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Editorial

31 MAY 1974 INDIA'S BOMB



ON MAY 16 this year, India exploded an underground nuclear device and became the first of the third world countries to do so. The carrying out of the blast demands considerable technological sophistication of which a nation may well be proud, but it is our view that in exploding this bomb, India has acted most regrettably. India contends that the test has been carried out for peaceful purposes, yet Canada with whom India has been collaborating on nuclear research has been studying uses of nuclear power without recourse to explosions of the type that India recently let off in Rajasthan, a province ominously near the border with Pakistan. Indeed, it is worth bearing in mind that Canada has found it necessary to break off co-operation with India as a result of the test.

A bomb is not a toy, and in a world which already has the capacity to blow itself to bits, any further proliferation of nuclear bombs is alarming. We are not unaware of the weird illogicality of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty which seeks to prevent some countries from developing military nuclear power but permits some others to possess it; we are also aware that India has not signed this treaty. But India's explosion comes at a time when there is an atmosphere of detente between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A., the two super powers, and even between China and the U.S.A. The two other nuclear powers, Britain and France, are not at loggerheads with any other nuclear power—even though France often causes alarm in the world community by its open flouting of international sanctions and opinion. All in all, in any case, the threat of nuclear warfare breaking out among these five powers has been minimised in recent years, and it is this fact which makes the Indian explosion all the more disquieting. For by no stretch of the imagination can it be said that all is well between India and her kindred neighbour, Pakistan, with whom she has been to war three times during the last twenty-five years. The Simla Agreement of two years ago seemed to have provided some basis for a normalising of relations between these two fractious neighbours, but it is obvious that by exploding this bomb, India has put Pakistan again on the military alert, and has negated what may well have been a period of peace on the sub-continent.

For now, Pakistan may think in terms of developing her own nuclear bomb to balance up with that of India; and a number of heretofore non-nuclear countries, including many in the third world, will think of doing the same. And this is perhaps

the most important consideration which makes India's bomb so deplorable. It sets a very bad example and poses a grave menace to the third world. Among the nations which are capable within the next decade (and for some the period is very much less than a decade—even as short as twelve months) are Argentina, East Germany, West Germany, Japan, Pakistan, and South Africa. To think that Gandhi's country is now the pace-setter for such a nation as South Africa!

Finally, we must condemn India's nuclear adventure as a callous waste of money which could have been put to more humane use. India is a nation whose teeming millions are constantly in danger of starvation, a nation for whom heavy seasonal rains inflict untold human misery, a nation which is currently resorting to most severe sanctions to end a strike called by railway workers who were demanding better working conditions. It is strange that this nation should waste money experimenting with dangerous nuclear devices.

Social

EDUCATING THE MENTALLY RETARDED

By
Victoria Bafi-Yeboah

The mentally, socially, and physically handicapped present educational, social and medical problems of a unique character and complexity. They present today, an outstanding challenge to science and society — particularly in the developing countries. For the advancement of a country is measured not only in terms of the amount of educational, social and medical services it offers to its citizens, but also by the quality of services offered to the unfortunate ones to enable them to be independent and self-reliant and contribute their stint to the national wealth. The Ghana Ministry of Education Report (1968—71) states: "There was an increase in the facilities of the education and rehabilitation of the handicapped..... In view of this practical Government interest and the consequent growth in the number of schools for the handicapped, it became necessary during 1969—70 to establish at Ministry Headquarters a special Education Schedule headed by an officer to handle matters of policy".

THE MENTALLY RETARDED

Policies and planning of programmes for the handicapped in general should include well defined programmes for the **Mentally Retarded**. Though children may be the victim of fate, they should not be the victim of ignorance, superstition and neglect.

Traditionally the bitterest enemies of mental retardation are ignorance and superstition. Today, however, through education, science and technology it is generally accepted that Mental Retardation is not a horrendous illness. It is a life time disability caused by interference in the development before birth, or in the early childhood years. Some of the specific identified causes are German measles (rubella) in the mother during the first three months of pregnancy, syphilis, meningitis, toxoplasmosis, Rh-factor incompatibility between mother and infant, lead poisoning in young children, chromosome abnormalities, malnutrition, etc.

A great majority of the mentally retarded, however, are neither physically deformed nor socially unacceptable. They can be educated and trained to support themselves and to be useful contributors towards the social and economic advancement of a nation. For mental retardation can be altered to an either much worse or better condition, depending on the educational programmes, social and medical facilities the mentally retarded person is exposed to.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES FOR THE MENTALLY RETARDED

The "New Structure and Content of Education for Ghana" (1974) states:—

- (i) before beginning formal education every child should have between 18 to 24 months of preparation and pre-disposition;
- (ii) the child should begin formal education at the age of 6;
- (iii) the length of basic formal education should be 9 years and **this should be free and compulsory**.
- (iv) practical programmes which lead to the acquisition of skills should be an essential part of all formal education.

It is envisaged that, the above covers the mentally retarded as well, since the **provision** of 9 years basic free and compulsory education is meant for **all**. Caution should however, be exercised here, for the mentally retarded may not be mature enough for any formal education at the age of 6; and would require a different programme of education along the following lines.

A. Early Childhood Education:

The mentally retarded would have to stay in Nursery and Kindergarten programmes longer than the stipulated period in order to get mature for formal education. This calls for the establishment of special schools for such children suitable to the nature of their needs.

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B. Education In Special Classes or Special Schools for the Mentally Retarded:

The mentally retarded are educable although they are limited in their potentials for advanced academic achievements. When they are given the chance at suitable education and training, the development and improvement can be amazing. For easy learning, better achievements and success, the educational programmes must be carefully graded and guided to give them the kind of confidence that leads to self-respect. The mentally retarded have very often low estimation of themselves because of the failures they inevitably meet in life.

By special educational techniques, appropriation school books, teaching aids, and special educators, they should be given enrichment programmes or a little more than what the non-handicapped school children receive. The education should either be given in special classes within the ordinary school system or in special schools. Emphasis should be on basic skills (reading, writing, number) and a certain amount of knowledge of manual occupations.

Recreational activities including physical education, games, and sports should provide another source for achievements. The mentally retarded should be encouraged to master physical problems such as hopping, swimming, riding bicycles, dancing, playing football, etc. Ability to paint, sing, play musical instruments, carve, model, weave and to perform calisthenics, should also be encouraged. All these should in the end improve the retarded child's physical fitness and his ability to learn, give him the opportunity to come into close contact with people to co-operate with them; to respect authority as well as to consider others. Furthermore, the determination and discipline learned in sports and games should be of some assistance in dealing with other problems of living. To be precise, educational programmes for the mentally retarded should place emphasis on what they **can do** and give them the confidence in what they **can accomplish**.

C. Vocational Training and Employment:

Vocational Training and Employment are in some ways the most important in mental retardation. Here is a partial list of jobs trained mental retards could hold:—

Farm hands, gardeners, packers, home helpers, assemblers, laundry workers, warehousemen, cleaners, filling station attendants, aids in hospitals and nursing homes, helpers in barbershops, hair dressing and beauty salons, messengers, office boys, stock clerks, painters, etc.

Education should therefore give the mentally retarded chance to attain economic and social independence, especially in these areas.

D. Sheltered Workshops for the Mentally Retarded Children:

Opportunity for training and employment in sheltered workshops⁽¹⁾ should be given to the moderately retarded children who can learn to take care of their personal needs and perform many useful tasks in the home.

E. Special Training and Services for the Severely and Profoundly Mentally Retarded:

For the severely and profoundly retarded it is desirable to provide special training or stimulation in areas such as behavioural control, self-protection, language development and physical mobility. They can to some extent respond to training in basic self-care, though their potential economic productivity is limited.

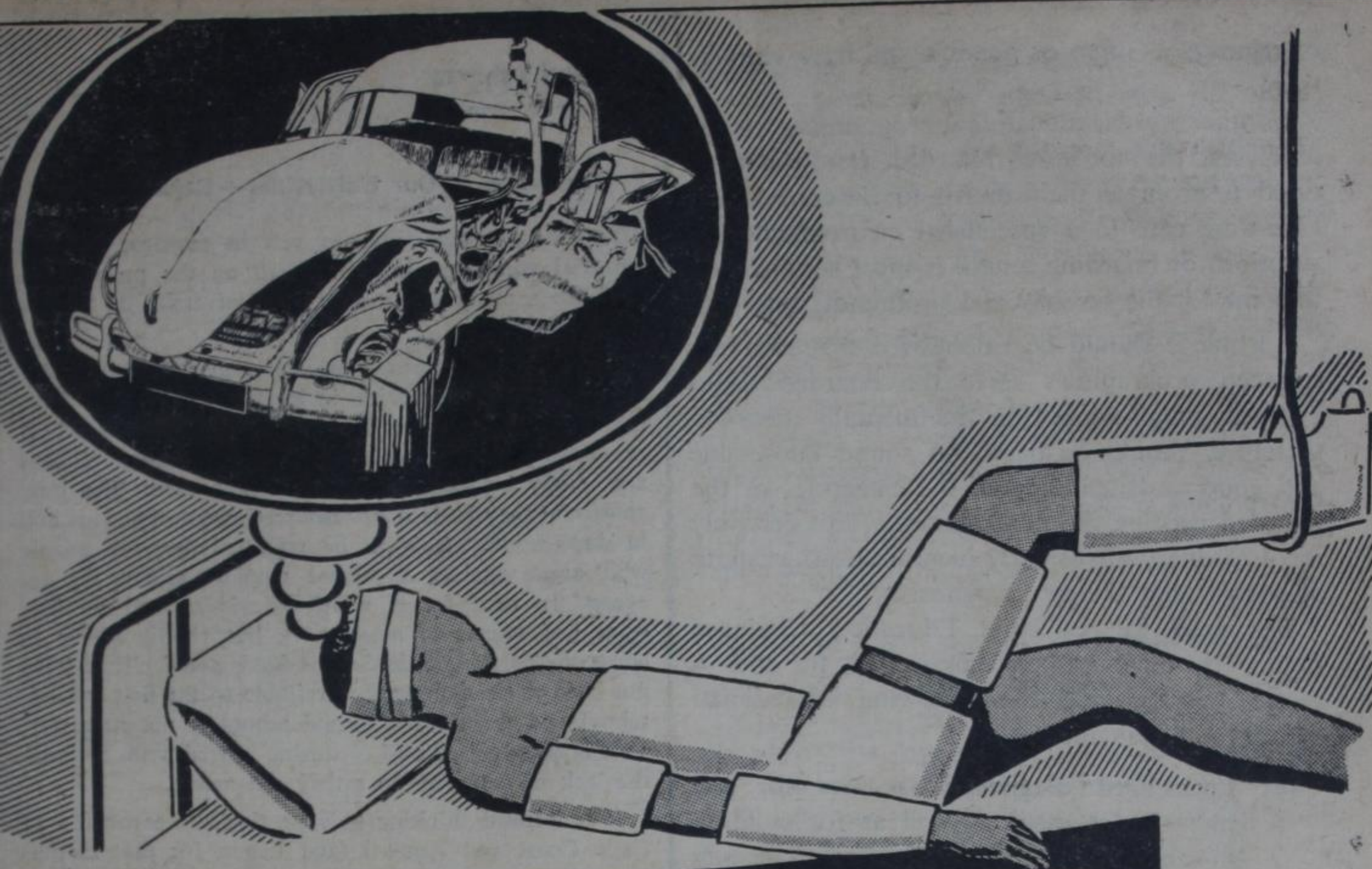
RESIDENTIAL SERVICES:

Every effort should be exerted to see that in providing residential services, unnecessary institutionalization — particularly for the mildly and moderately retarded — is avoided. Unnecessary institutionalization has detrimental effects on cognitive, social, personal development and hinders habilitation. Where it is imperatively necessary that the mildly and the moderately retarded can not stay within their own family unit due to one or other reasons, it is highly recommended that they reside in small separate living units — "family house". A female (house mother) and possibly a male (house father) should be in charge of every unit. The number of children in a family house should be relatively small and children should be of different age levels. Such pattern of residential arrangements promotes:

- (a) "family life situation" most needed by the mentally retarded.
- (b) easier and quicker adaptation to house members than is likely in a large institution with several children.
- (c) better chance of being independent and sociable.
- (d) good participation in household chores and care for the younger members of the group, and
- (e) facilities for better re-habilitation.

It is worth noting that the "family house" pattern is far more suitable for the young mentally retarded. Inmates of such family houses should be given the opportunity to rejoin their own families

1. These should be workshops in which the handicapped are employed on simple tasks and paid according to their output.



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or relatives as often as possible and have visits by them.

In other words, educational programmes for the mildly and the moderately retarded, should be structured to promote their return to the community. Life time care in a specialized environment (institution) or boarding school is most suitable and humane for the severely and profoundly retarded.

Further it should be emphasised that mentally retarded programmes serve the retarded. Educational programmes for the mentally retarded therefore, should be based on sound knowledge and good understanding of the categories of the retarded needing the programmes. This certainly involves questions of early identification, accurate diagnosis and better prognosis.

The need for a "child Education Guidance Centre" is therefore here emphasised, for such a centre will provide the following educational services and guidance:—

- (a) Specialized diagnostic facilities for the mentally retarded as well as for children in school and family, who may in one way or the other exhibit some behavioural problems.
- (b) Suggest and arrange remedial teaching where necessary.
- (c) Work closely with parents of mentally retarded in the following areas:—
 - (i) **Parent Education**—to provide information on retardation for its early detection.
 - (ii) **Parent Counselling**—to deal with generalised problems.
 - (iii) **Psychotherapy**—for those subjected to long emotional strain under the impact of the birth of a retarded child. Here Psychiatric intervention is needed.

In addition parents could be offered, practical assistance in specific problems of management—choice of diet, feeding, etc. Nutritionists, Public Health Nurses and Home Scientists would be of great assistance.

- (d) Conduct workshops and seminars with other related fields of special education.
- (e) Provide empirical information on retardation — brochures, pamphlets, etc.
- (f) Offer in-training services to teachers, particularly to train those who will man special schools.

For observation, research and training purposes, there should be a kindergarten for the retarded attached to the centre. The centre will have to serve therefore children in school, in the family and all categories of people connected with education and the up-bringing of children particularly the mentally retarded.

Letters

Duplication in Our Universities — Rejoinders (2)

SIR — I write this letter to you in response to your editorial comments in L.O. IX/10 on the proposal to establish a medical school at the University of Science and Technology.

To begin with, the caption and content of your editorial imply that duplication in itself is undesirable. This is not necessarily true. It is a fact that the medical personnel and facilities available to Ghanaian citizens are wholly inadequate for their health care. The only constraint may be lack of resources, not an inherent evil in duplication. It is to be regretted that the people who argue against a second medical school do not accept the need for it, which is evident, and consider ways and means of meeting it, but choose rather to adopt the negative attitude that funds and facilities have not been made abundantly available to the first medical school and therefore a second school is not necessary. This is simply a case of confusing a need with, perhaps, the lack of resources to satisfy the need.

It is wishful thinking to state that the expansion of Cape Coast and Kumasi (and Legon for that matter) beyond the original intentions behind their establishment "will ultimately not be to the good health of higher education in the country". The plain fact is that, ultimately, all these universities will expand to serve a greater population and to fulfil new roles. The country will have, ultimately, to establish other universities to enable the old and the new ones together to meet the higher educational needs of the country.

You question "the wisdom in setting up a second medical school at Kumasi even before the first one at Accra is well and firmly on its feet". Why, sir, is the first one not "well and firmly on its feet?" Please do not tell us that it is due to lack of students, teaching personnel and facilities. It is a well known fact that the medical school demands the highest possible A/L qualifications before students can be admitted into it. We are all aware of the many instances when students who have been rejected by Ghanaian universities have gained admission into Britain, America and other overseas universities and have **done well** in these places. We know of countries in Africa which are not richer than Ghana and which are certainly not as advanced educationally as we are, but which have nevertheless set up acceptable medical schools.

The Medical school at Accra was started in 1963. Ten years later the school still plans for the same intake of about 50 students. In fact its output of doctors since 1969 has averaged about 33 per cent. Kenya set up its medical school in 1967. The initial planned intake was 30, to be increased to 105 by 1972 (five years after the school's establishment). This figure has been exceeded in Kenya to such an extent that it is now hoped that the annual output of medical graduates will be 90–100 by 1977. It may be that the "case for setting up a second medical school anywhere in Ghana has not been publicly made". The argument why the medical school at Accra "must command all the resources that the Government has at its disposal for the training of doctors" has yet to be publicly stated and justified. Certainly the country is entitled to know why the rate

of development and expansion of the school at Accra has been much slower than at, say, Nairobi or Dar-es-Salaam.

In any case, it is submitted here that the health care of Ghanaians is too vital for us to entrust the training of health sciences personnel to just one institution.

Our concern now should not be to prevent many science students leaving the secondary school from fulfilling their first aim of entering a medical school. Why should not they have the opportunity of realising their aim? If we want science teachers and research scientists, then it is up to us to make the relevant careers attractive enough for students to take them up as a first choice. It is wholly misleading to imply that we must have only one medical school so that, as one of the consequences, sixth formers will be compelled to take up science teaching or research as second choices.

Our consideration of the case for a second medical school should be based squarely on the health care needs of the country now and in the future. Our energies and ingenuity should be directed towards finding ways and means of achieving this aim.

N.T.E.R. 51,
Kumasi

Andy Agyekum

SIR — Your last editorial (L.O. IX/10) was critical of the starting of a course in Principles of Management and Accounting in Cape Coast University next academic year, the reason being that there will be needless duplication since Legon's School of Administration is producing graduates in this field of knowledge.

However, I think your editorial ignored the fact that the University of Cape Coast was established on 15th December, 1962 to meet the pressing demand for graduate teachers in all fields of knowledge (including of course Principles of Accounting and Management) in the secondary schools and training colleges. The reason for running this course at Cape Coast is therefore to produce professional graduate masters in Principles of Accounting and Management to teach in our secondary schools so that we can get enough secondary school students, on the completion of their course, to take up appointments as much needed middle level personnel in our corporations and other establishments. Also, our present educational system has often been criticised because it is too liberal and most of the products find it difficult to get what they call 'suitable' jobs. Why don't we then shift from this system to the type that will give the school leavers immediate employment on completion of their course? An education in Principles of Accounting and Management is one of the best solutions to the problem of unemployment among our secondary school leavers. And we need professional graduates to cater for this all important need.

The assertion that Legon is producing graduates in Administration is untenable, for how many students are admitted for this course at the beginning of every academic year and how many opt for teaching after the course? The public will agree with me that not enough people are admitted and the very few who come out abhor coming to the teaching field, the reason being that the salary for teachers is meagre. Ghana can now boast of producing a substantial number of graduates in subjects like History, Geography, English etc. yet there has not been an over-production of graduates in

these subjects. Most of our schools still lack qualified graduate teachers in these subjects and I cannot conceive of the time when there will be no jobs for graduate teachers who take these subjects. And certainly the market for graduates in Principles of Accounting and Management is even more open. At the moment owing to the lack of Ghanaian trained graduate teachers in this field of knowledge, the country has to rely on expatriates. To train qualified graduates to teach in this field of knowledge in our schools is in harmony with our present philosophy of self-reliance.

In view of the arguments presented it is clear that the setting up of a course in Principles of Management and Accounting at Cape Coast University is in order.

354 Oguaa Hall
University of Cape Coast
Cape Coast

E. Y. Brobe-Mensah

Safety on Our Roads — A Subsequent Rejoinder

SIR — Having read the new "Ghana Highway Code", I read with surprise Dr. Addae-Mensah's letter in L.O. IX/10 of 17/5/74. He states that the new Code does not say "who must give way to whom at a roundabout", which only shows that he did not read this useful booklet carefully. On p. 22 it states clearly, under no. 84, first clause of the section on roundabouts: "Give way to traffic coming from your immediate left, unless markings indicate otherwise..." and rightly so! This will ensure the same regular flow of traffic at this kind of junction as prevails at present. If, on the other hand, the present rule of priority from the right were maintained at roundabouts, that flow would be seriously interrupted, as traffic turning to the left would have to stop twice on the circle, instead of once before it. Dr. Addae-Mensah goes on to say that "in most countries where driving is done on the right... one is expected to give way to traffic on the right," but admits that this is in fact an illogical rule. The new Code, quite rightly again, does not suggest such a rule; it simply demands to follow the rule where priority regulations are marked on the road surface or by signs, and otherwise demands of the driver to be careful and use his common sense, giving way to ALL traffic when coming to what is obviously a major road. As a matter of fact most junctions in the country are clearly marked, and I trust that the necessary alterations in these markings will be made before 4th August.

In countries with a long tradition of driving on the right the rule of priority on the right has indeed to some extent survived, but it is widely recognised as a dangerous one which has led to innumerable accidents which could have been avoided if motorists had used their common sense rather than relying on their "right from the right". Priority rules have been much under discussion in those countries, and in Holland for instance, a solution was found in the case of roundabouts by the simple rule that traffic on the circle has always priority over oncoming traffic, which in reality boils down to priority to traffic coming from the left, without stating so explicitly. To avoid confusion for foreign visitors to Ghana, a very simple solution would be to mark all access-roads to roundabouts as "give way"-roads; after the change-over all traffic on roundabout will come from the left. Roundabouts are excellent solutions to the problem of busy road junctions and lead much less to

congestion than traffic-lights. Dr. Addae-Mensah's suggestion to abolish them is defeatist and would be a great step back. That there are few roundabouts in most European cities is mainly because there is no space for them, not because they are considered intrinsically "bad"! I do agree with the author in his criticism of press, radio and TV: I think that it is high time that they "speak up" on this matter of priority.

History Department

A. Van Danzig

Legon

Onward With the Revolution — Rejoinder

SIR — Mr. Y. Amefia Opoku has said it all (L.O. IX/10) and at length. And I agree with him.

The "news" was all repeated ad nauseam on G.B.C. too! My mother loved cocoa as a beverage. She just would have nothing else — not even Twinning's tea. And then she had to die before this revolution!

The subject-matter does remind me of this dictum of Soren Kierkegaard's: "Men ask for freedom of speech: God gave them freedom of thought but they do not use it".

P.O. Box 6319

E. S. Aidoo

Accra-North

Strategy For Inducing Cocoa Processing Factories to Locate in Ghana — Rejoinders (2)

SIR — Writing in L.O. IX/9, A. N. Hakam made an interesting proposition on how we can get cocoa processing factories to locate in Ghana. In a nutshell, Mr. Hakam proposed that we should reduce the local price of raw cocoa and this will mean that manufacturers will be attracted here because of possible high profits.

There is no doubt that such economic considerations play very important part when a company is contem-

plating an investment in a developing country like Ghana. But it is becoming clear that economic considerations are not doing the trick. In fact economic considerations are very ineffective. One does not need much research to confirm that investments are moving to South Africa, Rhodesia and Israel. The question is: have these countries extraordinary economic advantages? If no, why should they receive more investment than others?

The question of international or foreign investment is very complex. Writing about Nestle' Dr. Max Gloor stated, "Nestle' has been forced by protectionism, nationalism and other isms of the various governments to decentralise industrially so that today our goods are manufactured in more than 220 factories".

Adding to the complexity in these days are political and economic blocs with virtually impenetrable tariff walls. For example, can we readily export our made-in-Ghana chocolate into E.E.C. countries?

To my mind, if we want these processing companies to settle here, our best strategy may not be the reduction of the price of raw cocoa. In these days, investments move after hard bargaining and agreements arrived at on a background of political stability, strong and honest leadership and strong but disciplined unions. In effect investments move only when risk is minimised and when nationals demonstrate in practical ways that they need the investment.

1102 Kaneshie

S. Sagoe-Nkansah

Accra

SIR — In a recent article in L.O. IX/9, A. N. Hakam outlines a strategy for inducing cocoa processing factories to locate in Ghana. He does not however mention explicitly a very important factor militating against the success of his strategy: namely the tariff structure imposed by many cocoa-consuming countries. Typically, the consuming countries impose tariffs on cocoa products (paste, butter, powder) which are two to three times the rates imposed on cocoa beans. For example, the European Economic Community external tariff rates were 5.4 per cent for cocoa beans, 15 per cent for paste, 12 per cent for butter and 15 per cent for powder. This tariff structure gives a very high effective rate of tariff protection on value added to cocoa processing industry in the consuming country and makes it very difficult for the cocoa products processed in countries such as Ghana to penetrate the market.

Considerable pressure has been placed on consuming countries to end this tariff discrimination, and this pressure has been at least partly successful. The EEC for example allows imports duty-free from overseas associated countries (Ivory Coast and Cameroun) and Britain has liberalized imports of cocoa products. However tariff discrimination against processed products is still sufficiently widespread to merit careful attention in formulating a cocoa strategy for Ghana. Iran the example used by Mr. Hakam with its nearly superfluous foreign exchange earnings can afford to have superfluous losses in the short run in exchange for longer term gains, but can Ghana?

P.O. Box 74

B. E. Rourke

Legon

GHANA MUSEUMS AND MONUMENTS

EXHIBITION ON TRANSPORTATION

The Museum of Science and Technology (M.S.T.) is organising an exhibition on Transportation. Some of the exhibits will be used for assembling a permanent gallery on Transportation in the new building of the M.S.T.

We hereby appeal to the public to assist us in tracing interesting historical means of transportation.

Any person who knows the whereabouts of, or has come across, or is in possession of a bicycle, a motor cycle, a car or any other means of transportation which dates before 1930 should, please contact the Assistant Keeper-in-Charge at the Museum of Science and Technology, or write to him at P.O. Box 3343, Accra, or telephone Accra No. 23963.



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Adverts in The Legon Observer

SIR — It is bad enough that nowadays a 24-page issue of your journal sometimes contains as many as ten pages of advertisement, but when the content of these adverts is in bad taste as well, or is offensive to decent citizens then somebody has to make a protest.

In recent weeks and months, your paper has advertised **Rest-House facilities** (See L.O. IX/10 p.223), **Cattle Semen** (L.O. IX/4 p.86) and a certain brand of **sanitary pad** (L.O. IX/2 p.42). And as for that toilet roll, what can one say about it when the item has even featured in an editorial comment of yours?

But seriously though, Mr. Editor, it may well be that you need these adverts to remain in business, but, couldn't you possibly be more discriminating? Surely this current indulgence in squalid advertisement can do your paper no good. And what are we to expect next — an advert from a magician who restores, for only a modest fee, missing vital organs? Really, Mr. Editor, you are concentrating below the belt, aren't you?

136/4 Market Circle
Takoradi

Effie Hinson

Santrofi And The Professors of Literature

SIR — Your correspondent, Santrofi's comparison of prostitutes with professors of literature was ingenious and humorous but profoundly unjust. Santrofi thinks these two groups of persons are similar in as much as they both make a living out of activities which others perform for pleasure only. The fact, however, is that in teaching literature, these professors are helping to improve literary taste and also ultimately helping to raise the standard of a nation's literary output. Their position is that if literature is desirable or even important then it should be produced well, and people should know how to enjoy it. Can the same be said for a prostitute: does she say that if sex is important then...? I suspect she doesn't have these altruistic intentions, or if she has them, they arise in spite of herself.

But perhaps Santrofi is right in one respect: I suspect that both the prostitute and the professor of literature would readily agree that it is extremely agonising and painful to make a living out of pleasurable activities, for if you are in such a position everybody seems to think she or he can do your job better than you, and this may in fact be the case.

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Cape Coast

Kweku Blankson

IT PAYS TO ADVERTISE
IN THE
LEGON OBSERVER

Matters Arising

ON A FUTURE CONSTITUTION FOR GHANA

By

S. O. Gyandoh Jr.

THIS year's Danquah Memorial Lectures will very likely go down in history as the most controversial in the series so far. His Excellency Mr. Joe Appiah, Roving Ambassador and the Guest Lecturer for this year's series, has managed to attract controversy over the lectures by choosing to give free and sometimes painfully blunt expression to some personal views of his on a future Constitution for Ghana. There is some evidence already, as I shall try to show, that the central message that ought to be inferred from Mr. Joe Appiah's "reflections" has not been accurately grasped by some. This can be injurious to the good of Ghana, for the necessary debate that the "reflections" should generate might proceed by sheer default, along largely irrelevant lines, and thereby result in faulty conclusions on the type of Constitution that will best serve our needs as a country.

I would like to enter an initial caveat that my task for the moment is not to evaluate Mr. Joe Appiah's proposals or to suggest my own proposals, constructive or otherwise, for a future Constitution for Ghana. I am simply trying to understand Mr. Joe Appiah correctly, and to suggest some hopefully fruitful lines along which purposeful thinking — on a future Constitution for Ghana may properly proceed.

The Westminster Model

If I get him correctly, the central message of Mr. Appiah's "reflections" is that, as a nation, we may well have miscalculated in reasoning, expressly or by implication, that the Parliamentary Democracy of the Westminster model is the form of government best suited to the needs of our young country. This is buttressed by a number of collateral observations and arguments. One such critical observation is that "the suitability or non-suitability of the wholesale adoption of this so-called Western form of Parliamentary Democracy was never canvassed" because our education and long association with the British prevented us from embarking upon a conscious search for a Constitution of our own making. Now, this is not the first time this observation has been made. The observation was advanced, in substantially the same form, to justify the adoption of the first Republican Constitution of 1960. Since 1960, then, we cannot hide behind the alibi that our Constitutions have not been of our own making. We deliberately chose to experiment with the form, though not the substance, of 'Western Parliamentary Democracy' under both the first and second Republics. That both failed us miserably should rouse us to the perfectly respectable speculation that, perhaps we need to take a fundamental and close look at our past traditions, our basic character as a nation, and our values, and critically examine the root causes of our failures. Only then can we start afresh in our search for a viable system of constitutional government.

There is no humbug in all this. Candour should compel us to admit that Mr. Joe Appiah's observations on what went wrong with our adoption of Parliament-

ary Democracy cannot be lightly dismissed. It is substantially true that the 'Majority' in Parliament under both regimes "behaved as though Parliament had (suddenly, by the simple process of a counting of heads) become their private property." Thus, under the First Republic, the 'Majority' blatantly passed laws to increase their majority in Parliament through the guise of granting representation to women, as if women were disqualified by law from seeking election. Again, the 'Majority' simply passed laws to re-elect themselves into office as Parliamentarians. Examples could be multiplied, but this is not necessary for our purposes.

Under the Second Republic, too, the 'Majority' astounded sober-minded and ordinary decent citizens by the alarming frequency with which Bills were presented under Certificates of Urgency, as if the Constitution had commanded that that was the normal method of bringing laws into being, rather than an exceptional and extraordinary method to be used only in cases of genuine urgency.

Back to our Roots

It is also true that under both regimes the constitutional conventions that go hand in hand with the practical working of "Parliamentary Democracy" were abandoned. This may have been by design, or default. I prefer to believe that it was the latter, just out of respectful charity to those entrusted with the reins of Government under both regimes. This, however, does not absolve either group from direct responsibility for disregarding the spirit, if not the letter, of the respective Constitutions under which they operated. It is in this sense, I believe, that Mr. Joe Appiah finally observes that the Constitution "was violated at will and with impunity under both regimes."

So much for facts. And, it is on the basis of these facts that Mr. Joe Appiah enters upon speculations as to our best chances for success in the crucial matter of devising institutional strategies for the governance of ourselves. He prefers to counsel our going back to our roots, rather than continuing to toy with the familiar but little understood (as the benefit of hindsight reveals) form of constitutional government generally labelled as 'Parliamentary Democracy.'

Mr. Agyare Koillarbi, on the other hand, seems to think that Mr. Joe Appiah's diagnosis of what caused the failure of our two notorious instances of experimentation with Parliamentary Democracy is somewhat faulty, and that we have not tried the system long enough to be in a position to say that it will not work on the admittedly foreign soil of Ghana. (L.O. IX/8). Mr. Koillarbi, as I understand him, would prefer to see a more diligent and more serious experimentation with a system that has proved so fruitful in other climes. Neither Mr. Koillarbi nor Mr. Joe Appiah, as I see it, directly questions on fundamental grounds, the acceptability, as opposed to the suitability, of the system of Parliamentary Democracy, to this country. The former is calling for the transplantation in this country of a system invented and nurtured elsewhere. The latter is calling more for the rediscovery of old indigenous doctrine than the invention of new.

These inferences that I have drawn are, in my view, easily supportable by reference to the essential contents of the two essays to which I am reacting in this short article. We begin with Mr. Joe Appiah's essay in

'Reflections.' His central thesis is clearly articulated in these words:

"In my view, any attempt in this direction (i.e. of re-examining 'the quality of our past efforts') must proceed on the well-laid proposition that, as a people, we have certain time-honoured traditions and institutions by which our sires of old regulated their lives, long before the establishment of the Whiteman's hegemony in these parts." Guided by this basic proposition, Mr. Joe Appiah suggests the establishment of the office of Executive President, i.e. Head of State of Government (by whatever name called), who will be "the common Father of all Ghanaians". The Father's immediate 'councillors'—Ministers and Principal Secretaries—should all share collective responsibility for results with him. Mr. Joe Appiah's idea of group or sectional representation by well-known national institutions in the Cabinet is presumably aimed at broadening the base of the Executive authority. And since the Executive Branch is, in essence, an implementing agency, rather than a policy-making one, I do not see that any unpleasant administrative lock-jaws can result from this suggestion, as is feared by Mr. Koillarbi. I can, however, see that the list of institutions to be represented in the councils of Government will have to be carefully circumscribed, to prevent unwieldiness of the Cabinet and generally to make for effective and expeditious execution of policy. Again, the selection of individuals from identifiable institutions within the community should be such as would ensure that those selected share the broad policy preferences of the Executive President and his immediate lieutenants or "councillors."

Government by Consensus

In his proposals on the law-making agency of Government, Mr. Joe Appiah shows legitimate, even if somewhat exaggerated, concern for ensuring general consensus on legislation. We may disagree with the suggested details for ensuring broad consensus, but I believe the principle is worth stating, for the purpose, at least, of generating informed debate. As Mr. Koillarbi rightly points out, the notion of Regional Assemblies might very well tend to be divisive, rather than unifying, and both Mr. Appiah and Mr. Koillarbi, as I read them, favour institutions that would conduce to unity rather than 'divisiveness'. So it is a matter of working out the details.

Finally, in keeping with his concern for government by consensus, Mr. Joe Appiah suggests a firm guarantee of human rights as contained in the Charter of Human Rights and the mandatory appointment by the nation's Father of an Ombudsman. The first of these suggestions pre-supposes an active and fearless role for the judiciary; and the second subsumes a healthy realisation that no matter how tightly a Constitution is fashioned to procure good government and probity in public affairs, there always are going to be instances of abuse of power or maladministration of the type which the Courts, and even Commissions of Enquiry are ill-fitted to deal with.

Mr. Koillarbi's reservations about Mr. Joe Appiah's 'reflections', as outlined above in skeletal form, proceed from what I suspect is a deep-seated instinctive enchantment with Parliamentary Democracy as perhaps the most ideal form of government. I think he largely

succeeds in demonstrating that so far as Ghana is concerned, the failure of Parliamentary Democracy in our successive experimentations derives from abuse of the system rather than any inherent defects in the system itself. On this point, most of us, including Mr. Joe Appiah, would agree. Attempts at apportioning blame, as between those who were entrusted with the reins of government under the First Republican Constitution on the one hand and under the Second Republican Constitution on the other, are, for this reason, beside the point. The fact is that neither repository of power did a particularly good job of the public trust reposed in it. True, Mr. Koillarbi disagrees with Mr. Joe Appiah as to the extent of infidelity to the letter and spirit of the Constitution actually exhibited by the C.P.P. and the P.P.—the two dominating political parties which have formed governments in this country since Independence. But, he does not, expressly or by necessary implication, deny that both parties were guilty of a measure of corruption or abuse of the system of Parliamentary Democracy handed down to us at Independence. Indeed, he is at pains to point out, what went wrong with the two major constitutional experiments.

Mr. Koillarbi's reservations about the value of institutional representation does not go so far as to take issue with the central message in Mr. Joe Appiah's proposals on this matter—namely, the need for a broadly-based Executive Authority, the key members of which share the same policy preferences.

Rediscovery of Old Doctrines

What has not been too clearly brought out, either in Mr. Joe Appiah's 'reflections', or in Mr. Koillarbi's critique, is the issue of the acceptability, in the light of our experience, of Parliamentary Democracy as a form of government. This critical issue can only be properly posed in the form of a national self-assigned task after the type of exercise in rediscovery of old doctrine of indigenous origins which I see Mr. Joe Appiah as advocating.

I believe that, taking our recent Constitutional history as our guide, it is better to call for a rediscovery of old doctrine, as Mr. Joe Appiah does, than to counsel repeated trial with a system that does not appear to have much hope of successful transplantation, as is preferred by Mr. Koillarbi.

I believe, however, that the voyage of rediscovery must be combined with intense assessment of the acceptability or otherwise of the system of Parliamentary Democracy, given our peculiar local customs, traditions and values. To canvass the suitability or otherwise of this system is to my mind, to discharge just a fraction of this burden. For it is all too deceptively simple to infer non-suitability of the system for our purposes of governance simply from our failures spanning the historically insignificant period of less than two scores of years. We should decidedly guard against such rash conclusions, seeing that it took the British some six centuries to evolve their present system, which was achieved only after a long period of toil and bloodshed, interspersed, significantly with eleven years of direct military cum puritanical rule without Parliament. The general point being made is that, even the most casual acquaintance with the constitutional history of the British, American, German and other Parliamentary

Democracies should teach us that this type of system makes enormous demands on human tolerance and is, generally, an extremely difficult system to operate in complex as in simple societies. We should, therefore, not embark, starry-eyed, on a search for the refinement of such a system unless we are prepared to take a long jump into an unknown, uncharted and dark territory.

Not too long ago, a certain gentleman, born and bred for the greater part of his youth in this country, wrote a book entitled "Africa in Search of Democracy." The basic assumption of this beautifully written book was that somewhere in the universe, it is possible to identify the ideal form of government, which might loosely be described as Western Parliamentary Democracy, with respect for human dignity as its touchstone, and that Africa should be striving after this ideal form of government. Nearly three centuries before the offer of this proposition an illustrious English Poet, Alexander Pope, had expressed in verse his disdain for forms of government, arguing ultimately that in matters of government, the end-result of good government justified the means:

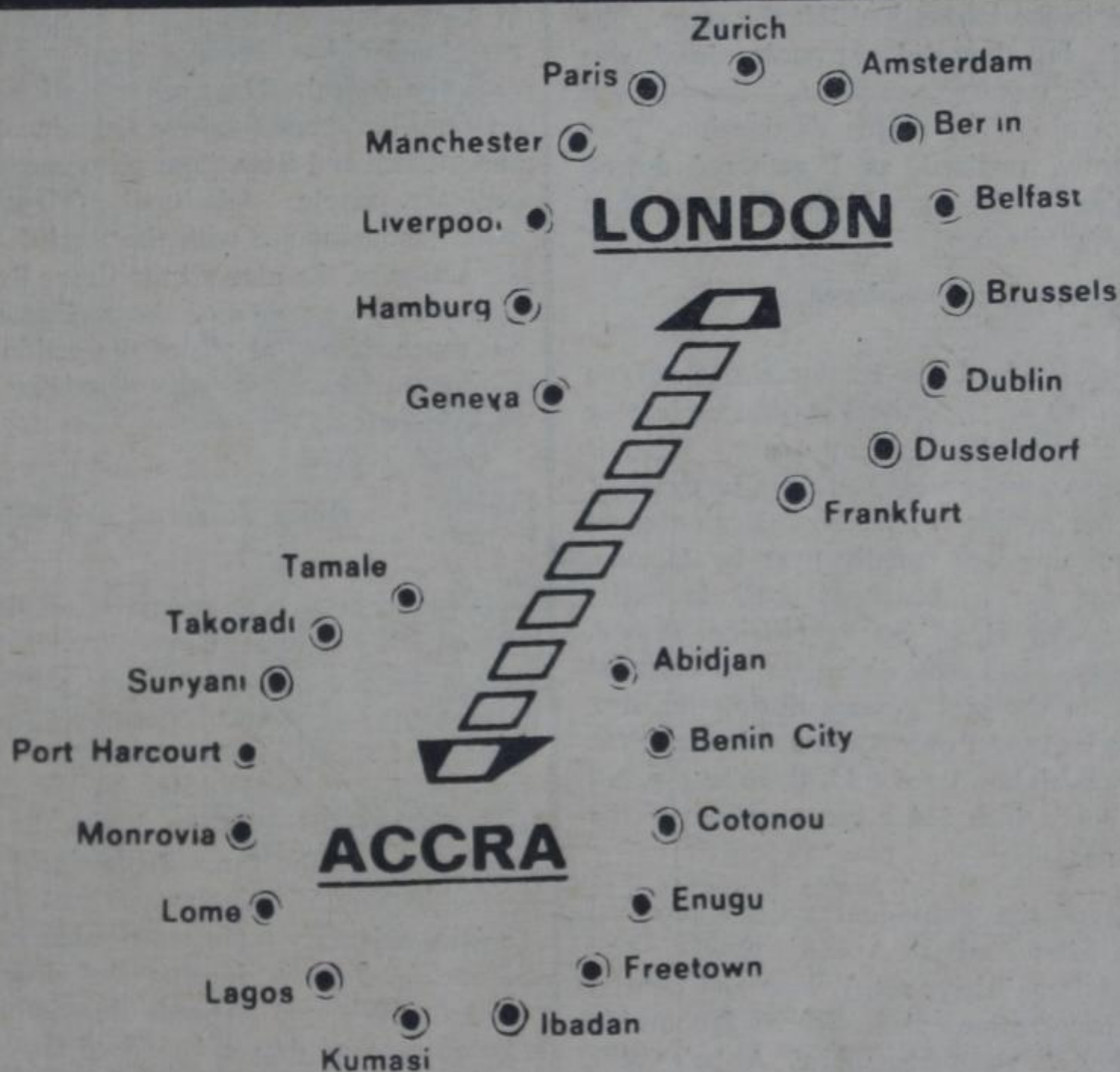
"For forms of government let fools contest,
What'er is best administer'd is best."

I am convinced that neither of these polar views will be of much enlightened guidance to us in our search for institutional governance of ourselves. We are more likely to make a meaningful and progressive headway, if we start from the proposition that our fathers and fore-fathers have passed on to us certain values, customs and traditions which die hard, and, in the light of our dramatically changed physical conditions, including our experiences with colonial government, we need to add new dimensions to our conception of government, without departing too violently from our inherited customs, traditions and values. The idea of a Presidential Executive, who chooses the top men who should help him govern, appears an eminently sensible choice in this regard.

The Yendi Affair

The recent Yendi deskinment affair, in which the Government has sought very wisely in my thinking, to restore established custom, including the right of the Ya Na, occupant of the paramount skin, to choose the persons to occupy certain designated minor skins, should be an eye-opener to those who want to think seriously about constitution-making for our country. It is also worth noting that the Government decision was not taken until a Commission of Enquiry, to which all interested parties made their views known, had thoroughly investigated the custom surrounding enskinment, deskinment and other incidents of these processes. All this should sharpen our awareness of the need to pay due deference to local customs, traditions and values when addressing ourselves to the crucial matter of fashioning a viable and permanent Constitution for our governance. Furthermore, we should raise fundamental questions about the acceptability, or otherwise of a borrowed system with which we have good reason to be disappointed. One of the first of these questions may well be this: Have we not got any ideas of our own making on how to structure a governmental system based on the consent of the governed and a deep respect for human dignity?

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Viewpoint

"HASSAN"—A Rejoinder to A Review

By
K. Egyir

SINCE Miss Laura Amissah-Arthur's very frank and constructive review in LO IX/9 of the presentation of Elroy Flecker's *Hassan* by the Ghana Playhouse, there has been a second running of the play at the same venue as before, the Arts Centre.

It must gladden the reviewer's heart to learn that for this second running further cuts were made in the script along the lines she suggested. The Producer managed to retain the basket though and so night after night four heavy-weights rode clumsily in it to Rafi's hideout. On Friday we saw in action the fear implied in Miss Amissah-Arthur's criticism of the basket idea. *Hassan* who was supposed to be unconscious fell from the basket as he was about to be pulled up. Meanwhile, Ishak who put him in the basket had left the stage. The actors were in a fix, but they did not panic. Ishak was called back on to the stage to everybody's hearing and with his help *Hassan* arrived at his destination. Not everybody, apparently, realized, as I gathered during the interval, that there had been a hitch. So much then for a successful improvisation.

Encouraging Attendance

It is not known whether the Producer decided on the cuts in response to Miss Amissah-Arthur's piece or whether he was going to do so in any case. What is certain is that the cuts were most welcome to those of us who had seen the earlier production. Beginning at 8.30, the second running was usually over by 11 p.m. leaving enough time for a round of one's favourite beverage at Ambassador Hotel before retiring to bed. The Producer himself had something to be pleased about: in contrast to the empty seats during the first running, attendance was most encouraging this time. On each of the last three nights, I am told, there was a full house and the audience included a cross-section of the dignitaries of Ghana.

The performance of the individual artistes received ample comment in Miss Amissah-Arthur's review. The designers of the very imaginative set, Wilson and Hinson according to the programme, also deserve favourable comment. Nor should we forget Paul Aliba's very fascinating lighting of the stage. The background music left you in no doubt you were in Arab land. But what shall we say of the costumes? Except in the case of the beggars, the rest of the costume hardly matched the characters. One expects to see at the Caliph's court real wealth reflected in the garb of every one present. But to achieve this, one imagines that the coffers of the Playhouse must themselves reflect wealth.

It now remains to consider the nagging question posed by Miss Amissah-Arthur: why this play? One suspects from the context of the review that Miss Amissah-Arthur is saying no more than that poor attendance should not surprise anyone if it is *Hassan*. But is it possible that she is asking a different question altogether, namely, why *Hassan* in an African theatre? Some of

her readers appear to have understood her to be asking the latter question. One does indeed hear questions of this sort a lot these days: Why Chopin? Why the King's College choir? Why Greek and Latin? Latterly, why potatoes? The questions are often so put as to suggest one of two things: either the person indulging these "quaint" tastes is a saboteur of the national effort towards self-reliance and cultural authenticity or a lunatic or possibly both. To establish the contrary, one is expected to defend and explain how very relevant to the African situation the particular activity is etc. In all frankness, the more proper answer to the type of question under discussion is "why not?"

The prime purpose of theatre is to entertain. To provide entertainment that will be appreciated one must choose not only such material as the production staff and the artistes can handle but also one that is suitable for the audience one has in mind. If local material can be found, so much the better. Failing local material, foreign material could suitably be adapted. But no apology need ever be offered for presenting on the stage a totally alien play in its entirety without any attempt at adaptation. It should be enough that the particular presentation has some appeal—*aesthetic, intellectual ... some appeal*: *Hassan* has a gripping story-line based on familiar themes—love (genuine and false), tyranny and cruelty and how these phenomena affect the lives of ordinary people. Admittedly, it requires more than a casual acquaintance with the English language to follow the action of the play all the time. But judging from the enthusiastic response of the audience night after night, not much, if any at all, of the action was lost on them. Evidently, therefore, the Producer had chosen his material well.

Other Forms of Entertainment

It would be a pity though if all the nation was ever treated to was the *Hassan*-type of theatre. Happily, this is not the situation. Every Saturday afternoon, the Arts Centre becomes "Anansekrom" and features a variety of theatrical entertainment with the "Concert"-type drama predominating. Anyone can see from the amusement column of the dailies that the villages have their share of the fun. Professional "Concert" parties are with them all the time. Thanks to T.V. and Osofo Dadzie, sedentary types are not left out of the fun. And of course there is dancing and drumming at durbars, local festivals and funerals throughout the year. The *Hassan*-type of drama is indeed the only one which is not adequately represented on our stages. Fortunately or unfortunately, some of us have acquired a taste for this type of pastime and we are grateful for the infrequent occasions that we have the chance to indulge it. We should have more of it and some Chopin too! Apart from gratifying our "quaint" tastes, our musicians and playwrights thereby get the opportunity of acquainting themselves with other varieties of their own art.

For the record, *Hassan* was first presented in the country some thirty years ago by Achimota School under the direction of Jack Andrews and Professor Mawere Opoku. We should be grateful to the Arts Centre, The Ghana Playhouse and the Producer, George Wilson, for reviving a play so hilarious even if tragic in parts. One hopes one has not seen the last of it yet.

SWING

WITH THE RIGHT BEER



APRA

SWING with

TATA PILSENER BEER



Miscellaneous

Inside the Northern and Upper Regions

By

J. O. M. Pobee

(Continued from Vol. IX No. 4)

The journey to Gushiegu was only a day trip and by 16.00 hours we left by another route westward to Tamale via a not so good road but shorter one through Karaga and Pigu—the latter on the main Tamale-Bolga road. Karaga is a very important cattle centre: it needs abundant water all the year round to be provided by a dam which in turn would provide the green pastures for the cattle to graze on. Karaga could attain the importance which cattle ranches have in Texas of the United States of America. The Northern Development Corporation should “look into it” (apologies to Super OD of Osofo Dadzie fame).

We stayed the night in Tamale and on the next day the 1st January, hit westward through Sangpala, Yapei, Bsusnu, Damango, Larabanga and to the Mole Reserve.

Yapei is an important port of call and indeed the terminal port for the Volta River Transport launches that ply the Akosombo-Northern routes. It has the potentiality of being developed for sailing and fishing. Chalets will have to be built by the river side.

The Mole Game Reserve could be developed into something much better than it is at the moment. If the air transport to Tamale could be made cheaper for bonafide tourists and the road to the reserve tarred, it should attract tourists including Ghanaians. There is a lovely swimming pool at the hotel cleverly situated on a hill overlooking a splendid view. The accommodation units at the Rest House are very decent and the catering is good and cheap. One needs to stay for about three days to enjoy the trips around the game reserve. Unfortunately, we could stay only for a few hours. We had missed by a day or two the visit of three elephants right up to the swimming pool. We were not fortunate to see any lions but we did see antelopes and hatter-beasts. The latter are pleasant to watch galloping away. They blend cleverly with the vegetation around if they are standing still.

The one setback of the trip through the game reserve was the struggle with Tsetse flies. Something has got to be done about them. They feasted on our blood all right. And even now when I fall asleep at an unusual hour I start neurotic thoughts about Trypanosomiasis, the sleeping sickness.

We needed a day's rest to salve our aching bones and sore flesh before we moved up to Bolgatanga on the 3rd of January. It was a good first class road. We made Bolga in next to no time, fixed up arrangements for spending the night there and then moved on to Paga the border town in the North.

The journey to Bolga saw us through Savelugu, Pong Tamale—a veterinary centre, Diari Pigu, Nasia, Walewale and Karamenga which is 83 miles north of Tamale and a border town of the Northern and Upper Regions. In a way it was nostalgic to see and cross the Nasia River which is the name of one of the ships of the Black Star Line. Walewale boasts of a G.N.T.C. Store which was a waste of everybody's time and attention. The Corporation must not be saddled with opening branches all over the place. They should work through agencies. Direct participation of this sort, must affect the profits it can get which could be ploughed

back in the form of reduced prices. The G.N.T.C. Store apart, Walewale boasts of Cafe de Africana; it was a welcome sight but we gave it a miss.

The Diare yam sellers know their onions. They knew that bargaining with the wife would be on a fair and equal basis, so they seductively came to me, the mug, to get me to buy the stuff. But rule one says buy nothing with your money when the missus is around, so they drew a blank.

Bolga is a pleasant town but the heat is nobody's business. One paradoxical observation in the North is that to have the fan on with the windows open is uncomfortable. It blows hot air. It is much cooler to shut the windows and shut off the fan! The heat in the north certainly causes thirst and invites one to beer, therefore it is almost criminal to find no beer available, as we did. The Catering Rest House serves very generous meals and the service is good. The one indispensable night life item which used to be missing has recently been supplied by the formation of the Uppers International Band which is the resident band of the Catering Rest House. This is a commendable case of administrative imagination. The band is a good one. I am not sure about the full implication of the word “International”, but it is good enough to have attracted that young and talented female teacher to be its leading singer. Education's loss is the gain of the night life of the Upper Region.

Bolgatanga

Bolga was gripped by market day fever when we got there. Tomatoes were cheap and in abundance. What we bought there had got cooked in the boot by the time we got to Tamale. That is a good enough indication of the severity of the heat experienced in the north. Yet another indication was the fact that for the first time in 2½ years the Peugeot 504 became super heated on the road from Bolga to Tamale in the lunch hour period.

Bolga afforded us the opportunity to visit a rice factory as well as the Bolga Meat Factory where we saw very large cattle, the like of which we had never seen before in Ghana, and which compared with cattle in Europe. The visit to the Veia Dam was also very rewarding.

The Veia Dam is the third largest dam in Ghana after the Akosombo dam in the Eastern Region, and the Barakese dam in Ashanti. It is at the moment irrigating 300 acres but its target is 3,500 acres of farm land. It is hoped it will be able to supply one and a half million gallons of water per day to Bolga and its environs. The land under cultivation looks green, contrasting with the brownish unattractive vegetation around. The young agricultural officer we met was full of beans (pardon the agricultural pun) and seemed to have a sense of mission which was very infectious. Ghana certainly needs such dedicated men to see her through her present difficulties.

Bolga showed us how Ghanaians must work if indeed we should succeed. The bungalow we were in was under repair and it was on contract to “A Lang”, I think. By 7.30 a.m. the workers had started work and were not just sitting around eating kenkey or taking “koko”. The contrast with the workers of another public organisation was such that a considerable case was made for private enterprise!

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The visit to Navrongo and Paga was too brief for any sensible comment to be made here. Navrongo has a population of 17,594 and is the seat of the Navropio whose palace is a treat to the eye. At Paga we got onto the act of enticing a crocodile out of the pond. Yes Ministers did it, Commissioners and humble ordinary people like us also do it—what's wrong? Our courage failed us when we were asked to touch the tail for the cameraman! The one cedi charged for a tiny chicken to feed the croc is, again, an undue liberty taken with our purse. It is highly arguable whether the chicken was indeed bought. I suspect it was swiped. But I must not let my delicate conscience get the better of me.

Back to Tamale on the 4th of January, we rested our wearied limbs for a day and then on the 6th retraced our steps back south. What were the high spots on this round trip covering 1,400 miles from Accra to Paga and back including the dashes to Gushiegu, Damongo and Nawuli, the water supply station of the Northern region?

It may well be that late December and early January was not the right time to visit the North. It was the beginning of the Harmattan. It was the dry post-harvest season. The stretches of brown and arid vegetation were everywhere. The rivers, rivulets and streams were drying or had dried up to beds of rock and mud. These aroused the feeling of despair and hopelessness. But all the same the visit has left us with very vivid and rather favourable impressions.

We left Accra thinking we were visiting the "poor" North, but I am not so sure now. The rice fields stretching hundreds of acres must have an impact on our economy. It is the more reason why bush fires must be prevented and made illegal to start with. It was heart-breaking to see such an event on the road to Damongo. Millet and Maize grow in abundance in the North. Then there is yam. And when we think of poultry, chicken and guinea fowls abound. As regards red meat we have a rich source in the cattle, sheep and goats and pigs which thrive well in the north. What we need is to turn the subsistence type of farming to big time business with the help of irrigation projects. So you see why in fact the north is really self-sufficient and can be the agricultural region supplying and satisfying all the requirements of Ghana and having some to spare for lands beyond the borders of Ghana.

The health facilities are woefully inadequate and the Missions, like in the Brong Ahafo region, play an important part. The isolation of hamlets and villages have its unfavourable effect on the provision of health facilities. Medical problems include cerebrospinal meningitis which is epidemic at times; chicken pox, measles and jaundice. It is not unusual for pregnant mothers to walk 10—15 miles to a clinic. And intoxication with native herbs for labouring mothers is a problem.

The North must have enjoyed its best years of education during the regime of the first republic. But this has had undesirable social consequences. There has been the inevitable exodus to the towns to seek work and high life. There has been the more southward immigration to Kumasi and Accra. So the elders have no young ones to help on the farms and they are disappointed. It is the experience in both the Northern region as told us by the chief of Gushiegu, and, as recently openly voiced out by the chiefs, in the Upper Region. Now they are reluctant to encourage the child-

ren to go to school and apparently there are many school places to be filled.

One great impression is that of fighting against great odds all the time. The administrator far removed from Accra with poor communication is fighting against great odds and must surely think Accra does not care at times. Let the rains come and the floods do their havoc in Kaneshie, Abossey Okai and Kpehe and everybody is on his toes. Let there be water shortage in Tamale and there is a feeling of apathy about it all at the Centre. It must have been the same for the Politicians. The long distances to be covered and the rough roads to be travelled should have been very discouraging.

Like other parts of the country, the North does have its interesting inscriptions and signboards. Of course there was **Allah** this and **Allah** that; and the inevitable **Nyame Bekyere** Chop Bar in Bolga which was in keen competition with the Catering Rest House. At lunch time there were more cars there than at the rest house. The face of the gentleman in tie coming out of the Nyame Bekyere Bar told a story of satisfaction and contentment. One car bore the inscription **What God Has Written**, and left readers to amuse themselves trying to complete the statement.

Can anyone tell me the meaning of **Oh Dunia** found on another lorry? That vehicle was carrying Salaga Real Republicans to Kwame Danso. I trust the Chairman of the Ghana Football Association has sent his scouts to all those areas. But the way the lorry was packed with people, the players would be more than tired before they started the match! One of the truest statements was that on another lorry, "Somebody teaches someone"; obviously, "We learn from one another is" too subtle for the guy's comprehension.

Too true was the inscription announcing "Who knows tomorrow!" Yesterday with its joys and sorrows we know and it is past. But indeed who knows tomorrow? But even though we do not know what tomorrow holds for us, another vehicle proclaimed loud and clear: "Yours is coming". Whether it was good or bad, we were left in the dark.

But the one shouting **Aboa Sika**, for all to hear, did no more than to underline the fact that "money is not everything" but that it is a damn useful thing to have in abundance. And if you did not have money you could not enter the "**Evening Shadows Night Club**" which we passed, or pay for the dress made at the "**Odo Nkoaa Tailoring Shop**".

Yes, if you had not the cedis you would agree with the sign which said "Men are suffering." The vehicle was being loaded with bags and bags of grain and the driver himself did not look as if he was suffering: if anything, the vehicle was.

But for me, the prize goes to **Fear Blackman**. I had only recently got over the one in Accra which proclaims **Modin Sane** (I leave the pronunciation of non-Gas to your imagination). Suffice it to say it means Blackman's Palaver or Problem. But **Fear Blackman** is a bit too much. It hits at the foundation of one's trust and faith in one's fellow blackman. That fellow should be brought before the Peoples Court to explain his treasonable statement. He is an enemy of the people. But perhaps he has had the experience of being done in by a blackman. Perhaps he is thus justified. So indeed does the black man prove as problematic in the North as he is South. Nevertheless, it was rewarding to be inside the Northern and Upper Regions.



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KONTOPIAATKROM REVISITED — V

JOE Boy, the uncrowned Prime Minister and Abakomahene (heir apparent to the skin) of Dompokrom listened to all this profound but drunken discussion of his ideas without uttering a word. The only thing that did convince us that he was taking in every word was the fact that though he did not drink even a calabashful of palm-wine, his eyes got redder and redder as the discussion progressed.

After we had stood up and called on all the 77 gods of Kontopiaatkrom to see that an Alafin was appointed in the not-too-distant future and had resumed our seat, Joe Boy cleared his throat as was his wont on an occasion such as this and got up obviously to hit back. However, before he could deliver his first blow, Kwame Kontopiaat who had slipped out in the course of the discussion obviously to make room for more palm-wine burst in and opened a new volley of attacks on Joe Boy. "If you do not see any difference between my two-year administration of the affairs of Kontopiaatkrom and that of the previous committee that took over directly from that white District Commissioner John, then you really must be sent to the Chief Priest of Kontopiaatkrom to have some purification rites performed on your behalf. At least we gave our beloved village pipe borne water; at least we never detained anybody, and what is most important, we never refused to go and cast lots for a new administration as the previous chairman and his council did on many occasions. That refusal on their part left us with no choice but to look to the seven Asafo companies of Kontopiaatkrom for redress! On your specific recommendation", Kwame continued, "I would like to point out that traditionally — the head of Kontopiaatkrom was not looked upon simply as a Father! He was our leader, our commander-in-chief, our chief priest etc. And considering the rate at which we have been changing governments in Kontopiaatkrom, your suggestion that the heads of the various departments of state should go with every committee will soon denude the civil service of Kontopiaatkrom of all its senior and experienced officers. I swear by Demo (Kofi Sabesabe as usual jumped up and plugged his ears) that will do us no good. And, dear Joe Boy, in what attire is the Executive President elect going to take his oath of office in all the wards of Kontopiaatkrom? Will he be in danta (loin cloth), pieto (pants), batakari (smock), Djokoto (a type of trousers, or Kyenkyen (bark cloth), and what food will be served on that occasion — tuo saafi, eto, fufu, garden eggs and okro stew, aboloo or akple? And most important of all, in what language will the President swear? No, we think this business of getting the President to swear the oath of office in all the quarters of the village will do more harm than good and will divide rather than unite the peoples of Kontopiaatkrom. If fufu were to be served, for instance, wouldn't the people of Ward C who think Tuo Saafi is the only sensible and revolutionary meal in Ghana boycott the whole function! And finally, Joe Boy, who ever told you that one of the traditional open methods of election was for people in the whole village or group of villages to file behind the man after their choice openly. We don't know what the people of Dompokrom are up to but never in the history of Kontopiaatkrom has any such method of filing behind a candidate been used! Candidates are chosen by the method of discussion and concensus, not by filing behind anybody! Joe Boy, it appears you read too much classics, and you

are obviously confusing what happened in the Greek city states with procedures in Kontopiaatkrom."

After this, it was agreed by all except Joe Boy that the trouble about his proposals is that they were based on wrong premises, that is, on a misconception of the really traditional ways of doing things. It was decided that Joe Boy should go and sit at the feet of the President of the Historical Society of Kontopiaatkrom for three months and then revise his proposals for our consideration.

Overwhelmed by the unanimity of the decision, Joe Boy in a brilliant display of real sportmanship and in the good old style, the style of the great African members of the Odikro's Council of the 1920's and 1930's said, "I concur." However, before permission could be given to him to take his leave, one other matter was brought up. This was raised by the President of the Historical Society himself. "Joe Boy", he stated, according to one Dompokrom saying, if one wants to deliver a message to God, one utters it to the wind, and since you, as the uncrowned Prime Minister of Dompokrom, are even more than a wind now, we have decided to give you this message, and that is about the fate of Kofi Kola's house which has been agitating the minds of so many citizens of the village for some time now. You see, the house is truly of great historical interest. It was the first two-storeyed building to be put up in our village, and so impressive was it that we called it "Hwe na Ampori", that is, be careful not to stumble and fall down for gazing too intently at it! It indeed became a big tourist attraction as citizens from Dompokrom, Cartmuttville and so on all poured in to see the house. But we now hear that it has been ordered that this historical monument is to be turned into a shrine for the treatment of certain categories of diseases.

"Moreover, Kofi Kola was the first scholar to be produced by Kontopiaatkrom. Indeed, he was the first person to obtain not only the London Matriculation, a very rare achievement those by-gone days, but also the B.A. degree, and ever since he has been spending a great deal of money collecting documents and books, and so much so that the house is more full of books than any other thing. The question then is what is to become of his books? And finally, Joe Boy, why did the Radio Active Committee not wait for the outcome of the palaver in connection with the assets not only of Kofi Kola but also of Kwame Kontopiaat and their colleagues. Does this rather premature action of confiscating somebody's property not constitute contempt of all the seventy-seven priests of Kontopiaatkrom who have been conducting these palavers?"

Joe Boy did listen to all this with every attention. (It is amazing what a good listener Joe Boy has become these days.) He, of course, denied that he is the intermediary between anybody and God, but he did offer to convey the feeling of the people assembled at the seat of democracy in Kontopiaatkrom to the National Radio Active Committee.

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Review

AFRICA IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

By

I. M. BARTON

Published by the Ghana Universities Press, Accra, 1973,
84 pp. Price: ₵2.50

Reviewed by

Gabriel Adeleye

THE book, as indicated in the introduction, embodies three lectures delivered by I. M. Barton, visiting Professor of Classics at the University of Cape Coast in the 1970-71 academic year. It deals with a subject which is increasingly attracting the attention of classical scholars and seems likely to appeal to those who are interested in Africa and its history. The author treats certain aspects of the ancient history of Africa, specifically the Roman provinces of Africa. The first province, the province of Africa, was acquired in 146 B.C. after the annihilation of Carthage, the African city which, under the leadership of the great general, Hannibal, threatened the very existence of Rome. There were three other provinces — Numidia and the two Mauretanias. These provinces became an integral part of the Roman empire enjoying the benefits of, and contributing to Roman civilization till the end of the seventh century A.D., when the Arabs deprived the empire (which had changed from the Roman to the Byzantine empire) of its African possessions.

Rome and Africa

The book is divided into three chapters. In the first chapter — Rome and Africa — Barton asks, and attempts to answer, two questions. First, he tries to ascertain why Rome annexed her first African provinces. After a careful examination of the evidence, he concludes that the annexation was necessitated by Rome's fear of a resurgent military power in Africa. He admits that the fear was irrational, but genuine. Secondly, the author tries to ascertain the benefits which Rome derived from her African provinces. The benefits are mainly military and socio-economic. With respect to the military advantage, which the writer considers less important, the African provinces served as the empire's best southern boundary (i.e. in conformity with the policy of establishing natural frontiers). There are three aspects of the socio-economic benefits. First of all, Africa was Rome's major grain supplier. The author illustrates the importance to Rome of Africa's grain by citing instances when political adventurers tried to use Africa's corn as a weapon. Secondly, Africa provided wild beasts — elephants, lions, panthers, leopards and bears — for Roman shows at the Amphitheatre. In this way Africa contributed in no small measure towards the satisfaction of the two great needs of the Roman populace, namely food and entertainment or, as the Roman would put it, *panem et circenses*. Finally, Rome found in Africa, with its extensive territory, land for the settlement of her surplus population.

In chapter two — Roman African — Professor Barton examines the benefits which the Africans derived from

their incorporation into the Roman empire. The benefits may be summed up in one word, namely Romanization. Like the European colonialists and imperialists of recent memory, the Romans brought their civilization to the African provinces. The spread of Roman civilization is evidenced by the adoption of Roman culture in the towns, such as Carthage, Lepcis Magna, Thysdrus, Utica, Cirta and Caesarea. These towns had paved streets, aqueducts, theatres, amphitheatres and public baths. Besides, Romanized Africans began to use the Latin Language. On the other hand, the author rightly points out that diffusion of Roman civilization is more noticeable in the towns than the countryside.

African Romans

In chapter three — African Romans — the author discusses the participation of Africans — Romanized Africans — in the political and cultural life of the Roman empire. In his treatment of Africans who held administrative positions in the Roman empire, he explains that this was made possible by the Roman practice of granting citizenship to non-Romans. He then proceeds to cite instances of several Africans who reached high administrative positions. These include (1) Aemilius Laetus, who held the post of praetorian prefect and managed to usurp the role of emperor-maker, (2) Lollius Urbicus, who held the post of city prefect — the highest senatorial office — and, to crown it all, L. Septimius Severus, who not only became an emperor but established a dynasty which lasted forty years. It certainly cannot be denied that Rome appears in a better light than most modern imperialists. Can anybody imagine an African Prime Minister of the U.K.? Nor were the contributions of Africans to the cultural life of the Roman Empire any less spectacular. The author refers to African mosaics and proceeds to discuss African — an African slave who was brought to Rome and subsequently manumitted — who composed comedies, modelled on Greek originals. Secondly, he mentions Suetonius, who wrote biographies of Julius Caesar and some emperors. Thirdly, there is Apuleius, a versatile writer whose writings include oratory, religious philosophy and a novel, *The Golden Ass* (which, incidentally, is recommended for entertaining reading). Finally, the author mentions Tertullian, Cyprian and Aurelius Augustine (popularly known as St. Augustine), all Christian writers.

Africa In The Roman Empire is a very fascinating book. The style is lucid and the material is well presented. There are no elaborate discussions of controversial points and no (or very few) strange expressions which are intelligible only to the specialist. But the absence of these features by no means impairs the authenticity of the information, for the author displays good knowledge of Roman history in general and the history of North Africa in particular. Another commendable feature of the book are the numismatic illustrations. It is a book which classicists, historians and those interested in Africa will find useful. Besides, the book reveals one aspect of classical studies which has hitherto received negligible publicity in Africa. It unmistakably indicates that the Classics, far from being a "useless and old-fashioned subject", can contribute to some extent to our understanding of ancient Africa.

BANDA by Philip Short

Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974

357 pp. Price: £3.50 (U.K.)

Reviewed By

YAW SAFFU

HASTINGS Kamuzu Banda, Life President of Malawi, and Life President of his country's only political party, is 70. But that is the official age. According to his biographer, he is 76. At that age, in accordance with the gruesome practice of prestige newspapers like the *Times of London*, his obituary would have long been commissioned, written and tucked away, to be retrieved occasionally from (one imagines) the "Advance Obituary File" for dusting and updating, until the day it is needed.

Regardless of the wishes of the obituary writer, Banda's place in his Malawi's recent history is guaranteed. Similarly, his name cannot be omitted from the story of Africa's post-war anti-colonial struggle. But in what terms will his secure place in African history be cast? Will he be remembered more as the messianic smasher of that settler-imperialist device for guaranteed exploitation, the Central African Federation, or more as the darling stooge of Verwoerd and his descendants and disciples in Southern Africa, for the sake of whose paltry crumbs he has reversed all his principles and tactics? Which will remain dominant: the image of the nationalist who kindled hopes and vistas of freedom when he led his country to independence, or the image of the politician who unleashed blinding terror and dictatorship in a 'pacification' of his own country? Banda is all of these contradictions.

The chief virtue of Philip Short's readable, uncomplicated biography is its balance. The bundle of paradoxes, the almost perverse inconsistencies that sum up Banda and his remarkable public career, receive continuous emphasis. Occasional attempts at a psychological explanation of them, however, are not only unsatisfactory, they are often redundant as well. The early part of Banda's life is interesting in itself, and not as an explanation of, as Short puts it, the "tortuous, tortured figure."

As Philip Short tells it, the outstanding asset of Banda as a youngman was his iron determination to acquire medical education. Although there are no figures to indicate how heavy the traffic on foot from Nyasaland to South Africa was fifty or sixty years ago, it is clearly an exemplification of enterprise and determination for a 17-year old to walk over 500 miles in search of education; to work for ten years as a hospital auxiliary and on South African mines, saving and studying all the while, as necessary steps towards the achievement of his ambition. The same diligence and determination, backed by piety, puritanism and luck (as when he met Aggrey who showed him the ropes for fund-raising for one's education) carried him through 12 years of successful and diversified academic pursuits in the United States. He emerged from there as the Nyasaland's second medical doctor. Three years after that in Scotland, and he emerged with three professional medical diplomas and the prestigious title of Elder of the Church of Scotland.

For the next 12 years, from 1941 to 1953, Banda achieved huge success as a family doctor in Liverpool, North Shields, and, particularly, Harlodesden, North London. At this stage of his life, his worldly success

and the genuine affection of his patients, his generosity and his philanthropy, and his increasing commitment to the political aspirations of his countrymen summed him up. Nyasaland politics with which he had never lost touch, but to which colonial intrigues had prevented him from returning after his qualification, now began to occupy a greater and greater amount of his time. In Nyasaland itself, the more the settlers pressed for the establishment of the Central African Federation, the more the Africans replied by organising.

Banda had to leave Britain in some hurry in 1953, largely to avoid publicity arising from an affair with his married Secretary. He came to Ghana to settle. He had known Nkrumah, whom he allegedly referred to as "my boy", because Nkrumah as a poor student in London apparently used to visit him in his bourgeois suburban home. Moreover, for anybody interested in colonial affairs and African emancipation, the early fifties were exciting times in Ghana. For five years, Banda lived and practised in Kumasi. For reasons which his biographer was unable to unravel, Banda's name was struck off the list of registered doctors in Ghana in 1958. Although it was reinstated a few months later, he had already made up his mind to leave for home.

However neither Banda's undoubted enterprise and achievement, his many degrees and diplomas, nor his experiences in the U.S., Britain and Ghana, necessarily presaged a successful political career. To explain that political career, one would have to adapt Gladstone's memorable phrase about Disraeli: Banda was at once the necessity as well as the curse of Chipembere, Chiume, Chisiza and others. The young graduates, building on African efforts going back several decades, had created an effective, nation-wide organization dedicated to confounding the knavish tricks of the imperialists and their settler kinsmen. All that was required was an elderly figure, the counterpart of the "Swing-man" in an otherwise youthful junta. Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda, Ph.D., M.D., L.R.C.P., L.R.C.S., L.R.F.P.S., was seen as a fulfilment of Chilembwe's prophecy. John Chilembwe, leader of the Nyasaland uprising of 1915, is said to have prophesied shortly before his death that some day there will arise in Nyasaland a greater man than himself who would deliver the people from their oppressors.

Banda was invited by these youthful organisers who handed their organization over to him without any conditions or guarantees. They built him up, not shrinking from comparing him even with the Messiah. Of course, sooner than later, they clashed with him: he remained, they had to flee.

The central task of every political biography is to trace the subject's climb to power, successful or otherwise; and, if successful, to analyse the use to which the power is put. This calls for an examination and assessment of the subject's resources, particularly his inner resources, his special talents. It also calls for an examination and analysis of the times and circumstances. Other, secondary but more difficult, questions concern those issues raised especially sharply by Marx in the Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon: What would have been different if the subject had never lived?

In terms of these criteria, Philip Short's biography of Banda is highly competent, but not brilliant.

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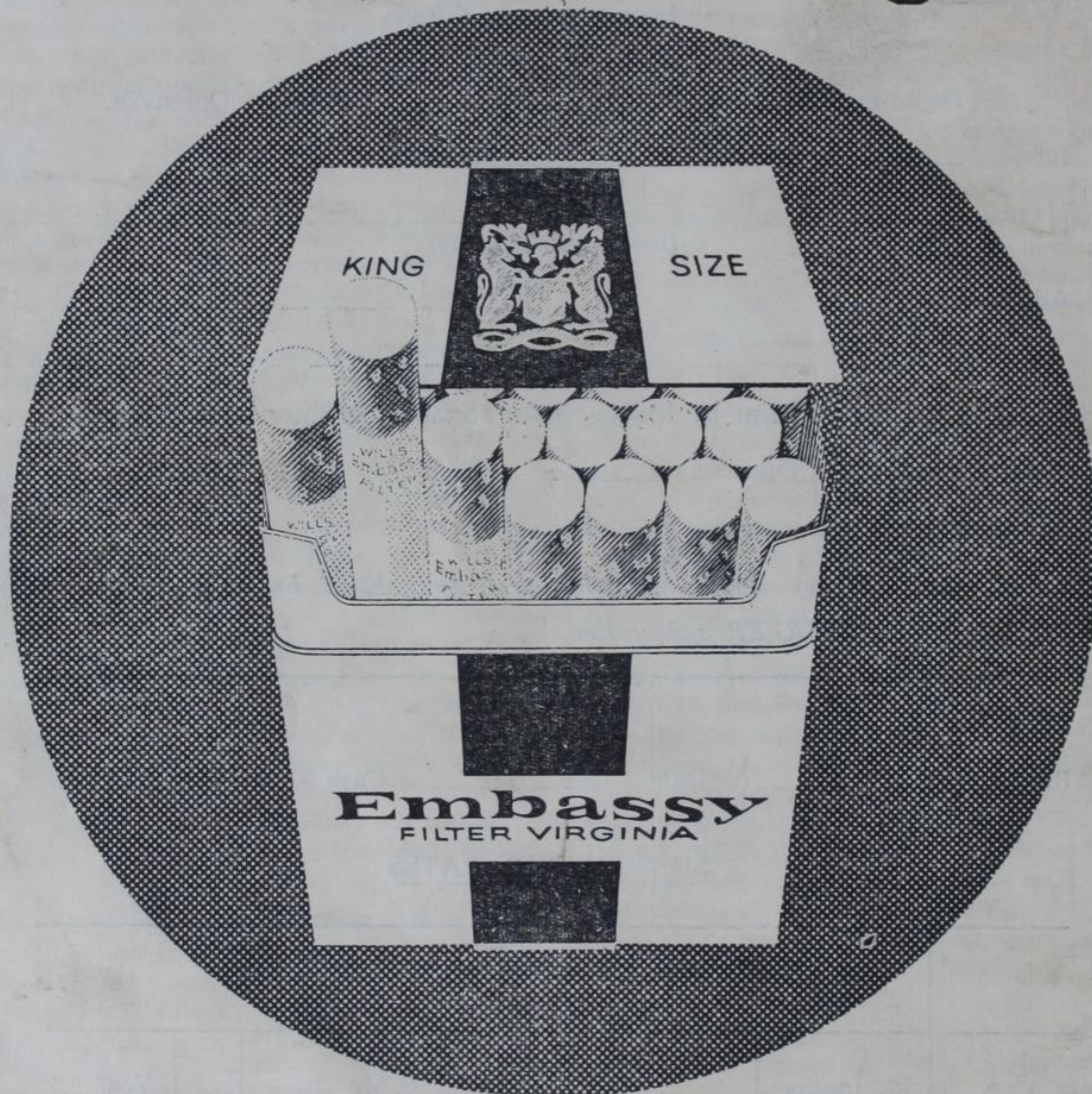
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