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Editorial

INDUSTRIAL UNREST

With the recent spate of strikes, the industrial peace of the country has once more been shattered. In the past three months workers in almost all the important sectors of the economy have had to resort to strike action to back their demands for higher pay and improved conditions of service. University teachers and workers, teachers in the primary, middle and and secondary schools, airline pilots, workers of the Ghana Industrial Holding Corporation, Ghana Cargo Handling Company and the Black Star Line have all had to go on strike.

The prospects for industrial peace are very daunting for the government since the causes of the present industrial unrest are extremely complex. These causes must be sought in the steadily declining standards of living of workers since 1974, declining standards which, in turn may be traced to an economy which has been stagnant since 1961. To argue that the strikes are politically motivated, as some observers who look for glib answers have speculated, is to confuse cause with effect.

A thoughtful search for the causes of the strikes calls for some understanding of the changing Ghanaian economy. As everyone knows there is an acute shortage of consumer goods, and there is a high rate of inflation with the consequent impossibility on the part of the majority of workers — especially those on fixed incomes — to live on their present salaries and wages. These are simply symptons of certain unhealthy trends on the economic and financial scene.

Perhaps the outstanding financial feature of the Acheampong and Akuffo regimes was the phenomenal increase in money supply. According to the 1979/80 Report of the Chairman of the Standard Bank Ghana Limited, available evidence shows that the rate of increase of money supply which was halved by the March 1979 demonitization, has resumed its upright trend. By March 1980 the increase in the supply of money over the past twelve months was 55%, and was thus back to its previous rate of increase. Official statistics show that the rate of inflation has shown a considerable decline since 1977, but by January 1980 the rate was 47.7%, compared to 166.5% at the end of 1977. The continuing increase in money supply derives mainly from government expenditure, a sizeable proportion of which consists of salaries and wages paid by government.

When those indicators that relate to the financial structure of the economy and the ability of the financial sector to play its assigned role in the promotion of economic growth are examined, the trends again appear unhealthy. The real capital stock has dropped by 55% since 1972, according to the Chairman of the Standard Bank Ghana Limited. It is the real capital stock that indicates the ability of the banks to provide financing for development; it also provides an index of the ability of the economy to grow as well as the willingness of the banks to extend their services. With this fall the conclusion may be drawn, as has indeed been drawn by the Chairman, 'that even though the nominal financial assets of the banking system may be increasing, the ability of the organized financial sector to-day to promote real growth is less than that in previous years.'

Also, the percentage of savings and time deposits in the total money supply has shown a constant decline. Between 1960 and 1972, according to the Report, it fell moderately from about 27% to about 19.5%. Closely related to this is another unhealth trend : the increase in the currency component of the money sypp'y, a development which began towards the end of 1979. By March 1980, the currency with the public exceeded demand deposits in the money supply for the first time in several years. What this means is that there is both a general preference of the public to hold their assets in currency rather than in deposits. It also means the unwillingness of the banks to accept all the deposits that the public may wish to make. The role of the banks, then to mobilize financial resources for long term development is reducing all the time.

All these steadily worsening trends in the important indicators discussed above on the basis of the Annual Report of the Chairman of the Standard Bank Ghana Limited, add up to a picture of an economy in deep crisis. The question then is : are salary and wage increases the rational response on the part of the government to the present industrial unrest? This is an extremely difficult question to answer. Salaries and wages are so low, and prices so high that most people find it difficult to have a decent meal a day. If the question is posed strictly in human terms, the answer should be that : yes, increase wages and salaries. If, however, we bring the picture we have drawn above to bear on the question, then it would appear that there should not be any salary increases. How, then, do we steer clear of the devil of salary increases and the deep blue sea of rising cost of living and inflation?

In answering the question, the first point that should be made is that the government should impose financial discipline on itself by setting strict limits to public expenditure. Secondly, the government should begin to invest in ventures which will, in the long run, be productive, so that whatever public expenditure is incurred will be offset by the goods and services which will later be available on the market, Thirdly, it appears that the government is determined to emerge victorious in its confrontation with workers.

But this urge for victory should not obscure the reality of the demand by workers for a decent standard of living. Neither should the government seek victory from a sense of vanity, bravado or from considerations of narrow political interest.

If the government wants victory, it should work for it through a well-formulated industrial and incomes policy.

Since this government came into power it has had to give in to pressures for increases in wages. This has resulted in increased government expenditure, one of the main sources of spiralling inflation. There can be no real hope of breaking this destructive chain of cause and effect until conditions have been created in which prices can be held down within reasonable limits.

Economy

THE EXCHANGE RATE SYSTEM IN GHANA: A NEW PROPOSAL

With a new civilian government having taken over the reins of leadership, many minds must wonder to the subject of economic policies for the future. To what extent can one hope for better economic policies from the civilian government than recent years have brought us? Has there in the past been a shortage of ideas, or has the political will been lacking? And in particular, what must one's attitude to the exchange-rate system be? Is devaluation in the cards once more? Can it achieve anything in our circumstances? Are its effects instant or long-term in nature? And who bears the burden during the transitional period?

It is time for a clear-headed unemotional debate on the appropriate exchange rate system for Ghana. It is the purpose of this article to initiate such a discussion. Such a discussion must address itself not only to the question of what is theoretically apt, but also what is politically and administratively feasible. Let me spell out my premises: (a) experience everywhere clearly suggests that economic policy-making is as much politically determined as it is economically inspired; (b) economic theory is generally regarded as bankrupt by policy-makers because t fails to address the question of the **transition** from one economic state to another; (c) implementation of policies are as integral a part of policies as the rationale underlying them.

Some Lessons from the Ghana Experience

The exchange-rate is perhaps the most important single price in an open economy. For, it is a primary determinant of the domestic prices of all traded goods, i.e., of all imports and exports. Not surprisingly, changes in the exchange-rate have invariably been viewed more as political than as economic decisions. In a comparative study of devaluations in developing countries, two of Cooper's major conclusions are first, that devaluation is generally followed by inflation in the short-run; and second, that it is often followed by the removal of the Finance Minister.

Devaluations in Ghana seem to have been even more traumatic than the average developing country experience would seem to suggest. But is this really so? After all, the 1967 devaluation was accepted with little opposition, as was the decision to float the cedi in 1978. What dominates our notions when devaluation is mentioned is the 1971 experience. Without wanting to prejudge the case for and against devaluation (see below), it seems that it is not devaluation per se, but its magnitude, that determines its degree of acceptability. And there is wide support for this proposition from other countries as well.

If the latter argument is acceptable, then it follows that the logical thing to do is to prevent a build-up of conditions that warrant a large devaluation, i.e., to devalue gradually. It is precisely this consideration that must have motivated the 1978 decision to 'float' the cedi. Admittedly, the system was a 'crawling peg' rather than a true 'float'. But the former is essentially a variant of the latter, and one which is preferable because it reduces uncertainty for importers and exporters.

Clearly, there are limits to the utility of a crawling peg when a currency is overvalued by a few hundred percent (as the cedi was last July), and hence it is also understandable that a 58 percent devaluation was pushed through in one swoop in November. What is most confusing is: why was the crawling peg system then removed? If this were purely an economic decision, one would infer that the government believed that the cedi's foreign exchange price had been restored at equilibrium. There are many reasons why one must conclude that this could not have been its belief, the most readily acceptable one being, of course, that the Ghana inflation rate was still many times that of its trading partners.

One must infer then that the decision to scrap the crawling peg system was motivated at least in part by political rather than solely by economic considerations. The exchange-rate will always be a politico-economic instrument and one must accept that as given. The problem is to devise an exchange-rate system that allows for this constraint, and maximizes the economic benefits that a par-valued currency is capable of yielding. One characteristic of the 'ideal' system is clear: it must be a crawling-peg system.

The exchange-rate is political in nature primarily because it determines, in large measure, the prices of many (imported) products that are strongly preferred by many Ghanaians, in particular, the urban population. A devaluation causes a sudden jump in the prices of such goods, and if supply conditions permit, this jump can in the short-run be more than in proportion to the devaluation. This shift in the prices of all traded goods distributes income away from wages to profits and rents. This makes for instant discontent among a vocal majority, and the government's popularity plummets. Faced with this option, the government's response is often to postpone the day of reckoning.

A Dual Exchange-rate System.

But this syndrome of a long delayed and large devaluation is not the only option. If it were possible to devalue the currency for transactions in all commodities other than those whose prices are of particular political significance (call them "basic goods"), then a large part of the economic benefits of the devaluation would have been achieved, while political costs would have been avoided. Such a dual exchange-rate system is not, of course, costless. For it amounts to a subsidy on "basic goods", (actually lost revenue, since foreign exchange is sold at a lower cedi price for these goods), which is an effective drain on the budget (via Bank of Ghana profits). It also distorts the allocation of domestic resources away from the domestic production of basic goods, unless these activities are subsidized to an equivalent degree - and this ought to be done for that subset of basic goods for which an economic or strategic argument can be made in favour of domestic production. But if the choice is between an over valued exchange rate for the uncertain future, and this dual exchange rate system and its costs, surely the latter is preferable!

The dual exchange rate system being advocated would thus have a lower cedi price for specific exchange directed at basic goods, and a higher cedi-price for all other traded goods. Thus all luxury goods would be included in the latter, as would all capital goods and raw materials. What system should determine the exchange rate for non-basic goods? Our earlier discussion provides the answer: it should be a crawling-peg system. But this raises a problem: if the exchange rate for non-basic goods continues to crawl away from the fixed rate for basic goods, the effective subsidy grows correspondingly - and the drain on the budget may become unbearable. One must therefore require either (a) that there be a fixed relationship between the two rates of exchange, or (b) that the basic good exchange rate continually approach the non-basic good exchange rate. Proposition (b) is especially attractive because it, in effect, institutionalizes a **transition mechanism** for getting from an over valued exchange rate to an equilibrium exchange rate, without in the meanwhile risking political upheavals.

The Economic Case for Devaluation in Ghana

One must still argue that should circumstances demand it, devaluation is a potent economic policy instrument. What are the economic benefits that a primary exporting country such as Ghana can hope to achieve by devaluing its currency? We begin by assuming that the currency is over valued. Then in principle, devaluation has three effects: (i) its most certain effect is on government revenue, although government expenditure also rises, so that the net effect on the budget is uncertain but generally positive, (ii) it adjusts the relative prices of traded and non-traded goods, and switches expenditure towards the latter, thus making possible an improvement in the balance of trade, and (iii) it adjusts the domestic prices of imports and exports, discouraging consumption of the former and encouraging production of the latter, and thereby also improving the balance of trade and (iv) it effects a reduction in real incomes and/or a change in the distribution of income, thus reducing total demand in the economy.

The first effect, although uncertain, is often positive for most countries, and one would expect it to be positive for Ghana as well. The second and third effects depend on how responsive demand and supply are to price changes, and are therefore linked to the magnitude of the devaluation. The responses are generally difficult to calculate, **ex ante,** except for very small changes, and these effects are therefore uncertain. But one can at least offer some conjectures. On the side of imported luxury goods, it matters little what the actual price-responsiveness is - one can let prices rise (through duties) until demand falls sufficiently. For raw materials that are used in the production of exports, the higher cedi value of the foreign exchange earned renders the average effect neutral. For raw materials and capital goods for import-substituting industries that produce non-basic goods, the price rise should be as high as is warranted by balance of trade considerations.

On the side of exporting, devaluations do not directly affect cocoa farmer incomes, unless the producer price is raised. Moreover, in the short-run, cocoa production responds sluggishly to price changes, although smuggling may be reduced. However, short-and long-run supply elasticities are not as low for our other traditional exports - namely timber, gold, manganese, diamonds and bauxite. For each of these 'exhaustible' resources, the degree of exploitation is likely to be influenced by the cedi price received for the product, although some institutional changes may be necessary to ensure that the higher price is received by the producers. Thus, with a higher price for timber it may pay to haul timber from longer distances, or use more efficient machinery; similarly, mining may be pursued in deeper mines at higher mineral prices than at lower ones, etc. The supply response of our non-cocoa traditional exports are likely therefore to be higher than that of cocoa.

Finally, and most importantly, the supply of manufactured exports is likely to be low except for the medium term, so no immediate effect would be expected. It is clear however that if we are ever to encourage manufactured exports, we need a gestation period during which the exchange rate applicable to such exports is not only at equilibrium, but perhaps even under valued (so as to allow exporters leeway for making mistakes in their attempts to create markets abroad). It is widely known now that successful exporters among the developing countries (such as Korea, Taiwan, Singapore) intervened in the export promotion process in as unsystematic and as chaotic a manner as did the import-substituting countries (such as Ghana). Export subsidies, consistently offered over a number of years, have therefore a major role to play in the initial establishment of a manufactured-export strategy.

The fourth effect, (i.e. a reduction in total demand) is, in our institutional context almost certain. The devaluation will raise the domestic prices of most traded goods, increasing the profits and rents of economic agents in these sectors, while wages will adjust more slowly. This is the most serious drawback of devaluation and needs careful calibration.

The need for devaluation arises after the nation has lived beyond its means for some time. Devaluation must therefore reduce the incomes of groups whose contribution to the nation's product is below the incomes they receive, and clearly defined supporting policies are required to ensure this result.

In short, devaluation would be desirable for Ghana because it (a) improves the balance of trade in the short-run through a reduction of imports and a slight increase in the non-cocoa traditional exports; (b) because it sets the stage for the future growth of manufactured exports, and (c) because it increases government revenue, especially since an import licence scheme has been in existence and receivers of these licences have continued to enjoy monopolistic rents. But it would have to be coupled with policies which mitigated its distributional effects, **unless** incomes of wage-earners have grown faster than their productivity, in which case they are the source of the overspending that underlies the balance of payment deficits.

The Effectiveness and Administration of a Dual Exchange Rate System

A number of questions remain to be answered. First, is there anything sacrosanct about having a single exchange rate, and are we giving up anything by adopting a transitional or permanent dual exchange rate system? Second, is the dual system administratively feasible? These are best answered together. The ultimate cedi price of imports and exports is determined in large measure, but not entirely, by the exchange rate. In particular, various taxes and subsidies such as import duties, excise taxes, export subsidies, etc. influence the prices of these items, in addition to the usual scarcity premia if any.

The difference between an exchange rate system and a dual one is therefore not as dichotomous as is often made out to be: it simply divides all traded goods into two categories, and imposes uniform taxes and subsidies on each category. To achieve greater fine tuning within these categories is still possible through selective taxes and subsidies. In fact, a major attribute of the dual system is its administrative expediency relative to selective taxes and subsidies. Moreover, still on its administrative strengths, the venue of tax collection shifts from the ports and borders to the banks (and in particular to the Bank of Ghana), the latter being more easily policed than the former. It has the further advantage of affording us a transitional mechanism for moving from an over-valued to a par-valued exchange rate, and this is no mean advantage. And finally, some have argued that it is particularly appropriate for primary product exporting countries who aim to foster manufactured exports, because it permits the former products to be exported at the lower exchange rate and thus holds down food prices, which hold down wages in industry, which in turn permit the growth of manufactured exports. The CMB performs this function for cocoa.

The IMF is, of course, very much against multiple exchange rates for the same reason that it discourages export subsidies - i.e., in the interests of promoting 'free trade.' But this is easily dismissed on economic grounds—on the basis of dynamic rather than static comparative advantage considerations—and certainly on political and administrative grounds, as I have argued above. In any case, the IMF seemed not to have invoked any sanctions against those Latin American countries which insisted during the '60s, on having multiple exchange rates.

The major argument against the dual exchange rate system is that, **relative to the single exchange rate system,** it is administratively complex, and encourages corruption because of the arbitrage it permits between the two rates. Thus by having a Bank of Ghana Officer misclassifying your imported product, (say classifying whisky as Malarex), you pay the lower exchange rate for a non-basic good, and yet are able to sell it as if it were imported at the higher exchange rate. There are no substitutes for scrupulous officers, but since we do not seem to have enough of these, we must search for mechanisms of side-stepping this problem. The most obvious solution is to have random checks by highly paid supervisors - but they in turn may be corrupt.

This administrative lacuna, and its implied revenue loss, has been the usual reason given by countries that have abandoned the dual exchange-rate system and reverted to a single exchange-rate system. But it ought to be pointed out that the comparison is between an administratively flawed dual system and a single system that is not only equally administratively flawed (because deliberate misclassification can reduce duties paid), but is likely to lead to infrequent corrections of the exchange rate, and hence to political upheavals when rate changes are finally made. The choice ought to be clear. (Perhaps the true motive underlying the abandonment of dual systems is more political - it is at the behest of groups that stand to gain from such an abandonment - the rich, the importers, the import-substituting industries, etc.).

Further Questions on Administering the Dual Exchange Rate System

Other questions arise: (a) should the dual-system be accompanied by import licensing? and (b) to the extent that the dual system brings back some form of price control how must the attendant problems of policing prices, excess demand and smuggling be countered?

There is no conflict, in principle, between the advocated dual system and import licensing. In particular, should it be felt necessary to impose a maximum on the revenue lost by permitting basic good imports at the lower exchange-rate (and one would hope so), the supply of basic goods through imports would have to be restricted, and this amounts to having import quotas for these goods. Similarly, in principle, other commodities may be subject to import quotas even though they are subject to the higher cedi price of foreign exchange, if there are strong reasons for restricting their supplies. However our 18-year experience with import licensing suggests clearly that we are better off using high import duties to do the rationing rather than quotas, and prohibiting domestic production of such goods through the industrial licensing system.

Finally, I come to the excess demand, price control policing and smuggling side effects. Our recent experience with price controls has almost followed the textbook model. Announced prices remained low, but so did availability; black markets sprung up; and smuggling to and from neighbouring countries flourished. With basic goods receiving the prescribed subsidy, it is clear that these rational responses will once more manifest themselves, unless a mechanism to keep them at bay is simultaneously introduced. With price controls, some form of rationing invariably takes place - be it on the basis of contacts, black market prices, luck, or whatever. The decision to subsidize basic goods must be accepted in the same breath as the decision to permit some form or other of rationing. The obvious thing to do is to render this rationing overt and equitable. The only way to do this is to introduce rationing cards which permit the purchase of basic goods at the subsidized price at specific locations. Registration and quotas for each household can be established through the forthcoming Population Census. Ration chits can render demand equal to supply, i.e., compress excess demand to zero. As long as the production of ration chits is strictly controlled and in line with supplies, there will be no room for smuggling even though the incentive to do so remains. Should any arbitrage take place between the two markets, the gain will be received largely by the person in original possession of the ration right, than by the trader, and the equity objective would not therefore have been compromised.

A Concluding Note

This works out to a tall order - but as one must continually emphasize, it ought to be compared with the policy instruments that we have so far used and the poor economic results they have led to. The guiding beam throughout the above dission has been to maximize the use of impersonal mechanisms (such as international prices, predetermined subsidies, market hinged exchange rates, per capita rations, etc.) rather than bureaucratic mechanisms (such as import licences). Our recent hi tory amply demonstrates the administrative pitfalls of controls and requires any objective analyst to minimize their use and to prefer market-hinged (not pure market-determined) instruments.

A dual exchange rate system is clearly preferable to a single exchange rate system for Ghana (and similar developing countries) because, given the institutional constraints, it is politically, administratively and economically a more effective instrument for attaining external balance.

Politics

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF PARLIAMENT

By Kofi Kumado

It was a normal day. The House began sitting at about mid-morning. The public gallery counted only a handful of people. In fact, not more than twenty people were there on that day. All these enthusiasts were sitting at one end — what may be described as the 'sea end' of the House. Later, I learnt that this sitting arrangement had been ordered by the Speaker. According to my source, at an earlier sitting, an irate member of the public tried to take part in the proceedings of the House by shouting from the "town-end" of the House. Any one familiar with the geography of the interior of the House will realise that this intruder was speaking from a location behind the Speaker. The order was, therefore, intended to ensure that those sitting in the public gallery would face the Speaker. A cynic may well observe that this order looks a normal Ghanaian over-reaction to one of he inconveniences of the democratic process!

Inside the House itself, there were about fifty Members. If you realised that the House has a hundred and fourty Members, you may be alarmed at this information. But, really, this is the normal Ghanaian attitude! How many times have the Boards of our public corporations had the full complement of their membership present at meetings? So those Honourable Members who were then on their way to the House; those who were in Parliament House but found the Coffee Room a more comfortable place, and others who were then engaged at various places in their own private pursuits - all these Members were behaving no differently from their fellow citizens in other responsible public positions.

Business Begins

The day's proceedings began with a protest from the Member for Kpeshie about the account, in that morning's issue of the **Ghanaian Times**, of the previous day's sitting. The paper had reported that the House had rejected a report of the House Committee of which the Honourable Member was Chairman. This, the Member felt, was inaccurate. He called upon the Speaker to get the paper to correct the wrong impression.

At this stage, the Speaker committed his first "faux pas" for the day. He remarked (or ruled) that since the Members knew exactly what had taken place the newspaper should be ignored. This brought a lot of protests from other Members. Finally, the Speaker backed down and ordered the paper to take steps to correct the wrong impression and to be careful in its reporting of the proceedings of the House in future.

The House then moved to what turned out to be the business of the day - a consideration of the Regional Council's Bill. A suggestion was made that Members should be included in the composition of the Regional Councils of their respective regions. This suggestion generated an animated discussion. There were two main arguments - one legal, the other non-legal. On the legal side, the argument revolved around the constitutionality of the suggestion. Some contributors felt that since the Constitution had expressly specified the membership of the Councils, the House could not enlarge this. Naturally, there were others who felt the Constitution would not be violated if the suggestion was adopted. The non-legal argument was to the effect that Members' responsibilities were already onerous; and that, while it might be prestigious to have them on the Councils, it was clear they would not have the time to participate meaningfully in the deliberations of the Councils. This argument brought shouts of "lazy man, lazy man" from those Members who disagreed with it. It was refreshing to note that these arguments were contributed to by both those members who had received a formal legal education as well as those who had not. One got the impression, though, that the Member for Kpeshie had a bite too many.

Procedural Confusion

After the discussion had gone on for a while the Speaker was invited to put the matter. The Noes had it. It was at this stage that the Speaker Committed his second "faux pas". After the vote, a Member shouted "Division!" There was no motion for a division before the House. But the Speaker surprisingly took notice of the crude shout and ordered a division. To compound the procedural confusion, another Member also shouted "Quorum". The Speaker, again, surprisingly ordered a count. The bell was rung outside for those Members then loitering about to come in. In the midst of all this confusion the Member, who had originally suggested the inclusion of Members in the composition of the Regional Councils, announced that he was withdrawing his suggestion. Without ruling on the regularity of the course of action adopted by the Member, the Speaker accepted the withdrawal. It was for me, as a person ignorant of the House rules, reassuring that a Member questioned the whole procedure. Naturally, the Speaker offered no explanation. The House rose shortly after this.

The present writer in an earlier account on proceedings in Parliament had suggested that the quality of debate on the majority side is likely to be affected by the appointment of some Members as ministers.

This view was somewhat confirmed by what took place in the House. There was room for hope though. Young Members, the Member for Nzema East, though on the day in question he tended to be theatrical, gave a lot of promise. But those of us who expected the 79 Parliament to become a training ground for national figures would have to wait for a long time. The result was that old performers, like the Member for Begoro dominated the House even when they made inconsequential contributions.

But one thing was unmistakably clear. The House was itself confused about its procedures. For example, it is respectfully submitted that the Speaker was wrong in accepting the unceremonious call for a division. The issue had at that stage been put and decided. The Noes had had it. Besides, there was no motion before the House any more. A voice vote, surely, is also one way of deciding issues in the House! Clearly, there was nothing left for the Member to withdraw.

Teething Problems

More importantly though is whether the

Speaker should have put the matter at all. The burden of the first objection was that the inclusion of Members in the Councils would violate the Constitution. That seemed to be a legal question which cannot be resolved by reference to votes. For the fact that the majority favour the inclusion would not affect the constitutionality issue. If the House rules do not require the Speaker to rule on such matters, then it is humbly submitted that the rules should be amended to empower him to do so. If there is already such a power, then we hope the Speaker will in future exercise this authority before putting the matter to vote.

In recent issues of the **Legon Observer**, there were articles on the ability of Parliament to perform properly the role cast for it under the Constitution. It is true those articles dealt with the problem largely from the theoretical point of view. The present article may well be considered as further buttressing the conclusions drawn by the theorists, this time from the practical point of view. But I would like to consider the present shortcomings as Parliament's teething problems. Do not despair. There is hope yet.

Notebook

PRICE CONTROLS AND TRADE MALPRACTICES

Whatever anyone may think of the AFRC administration during the three months that it was in office, there is no doubt that the average worker in this country will always remember it as being the only government in about 15 years or more that was able to insist on price controls. Many came to believe that trade malpractices had been buried with the demolition of Makola Number 1 market, the public humiliation of the untouchable market queens and their mentors and allies in commercial houses. Just under a year of handing over political power to a civilian administration, however, a new internal trade pattern, that is worse in intensity of naked exploitation than its predecessor, has emerged.

The failure of the Limann administration to maintain price control may be due to a number of institutional and constitutional constraints. Notable among these is the desire of the government to demonstrate to the people that the country was no longer under a military regime, and that **ipso facto** its authority is not based on the unnecessary use of force. The guns were, therefore, withdrawn from the streets and markets to the barracks. In the place of the soldiers, frantic efforts were made to form vigilante committees throughout the country to supplement the efforts of the police in checking prices. Many were those who argued against the formation of these committees; and when it became clear that some members of the vigilantes were people of questionable character and intentions, the organization became suspect. In the mean time, it was made clear that the price control list had no legal backing, hence anyone could sell any item at any price with impunity. The market queens and their agents re-emerged on the scene. Workers reaction to these developments has taken the form of industrial strikes - from the shopfloor level to the universities. Government reacted with some sense of urgency by getting Parliament to enact the necessary legislation to back price control. This was followed by recalling the soldiers and the police to help enforce the law on price control.

Giving reasons for recalling the guns to help enforce the law on prices, the Minister of Information and Presidential Affairs, Dr. Nabilla, noted that it had been realised by the government that nothing short of limited use of force would compel a section of the trading public from engaging in anti-social practices. He, however, conceded that the use of force was not the best and only solution to the problem and that the long term answer lies in flooding the market with essential commodities. While the goods continue to remain scarce, the soldiers would continue to patrol the streets, homes and the markets for the hoarders and profiteers.

The government needs a pat on its shoulders for revising its stand on the issue. Our worries are, however, numerous. For how long can the government sustain the pressure on these hoarders and profiteers. We have been witnesses to similar operations by alomst all the governments we have had in this country since independence, and none proved to be an effective method for combating trade malpractices. For a limited period, the cheats will surely remain underground, and indeed now one hardly finds maize, cigarettes, gari, rice, soap of all kinds, milk and mackerel which were plentiful on the market just before the operation began. If the guns remain for far too long in the markets, a way would be devised by these traders to frustrate the efforts of the government. It is also a hard fact that in the face of rising world-wide inflation the government cannot generate enough money to be in any position to flood the markets in the near future, and scarcity will remain with us for some time to come. The government is therefore in a very invidious position.

Historically, it has been extremely difficult to enforce price controls in many countries. The history

of attempts at price control in this country is a dismal one. Western Europe, America, Japan and practically every country which was involved in World War II did not wholly succeed in enforcing price controls. Nor does any Eastern European country still maintaining price controls provide any clear evidence that it has had any success. The policy of price controls in times of scarcity is of doubtful value for it thwarts economic forces, kills initiative and creates avenues for corruption and graft.

While the operation against the profiteers and hoarders continues, we call upon the government to re-examine the nation's import and export list with a view to removing those items which are not in great demand. Why do we waste money importing such goods as peas, carrots and seeds of all types including hot pepper, tomatoes, garden eggs **et cetera,** while they can be cultivated with ease throughout the country? Again, why do we export both canned and fresh tuna, palm oil **et cetera** while we import mackerel and sardines which prove hardly sufficient to satisfy our needs? Concessions granted to foreign countries to fish in our territorial waters must be reviewed or suspended until such time as we are able to flood our markets with fish. Right now, Ghanaians are hungry and are becoming angry. Also the government must launch a vigorous national campaign aimed at disabusing the minds of Ghanaians on over-reliance on foreign food and other products.

Parents, for instance,can be educated to prepare better baby food from corn or rice with such ingredients as blended meat or fish or groundnuts, instead of relying on lactogen, cerelac etc. If these measures are pursued with some sense of duty and dedication enough will surely be saved for the importation of the necessary raw materials to rehabilitate our industries. Stricter penalties will have to be imposed on those found guilty of trade malpractices and more vigorous methods should be adopted by the government for ensuring that commercial houses do not constitute the sources of supply of goods for those who engage in trade malpractices.

Letters

Best Tonic For Stability

SIR–Two interesting news items published on page one of **Daily Graphic** of May 19 cannot pass without comment.

In one item Mr. E. Q. Owoo, Kpeshie constituency chairman of the PNP, "exhorted members of the party to accept criticisms within and outside the party" as a way of correcting mistakes.

The second item headed "Allow PNP to Rule," quoted Nii Amaa Amarteifio, a leading member of UNC, as advising opposition parties not to get involved in any attempt to overthrow the civilian administration, but to allow it to complete its term of office.

The import of the statements precisely is that on one hand a member of the majority party is calling for acceptance of criticism while an opposition member (forget about the alliance of convenience) is saying that the people must not condone and connive at any illegal overthrow of the civilian administration.

If these statements are genuine, and there is no reason to believe that they are not, then our political leaders have much to learn from them.

First, because those who presently wield political power are merely holding them in trust for the people, and therefore we the latter have an inalienable right to demand that the right things are done.

Secondly, those who are officially recognised as opposition have a duty not only to see to it that the Government follows the path of progress, but more especially they should not indulge in criticisms that will give the impression that, after all, we civilians do not understand the political game.

Our recent history should teach us that power struggle is not just between one civilian group (majority party) and another (the minority), but in the background are men in uniform who would want to see chaos, fratricide and empty quarrels so as to exploit them as pretext for fulfilling their own ambition of tasting that forbidden fruit called POLITICAL POWER.

Uganda, at least, should be a living guide.

It is therefore hoped that while one would advise those in power to accept criticism, make utterances with circumspection and be more and more accommodating while tackling the problems, those (in opposition) who are best placed to help straighten the path will do so with the SUPREME interest of the nation at heart. This is he best tonic for stability.

Faculty of Law,
Legon.

K. Cab-Addae

Leave The Dead Alone

SIR - The recent decision by the Limann administration to celebrate the eighth anniversary of the death of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, President of the First

Republic of Ghana, cannot pass without comment.

In our present state of serious economic chaos when every opportunity, energy and pesewa is needed to help resuscitate the country's ailing economy, it appears the PNP Government is setting its priorities wrong by engaging itself in birthday celebration, funeral anniversary and needless waste of fuel by sending party officials to Nkrumah's tomb at Nkroful, hoping to achieve much for the country by mere pouring of libation for the dead.

Everyone recognizes the fact that Nkrumah came and led Ghanaians out of the woods to the road of political independence. Kwame came to make his mark and is gone forever.

The Government should, therefore, be reminded that no amount of libation or invocation of Nkrumah's spirit can help solve Ghana's problems. Rather this is the time to gear our minds and efforts towards the improvement of the living standard of Ghanaians who are alive in order to help uplift the spirit of the living and not that of the dead. The question of honouring or remembering the dead must be relegated to the background.

President Limann must note that it is a fact of political science that great emergencies in the life of a constitutional democracy bring an increase in executive power and prestige. For instance, United States Presidents like Abraham Lincoln, Woodrow Wilson and Franklin D. Roosevelt made the office a powerful instrument because of the extraordinary actions they were forced to take in times of crises- namely the American Civil War of 1861, the First World War and the Great Depression of 1933. Dr. Kwame Nkrumah also had to resort to extraordinary action when he declared Positive Action during his fight for Ghana's Independence. It is, therefore, up to the Limann Administration to sit up and work out an effective strategy that will somehow stamp out "Kalabuleism" from the Ghanaian society; make every effort to flood the market with goods as promised in order to help alleviate the suffering of the masses and steer the country on the road to economic recovery.

This, I believe, is the only sure way in which Dr. Limann can make an impact on Ghanaians and win the confidence of the people.

Let the PNP Government again be reminded that if a democratic Government cannot feed the many who are hungry it cannot pacify the few who are dead.

HQ 3LOG SVCS
Kaladan Barracks
Tamale.

Fred Essilfie

Hands Off Civilian Regime!

SIR - I believe that the major factor that has contributed to the mess in this country is the immature, ill-timed and irresponsible subversion of our Constitution through coups.

Soldiers first announce themselves in broadcasts as state 'liberators,' 'redeemers' and what have you. How true they have been to their claims is anybody's guess. Indeed any promise of 'putting the economy on a sound footing' ends up in their plunging the nation's economy into a worse state than they found it. In short, it is the past seven-year military intervention on the political scene that has placed us in all the mess we see.

Thus, if practical experience is anything to go by then, to all intents and purposes, within the context of Ghana's political history, the "worst" type of civilian administration seems far better than the "best" military one. For, when in our life as an independent nation did it ever become almost a fashion to queue for basic items like soap, meat sugar, toilet rolls and torch light batteries, to mention just a few? When did bribery, corruption and trade malpractices ever reach such intolerable heights?

When did the nation's coffers, ever become so badly depleted? The question then on the lips of many Ghanaians is this: after all these blunders, what else do our soldiers want to do? Coming back to offer solutions to the mess of your creation overnight? NO, NEVER AGAIN, OUR SOLDIERS! Obviously NAY, NOT as rulers of a nation.

It is the hope of Ghanaians that our soldiers will respect and jealously guard the Third Republican Constitution (including the procedures for changing governments). Please, our gallant soldiers, for goodness' sake, keep to your barracks and stick scrupulously to your primary and noble role of defending the nation against external aggression, For certainly, any further millitary intervention would do more harm than good to the already shattered ECONOMY and the very IMAGE of mother Ghana.

Commonwealth Hall
Legon.

Kwabena Adutwum-Mmrosa

Using The Poor Against The Poor

SIR - The re-birth of the Farmers Council at the Independence Square on 3rd May 1980, marks one of the saddest events that have taken place in the Third Republic. For Ghanaians, and for that matter, farmers to have forgotten so soon the days of the Appiah Danquahs simply surprises me. For anyone to think that the formation of a Farmers Council will solve the food problem of the country, is very unfortunate. We all know how the Council members manipulated the farmers for their own selfish ends. As for "those farmers" who spend all their time organising, they must have a very efficient work force to do all the farming and its administration for them.

Much too often, in this country, the poor (call it the masses) are always asked to form co-operatives and associations so that they can make a "meaningful" contribution to the economy. What one finds is that those who try to organise these cooperatives and associations have nothing in common with those who form these co-operatives, so what could be the motive or motives of these people?. The answer is anybody's guess. It is interesting to note that at the time the Farmers Council was being inaugurated, there was an advert by Attok Ltd., in the press on irrigation machines. One could not have any quarrel at all with this, but, for the fact that in the early sixties, the Government and farmers were duped millions of cedis by certain individuals who bought some cocoa spraying machines for them. Is it not likely that with the formation of the Farmers Council, attempts would be made to force these irrigation machines on the farmers?

In 1971 when the Government cancelled car maintenance allowances and asked certain categories of the working population who had hitherto not been paying electricity and other bills to pay "a fraction" of it, that Government was immediately overthrown. The language we all heard was that, the usurpation had been done for the sake of the poor, and there was jubilation by a large section of the "poor". Immediately, maintenance allowances were restored (for those who take "tro-tro" to work?) and the benefits which were withdrawn were also restored. The story of what went on after this is well known. The poor masses were again left to fend for themselves. In the midst of it all, they were being urged to form co-operatives for non-available goods.

Come again "June 4 1979," and the poor were the ones who were going to be liberated and therefore they had cause to jubilate. There was a frantic drive against all the "anti-poor" elements and while it lasted, the poor had cause to be grateful to their liberators. But, alas, that was also a nine-day wonder. The success or failure of June 4, is not the subject of this letter, but the aftermath needs examination. The true picture whether people like to admit it or not is that the poor who were supposed to have been liberated, were not after all, and have even become poorer. Yet, the leaders of June 4 are enjoying themselves in foreign lands. I am sure those who are still around are better off now than the day the liberation song was first sang.

All I have tried to point out is that the poor suffering masses, especially our farmers, and indeed the whole country, must be very wary of these people who brandish associations and co-operatives as a panacea for our problems. They are out to use them for their own selfish ends. As to the emergence of the Farmers Council and its leadership, may God help the farmers. I would warn that we are going back gradually, quite unnoticeably too, to those days when only membership of one or two associations entitled one to a reasonable form of living. Democracy, Yes. BALKANISATION, NO!!. For, all these are being done in the NAME OF FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION. Let the poor especially beware.

P. O. Box 9460 Kodjo Asante
Airport, Accra.

Industrial Unrest

SIR - The recent dismissal of workers in the wake of industrial unrest should not be taken as an effective way in checking violent demonstrations.

It only threatens the stability of the state by a government which is simply insensitive to the plight of the ordinary man still struggling to exist.

The government cannot sincerely condemn recourse to violence unless it engages in a corresponding effort to replace it by courageous and meaningful initiatives which aim at eliminating threats to peace by attacking the roots of injustice.

Bank of Ghana Kofi Agamah
Accra.

Why Give Judicial Powers To Chiefs?

SIR - Mr. G. B. Sarpong's thesis on the above topic in L. O. Vol. XII No. 5 cannot pass without comment.

Mr. Sarpong begins by saying that he has not seen a copy of the Constitution. Perhaps, if he had the patience and approached his Member of Parliament for a copy of the Constitution, he might have advanced different arguments. Since he is interested in hear-say, I am also informing him that our present Constitution is full of checks and balances, and our chiefs are not given unlimited powers. Also the various Houses of Chiefs are not set up to try adultery and seduction cases.

Does Mr. Sarpong not realize that these political conditions in the Gold Coast are different from those of Ghana. Has he bothered to find out the calibre of our chiefs to-day? The powers given to our chiefs under the Constitution are limited. Any attempt to tarnish the image of our traditional rulers should be seen as a calculated attempt to destroy our identity as a people. When our chiefs were made to run away, leaving their sandals behind, their offices were occupied by thugs and undisciplined politicians who introduced into our society the social vices which plague our nation to-day.

Regional Education Office P.C. Adjadu
P. O. Box 11 (Alias Togbe Tsedatsu VI)
Cape Coast.

Black Maria Incident

SIR - I would like to comment on the reported statement by Dr. Limann that "THE SIX GHANAIANS WOULD NOT HAVE DIED IF THEY HAD REMAINED AT HOME."

The statement is as blunt as it is unfortunate. This should not have been made by a Head of State who should, on the contrary, have consoled the bereaved families in a more sympathetic tone.

Having said all this the President has admonished us not to comment on the incident as it involves two governments. I do not see why we should not comment on this incident.

A 36 Commonwealth Hall Boaduh-Ayeboafoh
Legon.

Writing Skills,......

SIR - In his article which appeared in L.O. Vol. XII No. 5 Mr. Supple raised two issues which must not escape comment.

First, his condemnation of the lack of an obligatory spoken English test at "O" level in this country might not be so pardonable if he knew that until a few years ago there were many secondary schools where the English lessons were handled by British, American, Indian, Ceylonese and Ghanaian teachers, and with such varieties of English being taught in the same school, which of them could be adopted as the standard for teaching purposes? The learner in such a school was generally confused and usually spoke a deviant form of English that left him most unprepared for the 'O' Level spoken English test.

Secondly, he claims that as a result of the withdrawal of many expatriate teachers of English there is a decline in the teaching of accurate and fluent English. This is illogical and rather neo-colonialist in taste, particularly when he contradicts himself in the same breath by saying that "many excellent teachers continue working in the schools ..." The "dreadful, downward spiral" in the level of English in Ghana today can be attributed to more significant factors than the return of the expatriates to their home countries.

These objections apart, one cannot help agreeing that it is essential for the freshman to "learn to communicate easily, accurately and knowledgeably..." In fact, the freshman is the product of our training colleges and secondary schools where upper sixth-formers write about "descent lives" (sic) and "slump areas" (sic).

A lot more remains to be done than the Ghana Education Service and the Ghana Association of Teachers of English (GATE) appear to realize.

Ghana Secondary School G. A. Frempong
Koforidua

Food Distribution Corporation

SIR—My attention has been drawn to a letter written to you by one Mr. Samuel Asare of Koforidua on the Food Distribution Corporation (2) in L.O. Vol. XIII No. 7

In the letter Mr. Asare made an observation intended to be a whole truth but which is actually **only part of a whole truth**: I refer specifically to his words: "It would be recalled that during the years of Mr. Amuah, an agricultural economist, as Managing Director, the Corporation undertook the distribution of imported rice on a massive scale unknown in its history and in the process built up substantial funds. It then decided that the funds so generated should be invested in an estate housing project for the use of its staff......" Incidentally my name is AWUAH not AMUAH Whatever the observation is meant to create there is need for the true facts to be known.

It is true that the Corporation built up substantial funds from rice imports but the Corporation did not spend all its funds on Estate houses. The housing project was part of an investment programme whose main emphasis was on the promotion of agriculture.

Thus the investment programme (title: Investment Programme of the Ghana Food Distribution Corporation for 1978/79) approved by the then Board of Directors in June 1978, allocated about **82%** of resources available at the time to promote agricultural purchases and production and about 18% of resources for the housing project referred to by Mr. Asare.

Specific areas listed for agricultural promotion were: (1) Internal food purchases (including purchases from large scale contract farmers); (2) Construction of Permanent Buying Centres and Storage facilities; (3) Purchase of production and marketing equipment e.g. tractors, dryers, irrigation equipment for seed farms etc; (4) Credit Promotion for Farmers production groups through the organisation of Rural Banks at Kintampo, Kwame Danso, Ketekrachi, Salaga and Bimbilla (5) Buying shares in a matchet factory; (6) Buying shares in a fish farming project.

And lest I forget: the purpose of the housing scheme was not only to attract good professionals into the organisation to ensure long term efficiency but also to cater for the welfare of the old staff.

I still feel justified for advising the investment in agriculture and I believe the same general approach is commendable even now. The FDC must be allowed to sell imported food because food sales is their business; however the FDC must show they will do this **not** at the expense of internal operations (handling imports and internal purchase have been done before) ; and more importantly, the supervising agency must ensure that the FDC reinvests their profits in local production, storage and processing

P. O. Box 50,
Achimota-Accra.

S. K. Awuah

VRA Electricity Tariff to Valco

SIR - As Managing Director of Volta Aluminium Company Limited (VALCO), I was very interested in the article in your April 11, 1980 issue entitled "VRA Electricity Tariff to Valco."

Much of the article is an accurate summary of the need of the aluminium industry for dependable supplies of low cost energy and of the history of the rates agreed upon for the power supplied by VRA to Valco under the power contract which made the Akosombo hydroelectric project and Valco a reality.

I believe that further clarification of some of the points discussed in the article would be useful to your readers in understanding this complex subject.

Specifically:

1. The author states that Valco's energy usage has never exceeded 370,000 times 8,760 kilowatt hours (or a total of 3,241,200,000 KW hours per year) and will not do so for a long time to come. The higher rate, which applies to usage in excess of 3,241,200,000 KW hours per year, did not come into play in 1977 and 1978 because power failures and resultant freezing of Valco's aluminium-making cells reduced aluminium production during those years. During 1979, due to the low level of the Volta Lake and the consequent VRA-requested delay in the start-up of the fifth potline, this quantity was not exceeded. Barring unforeseen problems, we would expect to exceed it in 1980 and in future years.

   With respect to the rate, while the base rate for power in excess of 370,000 times 8,760 is 6.75 U.S. mills per kilowatt hour, this is subject to adjustment based upon an escalation formula. One of the factors in the formula is the actual cost of the Kpong project. It is expected that the rate for Kpong power will increase from 6.75 mills to in excess of 15 mills as a result of the formula.

   The concept involved is that with respect to power from Kpong (just as with power from Akosombo), Valco has agreed to pay its fair share of the cost of such power.

2. Fairness of original fixed power rate for 30 years.

   As is shown in the article in the **Observer**, the original rate of 2.625 was competitive with rates elsewhere in the world at the time the 30 year contract was negotiated. The economics of a hydroelectric plant are that the initial cost is somewhat higher than a comparably-sized thermal plant but that the operating costs are much lower. The major continuing cost of a hydroelectric plant is for interest and principal payments on the loans incurred to build the dam and related facilities. These are fixed by the terms of the loan agreement and hence make practicable long-term fixed price contracts for the sale of power from a hydroelectric facility.

   The other continuing costs of such a facility are largely the salaries of the employees required to operate the hydroelectric plant and the spare parts and other operating materials, and they represent a relatively modest portion of the total costs. Since there has been considerably more inflation since the power contract was signed than could have been anticipated at that time, Valco has modified the contract to provide VRA with Valco's share of increased operating costs.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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K. YANKAH: *Deputy Public Relations Director, Ghana Industrial Holding Corporation (GIHOC) Accra.*

3. Bonneville Power Rates.

The Bonneville Power Authority which provides power to the Pacific Northwest portion of the United Stated did make a very substantial increase in its power rates effective December 1979 but not to the level cited by your correspondent. The average effective rate to Bonneville's industrial customers in 1980 is estimated at about 5.6 mills per kilowatt hour, which compares to the approximately 5.2 mills which Valco is expected to pay to VRA in 1980. Bonneville started out as an all hydroelectric system but because all of the economic hydroelectric sites in its area have been developed, Bonneville is now building thermal generating plants with higher capital and operating costs. The rate increases initiated in late 1979 were the result of Bonneville's increased costs and were increases made in accordance with the provisions of the contracts between Bonneville and its industrial customers, including the aluminium industry.

4. Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA).

TVA also originally started out operating only hydroelectric plants, but the economic sites in its operating area have long since been fully developed and many years ago TVA turned to thermal units. Today, TVA obtains more than 80 percent of its electricity from thermal plants, both coal burning and nuclear.

In consequence, its operating costs are far higher than those of Bonneville. These high operating costs are the reason for TVA's present rates and why they are so much higher than Bonneville's rates.

5. Load factor.

Your correspondent assumes that the cost to VRA to supply a kilowatt of power to Valco is the same as it costs to supply other customers. This is not correct because of the very high load factor applicable to Valco as well as the economies of delivering large quantities of electricity to a single customer. Valco operates at a load factor of approximately 97 percent, as its facilities are operated 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Normal domestic and industrial users of electricity do not operate their facilities continuously. The load varies according to the time of day but the power generating equipment has to be installed and operated to a size and output sufficient to meet the peak load, i.e., the highest practicable demand for power at any one time. During the night and very early mornings, the load is very low and much of the electrical generating and transmitting equipment stands idle but still has to be paid for. The cost of power has to carry the cost of much equipment which stands idle for a high proportion of each 24 hours, and which only comes into operation during peak demand hours. The proportion of average demand to peak demand is called the load factor and for domestic customers may be as low as 25 to 30 percent.

Industrial plants are normally somewhat higher though this depends on the nature of the industry and the number of shifts per week being worked. The higher the load factor, the smaller the proportion of plant not in use except during peak periods and therefore the lower the cost of current supplied. In Valco's case, virtually all of the equipment required is operating at full load all the time, and hence the cost is low.

Your correspondent assumes that any increase in the power rate paid to VRA comes from the shareholders of Valco and is a direct increase in the foreign exchange resources of Ghana. This is not correct. The cost of power is of course a cost of doing business for Valco and if and to the extent that Valco's cost of power increases, Valco's taxable income decreases. A reduction in Valco's income (provided, of course, that Valco is profitable) directly reduces both the amount of taxes paid by Valco to the Commissioner of Income Tax and the amount to be paid over to the Managing Trustees of the Valco Fund pursuant to the formula set forth in the Trust Deed establishing the Valco Fund. For each $100 increase in Valco's power payment to VRA, Valco's tax bill is reduced by $40 and Valco's payment to the Fund is reduced by $30. The Valco Fund provides very significant additional revenues to Ghana. As was recognized from the beginning, the Fund provides a mechanism whereby Ghana obtains more revenue from the project than could be expected under normal conditions.

Speaking on behalf of the shareholders of Valco, we believe that the arrangements agreed upon by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah and Mr. Edgar F. Kaiser provide for a fair and equitable sharing of benefits. We believe that VRA and other suppliers to Valco should obtain a fair price for the services and materials supplied to Valco, and past changes in the power rate described by your correspondent were in part intended to accomplish exactly that. The Valco-VRA power contract provides for Valco to pay its share of any operating cost increases incurred by VRA but since VRA's power is all hydroelectric, the cost increases incurred by those utilities operating thermal fired generating plants do not apply in Ghana.

We do not agree that because a thermal-fired generating plant using residual oil as fuel produces electricity at high cost, VRA, with its very much lower costs, should be entitled to unilaterally change its firm contractual commitment and charge whatever it pleases for power.

In our view, the Volta River Project is an excellent example of co-operation between a host country and multinational companies to achieve a mutually beneficial, productive enterprise. Its accomplishments to date should be a source of justifiable pride to Ghana and to its private enterprise participants. We further believe that the project will provide increasing benefits to the people of Ghana in the years to come.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide this response.

Valco Ltd. Ward B. Saunders, Jr.
Managing Director

(This is published unedited — Ed.)

Miscellaneous Reports (3)

FROM KUMASI WITH FEELINGS

By

Kojo Yankah

If for sometime people in Accra do not see any Gulder and Star Beer, do not have funny ideas. It could easily be traced to a drinking party which I witnessed last Sunday afternoon three miles outside Kumasi. It was on the Accra road, a few kilometers to the Ambassador Records factory. And the party was being held right in the middle of the road. Traffic had come to a stand-still. It lasted for about three hours.

The organiser of the party was a long articulator truck loaded with thousands of bottles of beer which had run into a ditch and overturned the beer into the middle of the road. The masters of ceremonies were border guards, policemen and a couple of prison warders. Invited guests were villagers around the spot, passengers on vehicles which had come to a halt and farmers on their way from farm.

Mr. Editor, this party would have been no news but for the "human interest" aspect of it. Children from the age of six upwards - boys and girls - struggled for at least a bottle each with the young, old men and women. Without exaggeration, I would say that almost everybody on the scene, was "high." Passengers in the bus in which I sat looked on with sympathy as the party invitees ran up and down with bottles of beer either on their lips or under their armpits. Merriment was at its highest, and this was confirmed by a border guard who, in the process, had misplaced his shirt and berret and was displaying probably his fourth bottle. When passengers in a bus shouted "O papa soldier, you too ?," he responded "What is wrong with it?" As he staggered past our bus, I saw another border guard seize one Gulder bottle from a 10 year old, saying: "You small boy, where are you taking the bottle?" He opened the seized bottle and the "opener" in his bucal cavity facilitated things. Later, I saw one soldier displaying a pistol, but his role seemed to be protecting the party crowd from being interfered with. As for the policemen, they did not only drink; their police jeep was filled with cartons of Gulder. (One hopes they sent them to the charge office as exhibits!) One old man, about 65, (he must be a farmer) told me: "If I can't buy and I have got, what do you want me to do?"

In short, the party looked uncontrollable; but as some of us watched helpless, we could only ask: who suffers as a result of all this? Who will account for all the thousands of bottles which certainly cannot be traced?

But, Mr. Editor, there were other things which prompted the writing of this letter. Your newspaper is read in Kumasi a day after publication. Television does not work in the Garden City, and so if there happens to be power failure, wireless sets cannot send any news to this populous area. So one begins to wonder what could be happening to the rest of the population beyond Kumasi.

Mr Editor, there is a lot of news in Kumasi which could also be found in other capitals. I paid thirty cedis to travel from Accra by an Agege bus to Kumasi. (I missed the State Transport Corporation facility which would have cost ₵12.80). This bus had a Lagos City registration number. Out of the 14 passengers, 10 had travelled on the bus from Lagos; so only four of us were "natives." Six young able-bodied men including the driver and four young women had been in the same bus for four days. "If it weren't the GO SLOW in Lagos, we would be in Kumasi by now," one young woman with a baby conversed. From the back seat to the front, the subject of conversation was Agege and Ghana, and the medium was Twi.

"Ah, is it because of ₵250 that I can't go to Lagos?" (I learnt that the drivers charge ₵150 when the passenger has a passport; without passport, it is ₵250). On the return journey, the drivers demand the fare in Naira. Of course, why not? One tough guy said. "Don't Ghanaians have to pay in foreign exchange to board foreign planes?"

On and on we went. Policemen at the barriers did not demand anything, but the driver volunteered ₵5, ₵10 and sometimes ₵20 depending probably on the rank of the most senior officer or on the number of policemen on the scene.

"As for Ghana policemen"...One of the Agege boys began. "Don't say! It is everywhere. Wouldn't our luggage be searched, and wouldn't we have paid large import duty if we hadn't bribed the border people?" another interrupted.

After some ten minutes silence, one of the young men, about 28, broke in: "Ei, as for this time, let us all stay behind and build our country." Six others laughed and one said: "Tweaa! Build what?" A conversation ensued:

"But who do you want to build the nation?"

"Let those who spoilt it build it."

"Ah, as for you paa, you are funny"

Then one of the young women came in:

"O.K. Let you men stay behind. We shall go and come:" "No, the other way round. It is we the men who began the Agege trips. You should stay behind and bring forth children as we go and bring the nairas". Everybody laughed, and we went on, towards Kumasi.

A few metres to the Ejisu Border Guard barrier, three of the Agege men asked the driver to stop. Questioned by the others, they answered that they had girlfriends in that small village. As the driver brought down their suitcases, I overheard an old woman who stood by saying: "Shiee! So are sardines still in Ghana?" I stretched my neck and saw a paper bag full of sardines and ovaltine.

We moved on to the barrier. One Border Guard told the driver: "Bring the suitcases down and open them one by one." I don't know what the driver said, but after a couple of minutes, we were off to Kumasi. The Agege women were heard saying: "These boys paa, they are all from Kumasi, but they decided to stop there because they feared the Border Guards would search our luggage...Do you remember they didn't pay duty?"

When one passenger wondered how those who alighted would get to Kumasi an answer was volunteered: "They will join the tro-tro trucks which stand very little chance of being searched. You know, our bus has a foreign registration number."

"Ah, as for you Ghanaian men," one woman continued, "you are cowards. Because of the little money these boys would pay to the Border Guards, look at what they have done!" There was laughter.

Then one woman summed up! "Esi, if you mean to travel this Agege - Ghana distance and you don't prepare, you better not make the journey."

Not long after, we were in Kumasi. "Oh Ghana," a young woman of about 26 said, "look at how lean the people look". A few people laughed; then another woman added: "That is why I prepared. The provisions I brought will last for about a month, after which I would be going back."

"Ah, why not," said one of them as she alighted at a stop. "We shall meet in a month's time. And don't forget the nairas in the Quaker Oats tin. Bye bye, o!"

Before the rest of us finally got off the bus, the Agege group had agreed that they would meet at a certain point in a month's time to go back to enjoy life. When I gathered courage to ask the one with a baby what work she did in Lagos, she looked me twice in the face and spewed an answer in TWI:

"Why, is it your business?"

I was out of the bus before too late.

The feelings I got, Mr. Editor, made me write to you today.

So long!

Long Live Ghana!

THE P.N.P. CONGRESS

By

Our Correspondent

No National Congress of any political party in recent times has generated as much speculation and public interest, as the National Congress of the ruling People's National Party (P.N.P.) held in Kumasi. Some of the pre-Congress speculations and predictions had even gone to the extent of predicting the possible disintegration of the party, and thus raising the possibility of a general election. This is meant to give just a brief factual account of what transpired at the Congress.

The Congress started on Friday May 30 at 4.00 p.m., with a meeting of the National Executive, to discuss and approve the draft agenda for the Congress. Discussion of this agenda was free, and the draft was finally approved with very minor amendments. Significantly, however, there was no indication on the agenda that election of National Officers would take place at the Congress, in spite of the high expectations of both the Congress delegates and the general public. Infact, throughout the pre-Congress period, aspiring contestants were seen openly canvassing delegates for votes. The basis for this expectation was not immediately clear, especially to those who were conversant with the constitution of the P.N.P.

The main Congress opened on Saturday May 31 at about 10.00 a.m. There were observers from Guinea, North Korea, China, U.S.A. and Britain. The N tional Chairman, Nana Okutwer Bekoe III, gave a very conciliatory speech, obviously meant to defuse the tension that had builtup at the Congress, even about his own position as National Chairman. He, however, pointed out one significant thing: that the PNP was characterised now by most of the negative aspects of the latter days of the C.P.P. -character assassination, undermining, petty squabbles, etc.

He was followed by the Founder, Alhaji Imoru Egala, whose powerful speech called for unity within the Party, and spared no words in castigating those party members who "wanted to reap where they had not sown."

Then came the one and a half hour speech of President Hilla Limann, Leader of the Party. His speech was described by virtually everybody at the Congress as a brilliant speech which had exposed virtually all the shortcomings of the Party, and made concrete suggestions for its reorganisation. He clearly demonstrated that he was now an astute and tough politician, ready to take on any of the various factions within the party. He had strong words for rebellious Members of Parliament, lukewarm Cabinent Ministers and "destructive" Party members. By the end of his speech, it was obvious that he was in firm control of affairs.

The afternoon session started an hour late, at 4.30 p.m. It was at this session that Dr. Limann showed that unlike his colleagues, including those who were openly struggling for power, he had done his homework thoroughly before coming to the Congress. When the question of discussion of the new draft constitution was raised, he confidently pointed out that the Party was still operating the old constitution sent to the Electoral Commissioner, and which required that any amendments to the constitution had to be circulated to all branches for comments, at least 2 weeks before Congress. He himself had obtained his copy of the amendments only 24 hours before Congress, and other delegates in less than that time. The Constitution could therefore not be discussed. Moreover, even if it was discussed and approved, election of officers such as the Secretary General could not be held because the new constitution had to be sent by the Electoral Commissioner for at least three months before it could come into force.

Dr. Limann also pointed out that certain actions supposed to have been taken by the party's Central Committee were null and void because the party's existing constitution had laid down procedures for constituting a Central Committee. This procedure had not been followed. As far as he was concerned, therefore, no Central Committee existed. The party had only an interim Steering Committee which was very unrepresentative. This stand brought a lot of applause from the delegates who regard the Central Committee as unrepresentative, negative and lacking in ideas. They therefore took President Limann's pronouncement as a formal dissolution of the "Central Committee." Dr Limann made it quite clear that the Party had gone to Court once as a result of unconstitutional use of power, that he had sworn an oath to defend and uphold the Constitution of Ghana, and that he was not prepared to go to court again as a result of the actions or omissions of others who had no respect for constitutionality.

At this stage it was obvious that the Congress could not proceed with any of the business on the agenda, because constitutionally it was not mandated to do so. Alhaji Imoru Egala then moved a motion, seconded by Nana Okutwer Bekoe III, that:

(*a*) Congress should adjourn indefinitely, and reconvene at a later date when all relevant papers are properly placed before it

(*b*) The President, in consultation with Nana Bekoe and Alhaji Egala, should run the affairs of the Party with "Persons deemed fit for such an onerous duty"

The motion was carried overwhelmingly. No one voted against it. One significant observation during voting was that most of the old members of the moribund Central Committee abstained.

At the end of the Congress, the general impression among delegates was that the President had now got himself firmly in control of the Party (a situation that did not exist in the pre-Congress days), and is now in a position to strengthen it so as to make it a positive force for the proper governance of the country.

RAWLINGS, JUNE 4TH AND HISTORY

By

Our Correspondent

Jerry J. Rawlings still appears a very popular figure; his popularity seems to have remained as high as when he was head of state. That is why on the first anniversary of the June 4th Uprising, he was able to attract well about 100,000 people to celebrate the ceremony in pomp and gaiety with him. The **Pioneer**, in a front - page coverage, recorded half a million people.

A simply advertised symposium turned out to be a giant rally at Accra's Community Centre. The open field in front of the Centre, all the way to the High Street, along the front section of Parliament House, was filled with a multitude of people. Jerry arrived at the rally on a motor bicycle. Perhaps the people turned out in such numbers so as to reassure themselves that all is not yet lost in their yearning for some as yet undefined "revolutionary change", a change Rawlings' brief intervention in national politics symbolizes.

The slogans, chants and songs with which the thousands of people marched after the rally/symposium in the streets around Parliament House and towards the Castle (which they did not reach), bore this deep-seated support Rawlings has among the "ordinary people." But if Jerry is popular, it is not because Ghanaians are inherently hero-worshipping. It is precisely because the ills which the AFRC, unfortunately, so haphazardly attacked, are still here with us, getting worse and only now (mid-June) being attacked, equally haphazardly.

On the make-shift roof - top platform with Jerry was Johnny Hansen. He was still talking "socialist" revolution, even after he had disappointed his followers by ganging up with the non-ideological" PNP. Eric Heyman of **Evening News** fame was there too. He strained, sweated and laboured to remind the throng that he had not denounced the ideals of the CPP. Kojo Yanka, a public relations officer/journalist, probably the only figure there who had no public political past demanding a double-checking from the mass listerners, was there too, as eloquent as he was coherent.

Since his voluntary exit from power, Rawlings has logically attracted a maze of what he himself called "slanderous propaganda". His several public pronouncements have not only pricked the wrath of men like Alhaji Imoru-Egala——who challenged Jerry to form his own party.

More consistently, the mouthpiece of Jerry's antagonists has been Chris Asher's **Palaver Tribune**.

The anniversary was an occasion for Rawlings too to rail at **Palaver** and "those behind it". But Jerry-possibly for legal reasons? - - probably left his teeming audience and admirers dissatisfied when he only promised to "expose" **Palaver's** collaborators some other time. Maybe he didn't need to name names. The audience seemed already convinced that the **Palaver** did not mean well whenever its editor "junketed" into the complex web of rumours, facts and fiction about the AFRC and Jerry.

But Rawlings did "expose" some propaganda gimmicks at the Castle. The former head of state told of how he was cajoled into taking a picture with the President, his vice and other officials at the same hour that the radio was announcing his "retirement" from the Air Force. The picture, later published in the **Daily Graphic**, according to him, was to provide proof to the unsuspecting public Rawlings' own agreement and gratification at being retired.

Too many words have been uttered and printed against coups since September 24. Chris Asher even organized an inconsequential "demonstration" in May against coups. But negative political developments are not wished away by words. Nor will a coup, if it happens, even follow the same model of the one before it. With or without Rawlings, a coup is always haunting this country as long as corruption, sectional conspiracies, economic myopia and political stupidity remain a part of our national political life.

But as for June 4th, history alone will best record its real gains and losses. Perhaps its most fitting description is its name, "uprising." Rawlings' definition of it as a moral revolution is likewise inadequate. The morality of it has been lost on its targets the same way as its intangible gains have been whittled away not only by the lashes of its foes, but also by the quarrels and differing views of its leaders. Fundamentally, the loss of the June 4th morality and its gains, reflect the superficiality of the whole exercise.

If it was a classical revolution, not marked by so much spontaneity and a somewhat naive trust in the "inherent good in man", the targets of its attacks would not rear their heads so soon after its leaders handed over power—and voluntarily at that. But the "ordinary people" it chose to represent were mere cheerers-on, hailing "action action" from the street side, not leading nor actually involved in the process of the revolution. In fact, sometimes, the revolution appeared to be against the same "ordinary people".

But from the anniversary speech and other pronouncements elsewhere, Jerry too realizes the shortcomings of the June uprising. He still defends his major task of "cooling tempers" and not "letting the floodgates" of pent-up mass fury erupt, because the "people are not organized". So, now, his major message is a call to "Organize, Organize".

For, in his own words, and contrary to rumoured reports seeking to link him to coup plots, Jerry does not see the solution of our current problems in coups. He hopes for a "a people's government next time".

After all said and done, what stood out most vividly and poignantly about this least publicized affair at the Community Centre is a fact that cannot be denied, ignored or written off by journalistic or official silence. Until a concrete evidence of corrupt action on his part during his tenure of office is brought out, the more rumours and stories said about him, the greater his popularity becomes.

Rawlings will continue to be as popular as he proved last June 4th, so long as the grounds for potential June 4ths continue to exist, accentuated by all-round political ineptitude, callous incompetence and narrow political vision.

The Arts

THE GHANA DANCE ENSEMBLE AND THE CONTEMPORARY GHANAIAN THEATRE

By

J. K. Agovi

Soon after Independence, it was realised that decades of colonial rule have overthrown our foundations as a people, and distorted our values and our image of ourselves. With characteristic vision, Nkrumah realised that it was difficult to mobilise a country without a soul or a common cultural identity for meaningful development. Consequently, 'African Personality' in addition to other related concepts, was consciously developed as a cultural axiom in the early sixties in response to this situation. It was also at this time that a concerted cultural movement emerged as a corollary to the nationalist struggle in Africa. New cultural institutions were established, traditional ones resuscitated, and a simultaneous crusade to go back to our roots launched. It became official government policy to encourage the arts and to promote systematic research into our oral traditions and indigenous institutions under the umbrella of a New Cultural Movement.

Common Cultural Consciousness

The most important ideological function of this New Cultural Movement was to promote a common cultural consciousness in the country. Programmes and policies were therefore consciously initiated to realise this national objective. Traditional and contemporary performances were brought together in Arts Festivals organised by the Arts Council in which modern audiences provided the opportunity to appreciate traditional music, dance and drama. Performers were also encouraged to use traditional sources and recreate them in new contexts in order to share cultural expriences with those who do not belong to the culture. Thus, in all our earlier cultural programmes and policies of the sixties, emphasis was laid on 'remodelling' traditional material for contemporary audiences.

Innovation and Experimentation

In more recent times however, especially during the seventies, there has been a growing emphasis on innovation and experimentation as a basis of growth in the Arts. The new cultural nationalism, the feeling that we cannot altogether abandon our traditional performances or ignore our roots in tradition; the recognition that these traditional performances should be 're-fashioned' to meet the new sensibility of the times - all these have given rise to a wave of experimentation with new ways of presenting 'old' material in the contemporary theatre. This new trend has not only involved direct recreations but abstractions of traditional ideas and concepts as a basis of performances. While traditional materials were still used as source materials, the emphasis was clearly on the **abstraction** of purely traditional forms, concepts and ideas as models for stage presentation. Mrs. Efua Sutherland's experiments with the Kusum Agoroma and her production of **Anansewa** on the modern stage were all attempts to translate the traditional idea of drama as a 'community experience' in the modern theatre. Another interesting and on-going experiment which involves students of the School of Performing Arts in Legon, is the attempt to revive the traditional concept of drama as a **composite art.** Stage performances are made to incorporate song, drumming and dance, not as mere appendages, but as integral components of the total meaning of the performance. The recent production of **Jogolo** written by Mr. Allen Tamakloe is a good example of the experiment.

More interesting still, is the experiment in dance drama. Here again, traditional models that employ the vocabulary of traditional dances are used to create new patterns of dance drama that are meaningful to the contemporary audience. It is in this latter context that I want to review the contribution of the Ghana Dance Ensemble to the Contemporary Theatre Movement in Ghana.

Dance Ensemble

The Ghana Dance Ensemble was established in 1962 as a 'bold creative experiment' in dance studies in Ghana. In the words of Prof. Nketia at the inauguration of the Ensemble in 1967, the Ghana Dance Ensemble was set up as 'a School of Dance where Ghanaians can be trained professionally to perform not only the dances of their tribal areas but also of other parts of Ghana.' The immediate aim was to ensure, among other things, 'continuity in our dance traditions.' Right from the beginning therefore, the programmes of the Ensemble involved a form of presentation which highlighted and clarified 'the essential forms of the dances without destroying their basic movements and styles, their emotional, symbolic and cultural values or their vitality and vigour.' The original vision of the Dance Ensemble then was to recreate our traditional dances in a setting which would conspicuously highlight their aesthetic values and social significations. Thus the controlled movement of the Nzema Kundum which expresses 'unity of purpose,' the regal Asante Adowa, the vitality of Bawa dances of the Dagarti, the resstrained vigor of the Bambaya, the martial movements of the Atsiagbekor, the theatrical expression of the Ga Kpanlogo and the lyrics of the Fante Adenkum became the basic repertoire of the Dance Ensemble.

Extension of Original Vision

However, this original vision was soon extended. In the next experiment, related dance movements from different cultural areas were abstracted and brought together to express conceptual ideas, and themes. The idea of war or belligerency for example was expressed by a combination of Fontomfrom combat motifs and Atsiagbekor war formations and movements. This creative use of complementary movements became a feature of creative pieces that were performed by students of the School of Performing Arts as well as the creations of the Ghana Dance Ensemble. Although in the Ghanaian dance context, there are not many culturally defined movements that can be integrated in this imaginative way, the experiment nevertheless pointed to our practical concern with finding elements of unity in our culture through the Arts.

In more recent times however, this feature has been subsumed under a broader, more creative experiment in yet another development - dance drama. In this phase, a clear story line emerges as a result of a carefully structured combination of mime, dance movement, song, instrumental music, the use of props, costume, make-up and special effects. In addition to a creative use of all these elements, there is also an effective use of drum music to create dramatic contrasts in mood, atmosphere and feeling. It is this dramatic potential of our drums on the modern stage which makes this latest experiment both creative and interesting. **The Lost Warrior,** for example, one of the latest pieces of the Dance Ensemble dramatises this potentiality of our African drums and instrumental resources. The story itself is simple: it concerns the invasion of a village, Anlotovi. The peace and tranquility of this village is suddenly shattered. Its men take up arms to defend the village in order to restore their lost peace and tranquility. They quickly kill all the invaders but unfortunately one of the Anlotovi warriors is killed. The dead warrior happens to be a budding youth of the village who had, just before the war, fallen in love with a maiden beauty of the village.

Theme and Basic Idea

The theme of the piece - the idea that war or conflict is a tragic force because it destabilises human society, especially interpersonal relationships - is conveyed in three movements each dominated by the Atsiagbekor Master Drum. The first movement consists of a medley of light-hearted sounds which reinforce the action of youthful gaiety, courtship, and the 'orderliness' of human life in Anlotovi. Here, the Atsiagbekor Master drum becomes restrained leaving the field for the smaller drums to evoke the mood of 'order' in which 'youthfulness' and 'human love' are enacted.

Suddenly, the Master drum thunders. There is danger of imminent invasion of the village of Anlotovi. In a suite of swift, martial sounds, the Master drum evokes a dramatic atmosphere of war, realised in structured movements which enact the confrontation of the forces of the two villages. Martial sounds heighten the conflict and concretise the actual fighting till the invasion is warded off. The final movement sees the return of all the Anlotovi warriors - except one. Here the master drum maintains a significant silence, symbolic of sudden grief. Its previous cadences of war suddenly recede to the background, giving way to a series of 'soft sounds' pregnant with meaning, that complement the mimed action of loss, bereavement and personal dislocation. The dramatic contrast in mood, feeling, and action of the whole piece is entirely evoked by the Atsiagbekor Master drum, and the other drums of the ensemble, and it is this which evokes horror and pity in the audience.

This kind of creative experiment by the Ghana Dance Ensemble is clearly important. It suggests beyond doubt that African instrumental resources are not entirely made up of a mindless cacophony of sounds. They have a dramatic potential in the sense that they can be made to be both evocative and meaningful. This dramatic and aesthetic quality of the African drum in particular, hitherto reduced to the level of inter-village code messages, is what the Ghana Dance Ensemble ultimately highlights in its dance dramas. The contribution of the Ghana Dance Ensemble in pointing to this new direction in the New Theatre Movement in Ghana is already clear and solid.

For The Record

MAY 24, 1980

Ghana Stays Away From Olympics

The National Olympic Committee (NOC) announced that Ghana will not take part in the Moscow Olympic Games.

An NOC statement said the decision was taken because local circumstances had militated against adequate preparations of Ghanaian sportsmen for the games.

The statement said the unhealthy political situation in the country during the past two years had prevented Ghana from preparing meaningfully for the games.

Meanwhile, the National Union of Ghana Students (NUGS) and the African Youth Command (AYC) have in separate statements condemned the NOC decision not to participate in the games.

The NUGS statement regarded the decision as "disgraceful" and the reason given as "childish" and totally unacceptable."

MAY 30, 1980

Congress of People's National Party

The first Congress of the PNP since last year's general elections was held in Kumasi from May 30 to June 2.

At the end of the Congress, the Central Committee of the party was dissolved and President Limann was appointed to run the party in consultation with Alhaji Imoru Egala and Nana Okutwer Bekoe III.

This decision followed a compromise motion tabled by Alhaji Egala and seconded by Nana Bekoe, to save the PNP from imminent split.

The Congress adjourned indenfinitely without electing any national officers. A statement said the the Congress would be reconvened " at a future date during which all matters of business and resolutions would be properly laid before it in accordance with the party's constitution."

JUNE 3, 1980

Legon Lecturers on Strike

Lecturers at the University of Ghana Legon, embarked on a strike action to back their demand for better conditions of service.

Junior workers at the University also resorted to strike action in support of similar demands.

The two industrial actions brought activities on the campus to a halt and end-of-year examinations scheduled to begin on June 2, had to be postponed indefinitely.

Most students had to go down since there was no food and sanitary conditions had deteriorated.

In the mean time, the strikes have been called off and examinations are due to begin on June 23.

JUNE 5, 1980.

Listen to our side of the Story

The Chairman of the erstwhile A.F.R.C., Flt-Lt. J. J. Rawlings, has appealed to Parliament to investigate a campaign of reprisals directed at some members of the Armed Forces for the part they played in the June 4, 1979 uprising.

He said Parliament must listen not only to Ministers and security agencies but also to soldiers.

Flt. Lt. Rawlings made this appeal at a press conference in Accra to mark the first anniversary of the June 4 uprising.

He said such reprisals were the cause of instability in the Army even if those who organised them claimed to be working in the interest of state security.

Flt. - Lt. Rawlings said the enemies of June 4 were inventing lies to discredit the revolution, slander its personalities or distort stories to suit their own purposes.

He described a GNA report which said he had re-affirmed his loyalty to the government as "absolute nonsense," adding that his loyalty did not go to any government but to the State and to the Constitution.

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