparous tendency that the break-up of Nigeria will set in motion. This is not a far-fetched notion; African politics seems to have a built-in infectiousness and Ghana's independence, for example, was an eye-opener. But not all African events are of this desirable kind.

Those who have the overall interest of Africa at heart have constantly emphasized that African develop-

ment must depend upon closer relations between the states. If the existing motley of countries cannot be joined together it behoves all of us not to try to put them further asunder.

London

Dotun Koleoso.

The Role of the Middle Easterners in our Economy

SIR—I write about the article, "The Role of Middle Easterners in our Economy," which appeared under OPINION in your August 18-31 issue of the *Legon Observer*.

May I suggest that the opinion expressed in this article smacks of RACISM? To deliberately single out any one or two nationalities for such severe criticism as stated in this article is only the first step towards racial or national discrimination which is not worthy of the Ghanaian people.

Rather, your commentator should have encouraged people of every nationality in Ghana to work together for the common weal. Just as, on page 22 of the same issue of the *Legon Observer*, Dr. K. A. Taylor states in the last paragraph of his letter: "Honest (rich) men who render a true account to the country are indeed a great national asset." I feel it is up to the NLC to see that anyone in business is not guilty of any illegality. But, this must be based on law and not on race or nationality.

Perhaps "Anxious Patriot" would be interested to know that we here in Canada owe our high standard of living in part to the willingness of United States of America to invest so much money in Canada. But, we still retain friendly and fraternal relations with the Americans. We recognize the advantages to be gained from American capital and enterprise; just as you in Ghana should welcome the enterprise of any foreigners, if this will benefit Ghana!

I am living very far away from Ghana, and perhaps I will never see Ghana, but I do wish all Ghanaians a most pleasant and prosperous future.

Canada.

R. Jack O'Malley

Russian-trained Doctors

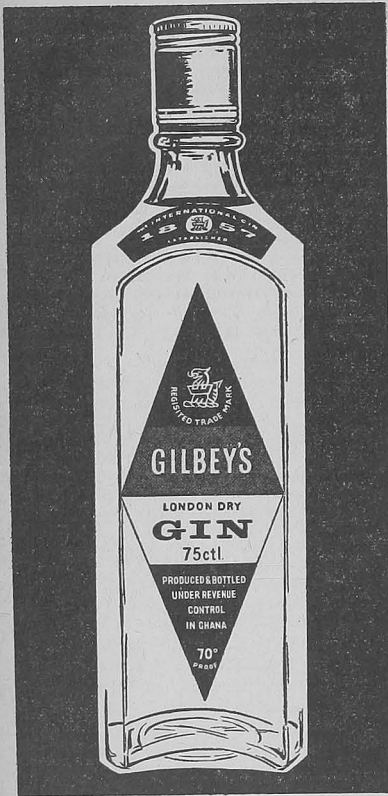
SIR—The qualification for entering into University to do medicine is either (i) G.C.E. Advanced Level in Science subjects, or (ii) G.C.E. Ordinary Level in Science subjects. Those with qualification (i) may do the medical course for five to six years and those in category (ii) may do it in not less than seven years, assuming they pass all their examinations.

During Nkrumah's regime a number of students were offered scholarships to study medicine in Russia who had either read arts subjects, or obtained poor grades, or failed, or never attempted the School Certificate Examinations.

These students left for Russia in 1961 and a number of them have already returned, having completed their medical course, including the language course, in five years. It is difficult to believe that such students could all complete a course of medicine in the Russian Language in such a record time. The more qualified contemporaries who went to Britain or West Germany still have a year or two to complete their courses. One

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female doctor who went to Russia did the language course and the medical course, and had a baby at the same time. One is inclined to doubt that the Russians gave these students the same training that they give to their students in their good universities. These Russian-trained doctors are known to be inadequate and yet they have been recruited by the Ministry of Health as doctors, receiving the doctor's salary. From what the Ministry of Health is doing at the moment, it appears that even a holder of Middle Form IV Leaving Certificate can go to Russia for 5 years and come back as a doctor and the Ministry will accept him.

Something must be done about these poorly trained doctors so as not to lower the standards of the medical profession in Ghana. I recommend therefore:

1. That these doctors and others in the same position who were trained in **Eastern European Countries** be examined on their arrival by the University of Ghana Medical School before they are recruited by the Ministry.
2. That those who are unsuccessful be asked to continue their course in the Ghana Medical School—the Year or Class into which they would be admitted to depend on past performance.
3. That doctors who are already in the Ministry of Health must not be paid as doctors until (i) above has been fulfilled.

I do not claim that the recommendations I have put forward are the best that could be made. I believe, however, that the Commissioner for Health should consider this matter seriously. And to the Ghana Medical Association, I say that this is the time for you to protect the standards and prestige of your profession since more of these Russian-trained doctors will be arriving soon. The health of the people demands qualified doctors.

Akuafu Hall,
Legon.

Kwabena Boateng

Gilbey's Gin

SIR—We would like to draw your attention to an advertisement on "Gilbey's Gin" which appeared on page 6 of the *Legon Observer*, volume 2, No. 17, dated 18-31 1967.

We refer to the caption "Gilbey's Gin is only one of the many fine drinks made by Wine & Spirit Distributors (Ghana) Limited". This statement is erroneous.

The truth is that Wine & Spirit Distributors (Ghana) Limited do not manufacture, neither do they bottle, any alcoholic beverages in Ghana. The State Distilleries Corporation manufactures 20 brands of alcoholic beverages. Twelve of these brands, including GILBEY'S GIN, are manufactured by the State Distilleries Corporation under an agreement with Messrs. Duncan Gilbey & Matheson Limited, London. These twelve brands are distributed solely by Wine & Spirit Distributors (Ghana) Limited, in Ghana.

We would be grateful if you would publish our letter and also advise the advertisers to correct the wrong information and impression given to the readers of your esteemed paper.

State Distilleries Corporation,
Accra.

J. A. Acquaye
(Public Relations Officer)

Opinion

DOES GHANA NEED THE ATOMIC REACTOR?

By

Ephraim Jackson

THE VERY solid and impressive surroundings at Kwabena immediately and unmistakably strike upon one the vast sums of money the country has already sunk into the Atomic Reactor. Also, through the sacrifices of tax-payers, more than 40 high-powered Ghanaian specialists have been trained or are being trained in reputable institutions in all the intricacies of the production and utilisation of radioactive materials. At present, the project is nearly 70 per cent complete, and tentative estimates indicate that roughly NC1.5 million will be required to finish it in its entirety; and, of this, only about NC700,000 (or less than 5 per cent) will involve foreign exchange transfers and this amount has already been committed in indents. The remaining constructional work, it is reckoned, can be performed at the limit in twelve months by Ghanaians only, that is, without resort to assistance from either the "comrades" or the "advisors".

Very understandably, it was one of the projects which fell under the heavy axe of the post-coup stabilisation programme. Apart from the very few specialists who had been intimately connected with the inception of the project most of us felt no qualms at the time about the wisdom of its suspension. But it appears a more sober reflection on the project is required now. Let us examine the relevant issues involved.

Any decision on the project will first of all depend on whether the sum of NC4.5 million already expended on it representing about 70 per cent of its total cost, should or could be allowed to go to waste. Elementary economics would suggest that when a project proves too expensive to salvage you scrap it and count it as a foolish gamble, but this only when it can be proved that expensiveness of the salvaging process stems from the choice of wrong techniques of construction or of production. So far nobody has complained about the technical feasibility of the reactor at Kwabena. And on the assumption of its technical soundness, the loss which would be incurred by giving it up now would be significantly greater than the rather illusive sacrifices which would be imposed by finding the extra 30 per cent of the total cost to bring the job to fruition.

On this reasoning alone, it seems the most sensible thing to do now would be to complete

the work on the Atomic Reactor, but perhaps postpone most of the ancillary development of the area to a more convenient date. This belief is strengthened by the fact that the annual running cost of the entire centre is in the region of NC300,000 which is less than 1 per cent of total public expenditure on the education system alone. Taken as a ratio of total expenditure on the social services, some of which are notoriously inefficient, the running costs of the Atomic Reactor is really insignificant (less than half of one per cent).

But of course, if Ghana can obtain her requirements of isotopes at a cost lower than the annual running cost of the reactor, then obviously the wisest thing to do is to count the expenditure so far incurred on the reactor as a silly loss and to continue to import isotopes for research purposes. At present, Ghana's yearly imports of isotopes stand at NC1,500 per annum, and this figure is not likely to change any radically in the foreseeable future. But the important thing in the use of isotopes is that one is often bound or circumscribed by the type of isotopes available and the speed with which they are made available.

It is now well-known that when, in 1957, Ghana approached Canada for Radioactive Isotopes of a limited potency to expedite various agricultural research schemes in this country, the Canadian Government was advised (by whom one can only guess) not to comply with this request on the grounds that Ghana's foreign policy was unstable. This same thing, it may be recalled, had happened to India around 1953 and India had to turn to the U.S.S.R. for assistance in the construction of a 2 Mw research reactor similar to the one at Kwabena. If radioactive material required for essential agricultural research in a developing country like Ghana can be vetoed by the whims, caprices and prejudices of international politics, then the reader can judge for himself the implication, of dependence on other countries for strategic material, for freedom and independence of action in international politics. Clearly, certain types of scientific research cannot be performed in this country as long as the isotopes are not produced locally in specific quantities and qualities.

The type of reactor being installed at Kwabena is not a "power" reactor, that is, it is not intended to produce electric energy or fissionable material with which atomic bombs may be produced. The Kwabena project is a 2Mw reactor designed to facilitate research in the fields of Agriculture, Industry, Medicine, Geology and Mining etc. It is simply inconceivable that Ghana

would want to convert this small reactor into a military instrument in order to produce a weapon as grotesque as the Hiroshima bomb. And if one admits that the rate at which science and technology advance in any country determines the long-run rate of development of the country, then anything which goes to improve scientific research cannot be counted too expensive to the nation.

It must be emphasized that the usefulness of the reactor does not lie only in the production of isotopes, but also and, even more importantly, in what might be described as its "educational effect". The existence of the reactor will induce more and more sophisticated forms of scientific and technological specialization, and the process of building an indigenous scientific and technological culture is surely the only vehicle for sustaining rapid economic and social expansion. In fact, it can be said that more than 70 per cent of the improvement in the human condition over the past half decade has been the result of scientific and technological progress. And this is why it is the conviction of this writer that Ghana should

take a more dynamic and more forward-looking attitude to things like the Atomic Reactor. Of course, these speculations would not arise if Ghana had not already started or if the economic situation were not, at the moment, so touch-and-go.

Again, one has to consider whether the pieces of machinery can be dismantled and sold at reasonable prices. This is an impossibility. Every reactor is tailor-made and can therefore fit only one environment. It either has to be used in that particular environment or it has to be scrapped. But it would be feeble-mindedness, if not madness, to suggest that Ghana should abandon this project because she cannot find a buyer.

And if it is possible for Ghana to persuade Togo and Dahomey to participate in the utilization of a project like the Volta scheme, there is no reason why Ghana could not get other West African countries to share in this project. In fact, the functional approach to West African economic and political co-operation seems to have gained acceptance after the Niamey and Accra conferences; and the recent agreement between the Ghana

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appeals to the senses, that which is "spectacular". But the sensual and the spectacular are there to make visible and clarify that which is hidden. To quote a familiar phrase: "The purpose of a playing is . . . to hold the mirror up to nature . . . and to show the very age and body of the time, his form and pressure". A production attracts a popular audience in so far as it both entertains them and holds up a mirror to show them something of the meaning of the life around them.

Judged according to both meanings of the phrase "popular theatre" the Wilson-Opoku production has been successful. The production has combined the "spectacular"—in the dance, in the libidinous appeal of the wrestling and seduction scenes to the "Zongo" audience—with that which appeals to the intellect, and has drawn a varied audience into the theatre.

The Admirable Qualities of the Play Itself

The vitality of the play itself depends as much on verbal drama, on wit, on the ridiculous or theatrical proliferation of language, and on grotesque behaviour, as it depends on those emotive moments which can only be adequately expressed through music and dance. This is part of the difference between *The Lion and the Jewel* as a working-script and the weak structural material which went into productions like *Obadzeg* several years ago, into *The Dagger of Liberation* some months ago, and into *The Lost Fisherman*. Wole Soyinka's play has a firm story-line; it has solidly drawn characters; it has a verbal wit which continually recalls Moliere to mind; above all, it draws upon mythic and archetypal elements which lie behind human life throughout the world, while it gives these elements a twist and makes them immediately relevant to life in West Africa. And because it employs the basic drives of sex, youthful vanity and pride, wise-old cunning, and braggart cuckoldry, it touches these levels of human "action" most appropriately dramatised by music and dance.

The Problems of the Script and some Weaknesses of the Production

The script itself thus offers a solid basis for a truly popular theatre. It has something to offer as entertainment to those who can only take their amusement in the most direct, sensual and empathic form; but it also appeals to those whose intellect is awake to verbal wit and structural form or, to use a modern jargon, subtextual meaning.

But although the script has all these potentialities and although the producers, as I shall indicate later, sensed some of these elements and basic drives, the production, as a whole, falls upon two poals.

One must admit at once, that the script has some intractable hits—there is for instance that whole section which precedes the Bale's seduction of Sidi. One was painfully aware that the production dragged considerably at this point. The greater part of the dialogue which is interspersed with the bouts of the wrestling could be cut. But this can only be done if the producer is keenly aware of the wrestling match as part of the seduction itself so that the choreography can make the match much more organically related to what both Baroka and Sidi are undergoing. In fact this is just where the production breaks down. For the dance—by which I mean those parts of the production which do not rely on dialogue for communication i.e. the actual dances, the pantomime, the wrestling, the drumming—instead of becoming the

most complex form of expressing what the characters were undergoing, became decorative and illustrative and hardly formed an organic part of the total production.

In the script, Sidi "stages" a pantomime to re-enact the arrival of the photographer from Lagos who had fallen in love with her, taken photographs of the village and given her image a front-page printing in a popular magazine. The magazine, bearing a beautiful image of Sidi, had just been received back in the village and the pantomime is meant to celebrate Sidi's joy and pride in her own youthful beauty. The producers, quite rightly, alter the script's demand for a pantomime in which the awkward Lakunle would have had to play the role of the visitor from Lagos. But the problem which the production faced at this point and never quite managed to solve, was to make the traditional dances chosen as a substitute for the pantomime, a celebration of Sidi's youth. This would have prepared the way for the final and contrasted capitulation of youth to old-age cunning at the end of the play.

But, having substituted powerful traditional dances for Wole Soyinka's imitative pantomime, the producers seemed to have called forth a genie which they found difficult to manage. The dances became interludes between the main spans of the action. And because no organic function has been really seen in the script for the dances, although all the hints seem to be there, Mr. Opoku has done very little fresh choreography for the production. The Gahu, which is a flirtatious dance and most appropriate for the scene of seduction, is used even when Sadiku is celebrating her triumph over her supposed impotent husband. And there are very awkward transitions from one drum rhythm to the other and therefore from dance to dance. If the dances were not being merely used as decorative, if they had been structured organically into the unfolding action of the play, such errors could have been avoided.

Wider Perspectives

The fact is that neither of the two producers seems to have discovered the basic sub-textual meaning of the play, a meaning which the music and the dance would most appropriately have objectified at the emotive moments suggested by the script.

The problem is a very basic one to the creation of an indigenous and virile popular theatre. Nobody who has given any thought to the matter can doubt that in the dance we already have the most direct, and yet the most complex, form of dramatic and theatrical communication which is both prior to, and transcends, the verbal drama. Even if we were ignorant of this, the popularity of the "dance-spectacle" in our theatres should make us stop and think. That which is done with the body, movement, positions in space, gestures, speak much more clearly and much more directly even to an illiterate audience than the verbal drama.

This is common knowledge. But its implications are only now being rediscovered and utilized by theatre people all over the world. We are fortunate here, because our audiences do not need to be educated to understand dance, movement, and the use of space, generally, as a much more direct and complex form of communicating thoughts, emotions and attitudes—those things which constitute the subtext of any written script. Faced with a written script like *The Lion and the Jewel* we need the use of all our resources.

(To be concluded)

and Nigerian Airways seems to be a concrete expression of the desire and necessity for co-operation in the use of resources in the sub-region.

At both the Niamey and Accra Conferences, the establishment of an Energy Committee was very strongly recommended and its proposed terms of reference covered every conceivable source of energy, atomic reactors not being excluded. The urgency of the recommendation was based on the conferences' conviction that acting in isolation, the countries of West Africa were not likely to make the maximum use of their energy potential and were consequently not likely to improve their economies at a rate allowable by the magnitude of such potential. The very shining example of Ghana, Togo and Dahomey to use jointly the Volta power which Ghana has constructed in isolation was applauded by the Niamey conference. This writer strongly believes that Ghana can again take the initiative in getting her neighbours to share in the peaceful uses of atomic energy.

These considerations suggest that it would be a regrettable piece of negligence to scrap the Atomic Reactor. In any case, we don't seem to have much scope for choice since obsolescence would decide for us if we don't act within the next twelve months or so. The point is that a more dynamic political leadership would sooner or later think of giving Ghana an atomic reactor of one type or another. If we do not decide now, our more scientifically-minded descendants will wonder about our present vacillation about projects which they will probably consider very critical to their survival.

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THOUGHTS ON CREATING THE POPULAR THEATRE—I

By

K. E. Senanu

LONG before I had made up my mind to go and see the Wilson-Opoku production of Wole Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel*, at the Drama Studio, the neighbours who owned television sets began to talk about it. They had seen snatches of the production television and, no doubt, the flirtatious Gahu dances proved a heady appetizer for them as, I believe, for the members of the audience who crowded the Studio when I went to see the production. It occurred to me, when I watched the Studio fill up long before the play began, and, later, as I observed the enthusiasm of the "Zongis" audience clamouring for a repetition of the seductive scene between the Bale and Sidi, that, at long last, we seem to have discovered in the Wilson-Opoku combination, a group of theatre entrepreneurs who may give the fillip to the development of the popular theatre in Ghana. Mr. Wilson certainly ought to be congratulated on his choice of play; especially as he has proved himself an astute producer before now in his choice of "The New Patriots". Much credit must also go to those who did the publicity work for the production. And, since the theatre's patrons are the best judge of its success, Messrs. Wilson and Opoku deserve praise for the resounding success of this production. They know what is good entertainment for the patrons.

Questions raised by the Production

At the same time, the success of the production raises, in a most acute form, a question that must be exercising the minds of those who have paid even a cursory attention to the popular entertainment which has been provided in our playhouses for the past eighteen months or so. The question: what form should dramatic productions which stand any chance of being patronized by more than a mere elite audience, take? Or, if putting it that way makes it sound too prescriptive, what are some of the features of productions which seem to have gone down well with a varied audience and how can those who are interested in the development of the popular theatre in this country "cash in" on these features?

The Popular Theatre

I use the phrase "popular theatre" in two distinct, but closely related, senses. In the first place, I mean any form of stage production which appeals to more than an elite audience. For, let us face it, for the theatre to exist and survive in Ghana, the number of people we manage to get into our playhouses is crucial. And when I used the word entrepreneur about the Wilson-Opoku combination above, I had in mind a business-like approach which keeps an eye on how to get the crowd into the playhouse, both by the play it chooses and the manner it produces it.

But the phrase "popular theatre" has always meant—when applied to those rare occasions when the theatre has been a success in any society—a mode of entertainment as well as a mirror which reflects and reveals something of the body and the soul of a people's life. The theatre is primarily the placing before an audience, that which is seen, that which has body, that which

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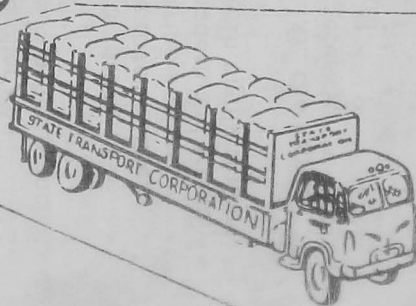
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