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Editorial

BULLYING IS NOT THE ANSWER

Lieutenant-General Akuffo's speech to the nation on Monday, 6th November was, like the one he gave on the political situation on July 31st, a terrible disappointment to many people. This last speech indicated purely and simply that the reconstituted SMC does not appear to understand the full dimensions of the problems facing the people of this country and that in consequence it has not the slightest clue about how to solve them. The SMC needs to be told bluntly that the stupendous problem of day-to-day survival for the vast majority of Ghanaians is one which calls for a realistic, sober and sympathetic appraisal and not one which should be approached with such threats as the general proffered in his radio and television speech.

We appreciate the fundamental need for industrial peace and harmony as an element in the search for enduring solutions to our economic problems and the need for sacrifices in hard times. Under normal circumstances, it is absolutely inexcusable for workers to flout the established procedures for settling industrial disputes and negotiating wage adjustments; even under extreme hardship it is utterly unpardonable for workers to resort to sabotage and other destructive acts to press their claims for better service conditions; when such wanton acts of vandalism result in the loss of life and property, they should be condemned for their mindless inhumanity.

This said, we hasten to add that it is only a very dishonest person who will pretend that we are living in normal times now. There is, of course, a machinery for settling industrial disputes, but as we stated in the first issue of the resurrected **Observer**, "in these days of galloping and almost uncontrollable inflation, the collective bargaining system appears to be too cumbersome and slow to deal expeditiously with urgent demands of impatient workers". If people are resorting to desperate measures to balance the equation of day-to-day survival, it is because the situation has become really desperate for the vast majority of people, though there is a tiny minority which has so cheated the system that they are not sharing in the mass suffering.

For a start, we would like the government to address itself to the question as to how we came under "the prohibitive pressures that are currently plaguing the economy". If it is prepared to face the issue squarely, it will realise that the criminal and irresponsible acts which have brought us to these desperate straits are not the making of all Ghanaians, and it is unreasonable to expect all of us to pay the consequences for the dishonesty, corruption and ineptitude of this unscrupulous and irresponsible minority of administrators, contractors, chit operators and bogus businessmen of all stripes. If we want to get to the root of our problems, then we should have the courage to recognise that the SMC (both Chapters I and II) is in fact, part of our problem. And a very major part of it.

For who was selling all our cocoa, gold and timber? And who was issuing import licences and all those chits to the semi-literate girls who became importers and contractors overnight? And who, in the full knowledge of our economic difficulties, sanctioned the ordering of BMW's and armoured vehicles for the Police Force? And who ordered the presidential jet in which Lt.-Gen. Akuffo just the other day flew to the Ivory Coast without much discomfort except possibly that of tightening his seat belt? To establish who was responsible for all this, we demand a probe into the financial administration of the country since January, 1972.

Since the SMC in the past has even claimed credit for acts of God like abundant rains and catches of fish, is it too much to ask them to accept full responsibility for all the acts of commission and omission under their rule and to account for their stewardship of the nation's affairs? We do not accept that former members of the military government who were known to be operating businesses directly or through their wives, relatives and other frontmen, or who were put in charge of the sale of flour, cement, iron-rods and other sundries should just be allowed to settle down into comfortable retirement as if nothing had happened. We demand that all such people should be thoroughly investigated in order to establish their contribution in the looting or mismanagement that has brought our economy to the rock-bottom level where it is now.

By their nature, probes take a long time for their findings to come out. But there are cases in which it may not be necessary to await the completion of the whole exercise. Where there are glaring instances of extremely odd and dubious happenings such as are suggested by recent reports from some of the probes in progress—like the practice of shipping large quantities of cocoa not covered by proper documents—it should be possible for the government to take immediate steps to establish what precisely happened and to take appropriate and decisive action. When such things are done, they can dispel a feeling which may well arise that probes may be used as a convenient excuse for shielding unpleasant but necessary decisions. They will also assuage tempers because there is righteous anger in the hearts of people who feel that those whose criminal conduct or sheer irresponsibility has brought about the present hardships are getting away too lightly and managing to weather the storm too comfortably.

In his recent statement, General Akuffo made great play of the allegation that "the plight of the workers is being exploited by aspiring self-seeking politicians, foreign agents and aggrieved businessmen who fear possible exposure by current probes, and some disgruntled elements in labour and management leadership". The impression that the general tried to create is that the recent wave of industrial unrest was a result not primarily of the economic hardship of the times but of the machinations of certain interest groups. We would like to believe that a statement of this kind is not made by a responsible government without having some substantial and concrete evidence to sustain it. If such people do exist, since the ordinary suffering people

are in no position to deal with them, we expect the government which presumably knows them to have the capacity to deal with them.

This country has for a long time lived through the experience of difficulties of the nation being blamed on some vaguely identified groups which become convenient scapegoats. Is it being suggested that Ghanaia are not intelligent enough to complain of hunger until they are instigated to do so? We want to know those who are allegedly fomenting the discontent; but if the government thinks that giving such information will jeopardize the measures it may be contemplating to frustrate the attempts of these groups, it can withhold the information, but we expect it to take the necessary action against them.

All this comes back to the question of who is responsible for the present difficulties. Whether the matter is one of sheer maladministration and naked corruption, or the intrigues of some malicious groups, not all of us have contributed to this and there is no earthly reason why we should all be expected to suffer. We are not prepared to suffer gratuitously for the wrongdoers of today or the irresponsible ones of yesterday.

Whichever way you look at it, the ball is squarely in the government's court. The stark reality is that people are suffering, and unless the government takes realistic measures to ensure that those who have exploited and are still exploiting the general public are permanently neutralised, invoking special powers—which the military government already had anyway—to cow us into silence will not solve the problem or make it go away. It only betrays a pathetic bankruptcy of ideas. This is no time for bullying or quixotic muscle flexing. This should be the time for sober reflection and the beginning of the gigantic economic and moral clean-up operation that we so badly need in this country.

Economy

WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE CEDI

By

Albert Van Dantzig

The problem in Ghana is that the Cedi seems to have ceased to provide a clearly defined standard: it has become quite common to hear people ask "what do you mean, official or black market rate? 'control' or 'kalabule' price?" Moreover, it is not always easy to draw the line between the one or the other: if a market woman sells a tin of milk for ₵1.20 instead of 35 pesewas it is generally called profiteering. But what about the state-owned GNTC selling bath-towels at ₵130.00 a piece? Are such prices, although openly displayed on price-tags, not calculated on the black-market exchange rate of the Cedi?

It is by now widely known that Ghana, the former Gold Coast, won this year's silver in the

international inflation contest. It is a curious coincidence that the gold medal went to the Land of Silver, Argentina. Inflation in itself need not be all that disastrous if it affects all in the same manner, i.e. if wages follow prices in their upward spiral. But what makes Ghana's particular form of inflation so unbearably unjust is that it is very selective, affecting some people much more than others.

Take the example of the tro-tro owner and his passengers: to the owner of the tro-tro, the Cedi which the passengers now pay instead of the three-pence coins which gave these lorries their name continues to represent a mere "tro", but to most passengers their Cedi remains fully 100 pesewas. Most of the passengers are likely to be wage-earners and cannot compel their employers to pay them more on account of the increase in tro-tro fares. But the tro-tro owner can compel his passengers to pay more on account of the increased cost of keeping his vehicle running. Ghana's "hyperinflation" does not only mean £40 for an "American" tin of sugar, which was sold for 50 pesewas a few years ago, it also means that an uneducated but young and attractive "lady contractor" makes in one day more money than a well-trained senior clerk in a whole year.

"Chits for the Girls"

Why should Ghana be so much worse off than other countries in West Africa, whilst it is in fact one of the most richly endowed by nature? The root-causes may go very deep. The rot set in very shortly after independence, when under the influence of nationalism and scientific socialism Government became more and more involved in business. The higher the pitch of political rhetoric rose, the more international faith in Ghana's economy sank, and soon strict regulations had to be issued on foreign exchange and imports, which involved the establishment of a vast new Government bureaucracy and opportunities for corruption.

Corruption is, of course, nothing new or specifically Ghanaian; but in the last three or four years it has in fact assumed a character peculiar to Ghana known as "kalabule". It is a form of corruption which was openly sponsored by the executive and which found a fertile ground in an economy of shortages, artificial or real. If Nkrumah opened up vast new areas of "jobs for the boys", Acheampong's reign became the era of "chits for the girls". But Acheampong's most serious economic crime was probably his order to print millions of bank-notes in order to bribe Ghanaians into accepting "Unigov". The whole referendum episode, unsavoury though it may have been, has at least shown that there are limits to the extent to which Ghanaians can be bribed.

The news of July 5th has generally been received with the proverbial "sigh of relief", and indeed several of S.M.C. II's measures seem to enjoy truly popular support. But for the average wage-earner, the situation has become even more unbearable after the devaluation with a *de facto*

wage-freeze than it was under Acheampong. In fact it is surprising that there are so few strikes and that the strikers' demands are so modest in view of the fact that a high placed Government official publicly admitted that one cannot expect to get a decent meal for less than £15.

Considering that one decent meal per day is about the minimum a worker requires and that expenses on food should not exceed 50% of a worker's income, minimum wages in Ghana should therefore be in the neighbourhood of £900 per month! If during the last few weeks goods could still be offered for old prices because they had been bought at pre-devaluation rates, the game now seems to be up, and everywhere we see prices, including "control"-prices, double or treble.

The SMC's reason for not increasing wages is that it would lead to "spiralling inflation" and defeat the original purpose of the devaluation. The devaluation would have been worthwhile if it had made the Cedi a freely convertible currency. This would have put a stop to smuggling and currency trafficking, which still continue virtually unchecked. What we are left with is spiralling injustice and spiralling crime. In spite of the probes, the (relative) freedom of the press, the growing number of civilians in Government, the general feeling remains that "only the driver has changed" and that most of the racketeers of the Acheampong era are in fact still sitting pretty.

Obviously some major probes are needed in order to attempt to retrieve at least some of the cocoa pounds or timber dollars of which Ghana has been swindled in the last few years, but an attempt at probing irregularities at all levels would probably end in an interminable shouting match of mutual accusations. After all, by its public admission that it is impossible for most workers to survive on their wages, the Government seems to imply that it is cognisant of the fact that nowadays some form of irregular income has become a necessary condition for survival.

"Unigov Cedis"

It has been pointed out that in Ghana too much money is chasing too few goods that there is an urgent need to siphon off the excess amount of Cedis, in particular of the 'Unigov Cedis'. Indeed, the latter constitute a dangerous poison in the body politic, and any form of future civilian rule is likely to be subverted soon by groups controlling this ghost in its cupboard, if it is not removed in time. If the SMC is indeed serious about handing over to a civilian government, it should also perform, before doing so, the 'life-saving incision' needed to remove this poison. This would be an act of honour of a regime which need not worry about the popular vote or its political future.

The devaluation was necessary, we were told, "because the official exchange rate of the Cedi was no longer realistic". The present exchange rate is still quite different from the "realistic" black market value of the Cedi. However, it may be pointed out that as long as Ghana's monetary system hasn't been submitted to a thorough clean-up campaign, throwing the Cedi on the open currency market would be suicidal. One way of

solving the problem of excessive liquidity would be to declare all banknotes in circulation no longer legal tender by a certain date, and to allow the issue of a much more restricted number of new bank notes of a different design, setting a limit to the amount of old currency notes which can be exchanged for new ones by each individual. After this, another devaluation could perhaps achieve free convertibility for the Cedi.

If an entirely new currency were to be introduced, it might be sensible to let the basic unit, whatever it will be called, have a value of 20 pesewas. Certainly, the thrice devalued Cedi which was never seen on the open counter of a foreign bank has not brought much luck to this country. If the Cedi ever enjoyed national or international confidence, it certainly does not today. Changing to a new currency, especially one which can be exchanged on the international market, will probably be regarded by many as the turning of a new leaf in Ghana's economic history.

Introducing a New Currency

The cost of printing and coining an entirely new currency as well as that of the educational campaign which will be needed prior to its introduction is of course not negligible, but at least a part of it could be recovered by the melting down of the present over-valued coins. In the long run the advantages of a restored sanity in the whole financial system should of course justify this expense a hundred times.

If one of the main aims of introducing a new currency is at the same time siphoning off excess currency in the system (the Unigov Cedis), great care should be taken that the limited quantity of new currency gets into the right hands. Firstly, the period during which the old currency can be exchanged for the new should be limited to a maximum of about two weeks. Secondly, the amount of cash which each citizen over 15 years of age is allowed to change should not exceed C300 or whatever amount may be deemed sufficient for ordinary daily needs during the period of exchange. Thirdly, amounts in excess of this stipulated figure should be deposited into bank-accounts which should be open to scrutiny by authorised public officials and journalists.

Once the Cedi has ceased to be legal tender, the Central Bank can bring the necessary amount of new currency into circulation through the payment of wages and salaries. The scrutiny of private bank accounts may be a time-consuming affair, and the partial freezing of such accounts may be necessary. Special rules have to be made for companies in this respect. Ultimately, amounts above a certain level for which no proper account can be rendered may have to be taxed or even confiscated. It would of course be advisable to wait with the public announcement of such sanctions till after the date on which the Cedi ceases to be legal tender.

Of course, people with large cash holdings will do all they can to avoid such scrutiny. They will try to convert as much of their money as they can into durable goods and to find frontmen to change their Cedis. However, with the present

shortages it is difficult to buy anything, and nobody will be very keen to receive large amounts of Cedis which will soon lose all their value. On the other hand, as long as people can change their names at will and a proper address system remains virtually non-existent, all kinds of tricks can be played with ease.

Impersonation of various kinds in order to open more than one bank-account or to change more than the stipulated amount of cash during the exchange period will be very difficult if before that time everybody has been supplied with an identity card. Such an ID-card could be used for the exchange of the C300 and the deposit of excess Cedis. After that transaction the owner should leave his ID-card with the bank till the day on which exchange period ends. During the exchange period various amounts below the C300 mark could be exchanged and indicated on a tally-card with the same number as the ID-card, or otherwise added to the deposit account.

The issue of ID-cards is of course not new in Ghana, and many people oppose it, fearing that the card may be abused for political purposes. But it is common in several countries where they serve very practical purposes. For a new, and this time really effective ID-card campaign, a virtue may be made of a necessity. It has been suggested that a rationing system of essential consumer goods be instituted to obviate the present irregularities and injustices in the distribution of goods. Obviously, a rationing system can only work if each citizen entitled to coupon-cards can be properly identified by name, address, passport-picture and/or finger-print.

If the purchase of essential commodities against "control" price is made dependent on presentation of ID-cards much of the resistance against such cards may be broken. It is to be expected that soon some new life will be blown into the Local Government system. Local Government is of course best suited to deal with a new ID-card campaign. This time, the accent should not be on the acquisition of expensive and sophisticated machinery, but on unambiguous rules concerning change of name and a sensible address system.

Use of Identity Cards

It should be enough to formulate directives about the required measurements of passport photographs, and leave it to the prospective ID-card holder to supply them. Only for the very remote rural areas, where there are no photographers at all may it be necessary to send out some photographers to supply this service. Again, the issue of new ID-cards should be done countrywide within the shortest possible space of time, and each person should get a clear mark with indelible ink on his right thumb (just as was done on referendum day) at the time that he receives his ID-card, so as to make impersonation virtually impossible. Finally, the cards should have a limited period of validity.

Many people now agree that Ghanaian society badly needs a thorough clean-up. Ghanaians often have the strange habit of trying to convince

themselves and others that their countrymen are "worse" than others. This is highly unlikely. What is true, is that they have, through smiling complacency, allowed the country to slide off into a state of total disorganisation, a murky morass of confused values, a labyrinth of nameless streets full of chameleon-like people. It is only after some sensible order has been put into this mess and once again we can call a spade a spade that we can hope to do the real clean-up which the country needs so badly and retrieve some of its past glory to which it is entitled.

Labour

A SELF-RELIANT T.U.C. NEEDED

By

K. Agbeli Mensah

The charges made recently by the Secretary of the Maritime and Dockworkers Union, Mr. J. R. Baiden, concerning the lack of dynamism and dedication in the present leadership of the Trades Union in Ghana, have focused attention on the real value of the Congress to the workers.

For once it is not the case that the affairs of the T.U.C. are being interfered with by agencies outside the organization. In fact what is happening is a criticism of the T.U.C. hierarchy from within; and if such criticism does not mean anything to some people at all, at least, it has revealed in some way a deep seated voice of dissent within the T.U.C. itself.

It has been felt for some time now and particularly since the July 5 exercise that one area of the Ghanaian body politic which needs a full public debate and searchlight is our Trades Union. I therefore find Mr. Baiden's remarks very useful and as a good starting point for such a debate. It is rather disquieting therefore to read some unionist remarks about the said charges as amounting to mudslinging.

For some time now the official pronouncements of the present leadership of the Trades Union Movement have been a general call for what the leadership terms a "socialist orientated" form of government. And in the not too distant past one of the reasons adduced by the T.U.C. leadership in support of the stillborn Union Government idea was their so-called conviction that the Acheampong leadership bore every sign of transforming this country into the type of society the T.U.C. leadership conceives of. Their further support for the same proposal stemmed from their view that it was Acheampong's government which had saved the T.U.C. which, they alleged, stood in danger of being proscribed under the Busia Government.

Be that as it may, it is evident from the showing of the T.U.C. leadership itself for the past six and a half years that either they themselves do not fully understand the type of society they want to create for their rank and file or that out of the usual fear of being thrown out of office by the

very workers they claim to be leading, they have been clinging to archaic slogans and 18th century tactics of Trade Unionism whereby workers are pitched in antagonistic position against management. Where at all, one may ask, is the evidence of transforming this society of ours into a just, equitable one since the last six years when this country has been wandering through the corridors of history?

The charge of want of dynamism and lack of courage to speak constructively could therefore not have come from any better quarters than from the ranks of the T.U.C. itself. This criticism or self-criticism, will do the present T.U.C. more good than the hysterical campaign by the hierarchy of the Congress to label the charges as 'mudslinging'.

It is amazing that one does not see anywhere in this country the positive evidence of how best workers could benefit from their own organizations or different Unions; instead one only reads about the usual and stereotyped negotiations between managements and the Unions for higher wages.

Why, for instance, has it not been possible for T.U.C. leadership to set up units of workers or corps of each Union to undertake viable commercial ventures in each region in Ghana, not to mention in districts; why is it that the T.U.C. leadership everyday laments the lack of transportation and its attendant effect on low productivity of workers when the leaders have under their command such a vast membership of the Transport Union, including drivers, who can be organized to run inter-city and town transport services?

Instruments of Social Change

Why, can't the T.U.C. leadership boast of an single model farm run by the corps of the Agric cultural Union of the T.U.C. which can be said to belong to the workers themselves? Why is it impossible even for the Commercial Union of the T.U.C. to engage in small retail shops or even kiosks in cities, towns and villages especially for their members so that one can see what a truly organised labour movement can do for its members, if not for the people of Ghana? Why is it that the leadership of the T.U.C. is always seen or heard of only in areas of wage-bargaining instead of organising workers to increase their productivity and to engage in meaningful joint ventures within their own Union? As previously stated, there is lack of education within the T.U.C. hierarchy and lack of appreciation of the virtues and principles of Unionism.

In most progressive countries where workers are instruments of social change, they are carefully educated to pursue ventures that enrich their social well-being instead of pursuing goals that rather worsen their plight. The way and manner the affairs of Trade Unionism are presently being handled in Ghana is a mere stereotyped application of labour organization in 18th century England and it is a far cry from fighting for the social upliftment of the workers.

The accusation that companies and corporations make huge profits at the expense of the workers seems to be misdirected when one examines

the scope, operation and ownership of the corporations and companies. Here in Ghana, the largest employer is the Government, and unless it is the case of the T.U.C. leadership that their members are being exploited by their own government, then I fail to appreciate such accusation.

I believe the members of the T.U.C. have a potentially inexhaustible enthusiasm for work. But if the leaders are simply following the old and archaic routine of Trade Unionism they will find it difficult to lead them. What the organisation needs is an active, enthusiastic and systematic leadership and constant education.

One is yet to know how profitably the workers' contributions are used. Surely the working population in Ghana is in several thousands and one can imagine that the Union dues for the past six years could have reached at least a million cedis. One therefore wonders what prevents the T.U.C. from engaging in profitable and commercial ventures like any of the corporations and companies they allege, have been making huge profits. Is it not the fact that the leadership is always haunted by the prospect of failure of their own initiatives whilst they prefer to sit back and criticise others?

There are boundless creative areas where the workers' energy can profitably be engaged. They can organise and concentrate on places and branches of work where they can give full play to their energy; they can concentrate on production in our cities, towns and villages and create more and more undertakings for their own well-being. What they need is the organisation and the leadership which has been eluding this dear country of ours for all this time.

Education

THE NEW EDUCATION SYSTEM FOR GHANA: 1975 OR 1980?

By

Amu Djoleto

It would seem that in the story of a nation, every age has its fascinations. And it appears that one of the fascinations of the present generation of Ghana is the ability to ignore opportunities of the present and engage in arguments of despair about a future whose roots are in the present that is overlooked. The implementation of the New Structure and Content of Education for Ghana, 1974, probably illustrates the point.

Historically, there is nothing particularly unique about the publications of this document, and it is only fair to say that Ghana has had a remarkable record of a series of educational reviews over the past seventy years, if one takes 1908 as the base year when Governor Rodger appointed a committee to investigate and report on education in the country. In 1920, Governor Guggisberg charged the Educationists Committee to investigate past education effort and evaluate its success or failure. Ten years later, 1930, there was the Education Review Committee which concerned itself mainly with education financing. In 1937-1941, there was another Education Committee whose report was published in 1941. This Committee examined the existing education practice and made recommendations for modifications.

The Accelerated Development Plan for Education came out in 1951, and its implementation had far-reaching consequences especially on enrolment in and management of primary and middle schools. The Education Act of 1961 (Act 87) made first cycle education in Ghana fee-free, compulsory and universal and had in its implications a review effect mainly with regard to the accessibility of formal education to the ordinary Ghanaian child. By 1964, another report had been authorised and completed, that is the Amisshah Report, but it never saw official publication. Four years later, the Kwapong Report was ready, having been triggered by the initial euphoria of the first military intervention, 1966. The compilation of the present New Structure and content of Education for Ghana began in 1972 and was accepted by the Government in 1974 for implementation the following year in phases up to 1987.

Denominational Schools

Thus for the past seven decades, Ghana has had a tradition of taking a close look at the principles and performance of formal education particularly at pre-university level, on average, once in ten years. But the habit raises a number of questions. Why this frequency of reviews? Is it because new recommendations in themselves would not hold? Or that though relevant, their implementation got away thereby inducing fresh evaluation and course-charting to avert failures? These are but a few of a whole host of questions that crowd the mind.

Perhaps the sum of these questions is: Has Ghana over the past seventy years been able, ever, to match its educational ideals with achievable implementation programmes? Put another way, does a new set of prescribed curricula go with viable teaching, reasonably adequate facilities and, most importantly, sound management systems?

The purpose of this contribution, however, is not the discussion of Ghana's educational achievements or non-achievement, but the staggered dates for the implementation of the new Structure and Content of Education for Ghana 1974.

It is noteworthy, however, that a number of the past educational reviews, recommendations or plans including the New System would require considerable adjustments in the educational practices of the country, and it is not clear whether all along this was well understood by reviewers, educational practitioners and the general public, and one wonders whether the position is much different today.

The Accelerated Development Plan for Education, 1951, for example, which was more concerned with the control and universality of primary education than with the curriculum provides the following in Paragraph 6: 'In future no new primary school opened by a denominational religious body or by a person or group of persons will be eligible for assistance from public funds unless approval of the Local Authority concerned under powers delegated by the Central Government has been obtained. It is expected that considerable numbers of educational unit (i.e. church) schools will be handed over to Local Authorities.'

Surely, this ruling was so radical that in spite of the lofty principles of state responsibility that inspired it, it threw the management of primary and middle schools into utter confusion overnight because for one thing several Local Authorities were poor and could not look after themselves anyway. For another, unlike the Educational Units of religious bodies, they were not shored up financially with funds from the Central Government, so that as in the case of religious bodies, they could at least employ competent staff

to manage schools. The resultant managerial and infra-structural abandonment of primary and middle schools lingers to the present day.

And despite the salvaging recommendations on the matter by the Mills Odoi Commission of 1967 which the Government accepted, the religious bodies which have had founding relations with very many schools and whose Educational Units are still sustained with financial grants from the Central Government, have remained cool, subtle, expansionist and overly participant in management, especially in teacher deployment. But education is extremely expensive and therefore it is the one area where whoever provides the funds must provide the most competent, cost-effective management systems for the benefit of all irrespective of religious interests.

New Structure

Management problems aside, it is to be noted that by 1972 there was the desire to re-examine the education system and relate it to present and future needs. Consequently, the new system is structured as follows:—

- (a) Kindergarten—duration, 18 to 24 months for age group 4 to 6 years.
- (b) First Cycle Education—consisting of 6 years primary plus 3 years junior secondary. Thus with effect from September 1975, every Ghanaian child is entitled to 9 years of basic education divided into 6 years primary and 3 years junior secondary, and both are fee-free and compulsory.
- (c) Second Cycle Education—this consists of
 - (i) senior secondary lower, 'O' level, to be pursued in 2 years after graduation from the junior secondary school
 - (ii) Technical and Commercial courses.
A pupil from the second cycle level who wishes to continue formal education and has the necessary qualifications can proceed to
 - (a) senior secondary upper leading to 'A' level
 - (b) a teacher training course
 - (c) a polytechnic course

and those who do not proceed to university from the senior secondary upper would be encouraged to train for middle level professions.

The aims, objectives and content of the new system are all rooted in one basic principle: **Relevance**. The system takes account of the present and future needs of the child and the society in the context of the environment within which both are to fulfil themselves. An attempt has been made therefore, to marry humanism with technology; in other words, the acquisition of practical skills must be backed by sound general education.

The learning of graduated practical skills which starts in primary class one is re-emphasised in the junior secondary school. As previously, literacy, numeracy and socialisation are basic. The subjects for the junior secondary are in two groups. The group one subjects are the same as those being pursued in the present-day secondary school Forms one to three but with new orientations in the syllabuses and books. And I believe the depth would be the same since the target for a number of those who would continue after the junior secondary would be 'O' level.

It is the subjects in group two that are probably causing confusion in the minds of the public. These are three all together. They are wood work, masonry, metal work²

technical drawing, pottery, commercial subjects, marine science (fishing), automobile practice, craft, beauty culture (including hair-dressing), tailoring, dressmaking and catering. But the rule is that each pupil shall do at least TWO of these subjects and the purpose is not to turn all junior secondary school pupils into full-fledged carpenters, masons, mechanics and technicians. They are too young for that. The purpose is (a) to make them understand what these practical subjects are about to enable them cope with a technological environment; and (b) to so predispose them that those who have the aptitude could pursue them further.

What has been said so far should indicate that the New Education System is not going to start in 1980. It started in September 1975. Children in Primary Classes 1-5 this year are the pioneers with Class 5 the frontliners. It is most important that this fact of the matter is clearly understood by all Ghanaians. 1980/81 is only another phase, that is when those in primary class 5 today enter junior secondary Form One. The next target date is 1983/84 for senior secondary lower and 1985/86 for senior secondary upper. So that it will take some 10 to 12 years for the children to go through the first and second cycles of the new education system for Ghana, that is, if within this period there is no overhaul.

It follows, then that the implementation of the new education system is in progress. The new syllabuses of the primary course have been prepared and many of the books based on them published and are being used. Some of these books are fine indeed and are a credit to the authors and publishers. Therefore, in terms of the objectives, at least the numeracy, socialisation and literacy aspects of the curriculum, the obligations are being met. It is not clear, however, whether the practical activities are being equally provided. If the main thrust of the new system is to be maintained, then the implementation of these practical activities should receive urgent attention from top to bottom management and also from the Ghana National Association of Teachers.

Converting the Middle Schools

What obviously worries a number of people is how the middle schools are going to be converted to provide the normal secondary school course as well as courses in the practical subjects mentioned. The problem here is not money primarily; IT IS MANAGEMENT. If Ghana is clear about who manages first cycle education and who is responsible for the provision of facilities pending the competent operation of the Local Government System, then these will be a firm base for profitable use of money. This point requires full and decisive government consideration if disaster is to be averted.

We may, therefore, divide the problem areas of implementation into three; the pedagogy, administration and facilities. The country is fairly used to humanistic education and not many problems are to be expected in this area. Equally, it should not be difficult to provide practical activities at the primary level. With good planning, teachers for science and the non-literary subjects in Group II could be produced in adequate numbers having regard to the present and future teacher training and supply requirements. The problem is likely to be how best to deploy these teachers and make the best use of their skills. Secondly, the writing and production of books for the junior secondary school should follow a tight schedule and the private sector should help in the writing, production and distribution of these books.

Administration seems to be the most difficult area at the moment, and it is in two parts: the administration of the individual school and management of schools. It is suggested that each primary as well as junior secondary school should be managed like an ordinary secondary school or training college of today, that is, by a board of governors to which financial grants are made quarterly. It means that we will now have to have large primary schools and junior secondary schools managed by boards of governors with independent financial grants from the Central Government. Religious interest in schools will continue but not in deployment of teachers and management. All single-stream schools in rural and urban areas should be merged into at least two but not more than four streams irrespective of religious affiliations.

The members of the boards of governors in primary and junior secondary schools, i.e. converted middle schools, should be drawn from the local community so that each community will have pride and civic responsibility in running its own school. The head of a primary or junior secondary school must have the same administrative clout as the headmaster or principal. The community can charge extra fees if that does not affect the right of the child to education.

Money will always be needed for education. But facilities are best available if whatever money is given is effectively used by a competent school administration. The junior secondary schools will require laboratories and workshops;

however, the full needs of each school cannot be met overnight. They will have to be provided in planned phases. Junior secondary laboratories and workshops need not be sophisticated in order to meet the minimum requirements of the syllabuses. However, the truth of the matter is that the most effective use of money, no matter how much, for the procurement of facilities depends on sound management. Given this, there could be cheer for the future if the opportunities and resources of the present are seized up, added to and utilised properly.

Observer Notebook

THE COMMISSIONER AND PRESS FREEDOM

For those who have known the present Commissioner for Information over a long period, his appointment to this important post appeared to be one of the progressive things that the "new" SMC had done. This was because Mr. Dixon Kwame Afreh has been a great champion of liberalism in general and the freedom of the press in particular. As both university teacher and lawyer, he has had numerous occasions to expatiate on the question of press freedom, and his views have been consistently progressive in the liberal tradition. His appointment as Commissioner for Information, was felt by many, was an opportunity for him to translate into practice the ideals he has professed and campaigned for over the years. The Commissioner ought to be told now that after a full month in office, those who held high hopes on his appointment are getting disappointed and frustrated.

It will be recalled that about a month before his elevation to the high post of Commissioner for Information, Mr. Afreh was a panelist in a symposium on press freedom organised by the students of the School of Journalism and Communication, Legon. In a spirited speech at the British Council Hall on August 30, 1978, Mr. Afreh put up an unassailable case in defence of press freedom and drew particular attention to the inimical laws that have made true press freedom so elusive in this country. On that occasion, making specific reference to the Newspaper Licensing Decree, 1973 (NRCD 161), Mr. Afreh said:

The government has the power to grant, refuse or withdraw a licence or review it or refuse to do so. The reason why the Legon Observer could not come out for four years was that the Ministry of information just refused or failed to take any action on the paper's application for the renewal of its licence. Apart from this, the government has power under S. 183(2) of the Criminal Code to impose censorship on a newspaper or the writings of a particular individual...

As long as such laws remain on the Statute Book the recent Proclamation on the Emancipation of the Press by Col. Parker Yarney will remain a hollow and meaningless declaration. It is not surprising that the press have so far not fully asserted the freedom granted to them. For

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These adjustments do not take account of variation in prices resulting from continuing inflation. This trend should be taken into account when these revisions are being made.

it can be taken away at any time. The freedom of the press is not for a government to grant: it is a human right, and no group of persons should be allowed to usurp it and then release it at will. And this we must not allow to happen in future. (Our emphasis).

We have quoted part of Mr. Afreh's speech at length to remind him of the noble sentiments he publicly evinced and to tell him that the public is anxiously waiting to see what he is doing about those two laws, now that almost by poetic justice he is in a position to help in the establishment of true press freedom in this country. We also hope that with his legal background, the present Commissioner will recommend action on the revision of other laws restrictive of the freedom of expression such as the laws of sedition, libel, contempt of court, state secrets, publication of false news, rumours, subversion, etc.

The revision of such laws may take some time but action in this direction can be initiated without undue delay, especially since the Commissioner has demonstrated in his university lectures that he has given careful thought to these over the years. Meanwhile, there is no earthly reason why the Newspaper Licensing Decree of 1973 should be on our statute books today. We believe the Commissioner has been in office long enough to get this obnoxious law repealed immediately. If this is not done forthwith, we shall have legitimate grounds to question the principles on which he made his earlier pronouncements when he was not in office. Or has he become "contaminated" so quickly that he is prepared to adopt a double standard? Or may it be that he has suddenly discovered the wisdom behind that decree?

Whatever the case is, the public is entitled to know. The Commissioner should see his appointment as both an opportunity to serve his country and a challenge to uphold, defend and vindicate those principles on which he was waxing eloquent not so long ago. We hope that for the sake of his own honour and his credibility, Mr. Dixon Kwame Afreh, Commissioner for Information, will not disappoint his numerous friends and well-wishers to whom he had given reason to believe that his appointment to this particular post would bring some enlightenment and freedom of expression to Ghana.

DECLARATION OF ASSETS

It is most disturbing that after four months in office, members of the "new" SMC and their commissioners have still not declared their assets. This failure, unwillingness or inability to declare their assets has already provoked a crisis of confidence in the new administration. This is a most serious omission, and we demand that this constitutional provision — or just a pragmatic, sensible convention — be complied with forthwith by all the members of SMC and NRC.

We insist on this because a government which lacks legitimacy should make up for this serious political deficiency both by actual performance and by high moral standards. On the grounds of

performance, there is incontrovertible evidence that this government and its predecessor (or part predecessor) have even not begun to appreciate the problems facing this country, much less make any serious and realistic efforts at solving them. On moral grounds, we are still to get any evidence that this government wants to give people of this country any reason to have confidence in them.

Given all the noise that the military government under Acheampong made about the failure of the PP government to declare their assets — a charge which has since been shown to be only partly true — we completely fail to appreciate why the "new" SMC which claims to be more serious than its part predecessor have not yet declared their assets. This failure is giving rise to unhealthy rumours and it is in the interest of members of the SMC themselves, both old and new, to put an end to such speculations by declaring their assets to the Chief Justice who will then make a public announcement to that effect.

If the "new" SMC is determined to clean up the country, as Lt-Gen Hamidu, Chief of Defence Staff, has been constantly telling us, we invite them to start that operation from the top, not forgetting all those, both civilian and military, who have held office in the government since 1972, including General Acheampong himself. Even if they did not declare their assets on assumption of office, we are still entitled to know what they acquired while in office. If the SMC fails to take up this challenge we are throwing to them, they should by this act of omission know that they have forfeited all moral right to pontificate on public morality or even to preside over the affairs of this country. We are already getting fed up with the homilies and double-talk and we demand action now. It is only opportunists and hypocrites who judge others by standards by which they themselves do not want to be judged. We hope that members of the SMC and NRC would not like to be so described.

THE SATELLITE PUZZLE

Efficient internal and external communications are essential to economic development, and the government of the SMC has been rightly concerned with improving our telecommunication system which is rapidly falling to pieces. To this end, the government last year invited tenders for the supply of a Standard "A" Station consisting of a Satellite Earth station and an Electronic International Telephone Exchange. Six companies made offers and after the technical and financial aspects of the offers had been considered, three were shortlisted in the following order: GTE of the U.S., NEC of Japan and SPAR of Canada. The first two companies were asking for about US \$13 million for the package while the Canadian firm bid for US \$6 million.

Somehow, after the tenders had been opened and a technical committee had placed the offers by the three companies in order of merit, the third company, SPAR Technology Ltd. of Canada, represented in Ghana by Mr. Henry Kwadwo

Djaba, submitted a fresh quotation reducing its original offer by about US \$2 million. This third company therefore got the contract and on 28th November last year an agreement was signed with SPAR for the installation of Standard "A" Earth Satellite at a cost of US \$14,630,068 plus £2,364,308 in local costs. Ghana has already paid £5.540 million, £3.8 million of this in foreign exchange to that company. It will be useful to find out under what circumstances the company adjudged third by the experts was finally awarded the contract.

In this connection it is useful to know that both the Japanese and American companies approached their governments about assistance that could be offered Ghana for the realisation of the project. In fact, based on the various experts' reports and at the request of the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the EXIM Bank of USA approved a loan for Ghana to implement the project through GTE, and the US Ambassador in Ghana conveyed this information to the then Commissioner for Transport and Communications, Mr. E. R. K. Dwemoh, in a letter dated 25th November, 1977. One would like to know why this offer was ignored.

But what is more serious and calls for a public enquiry is that despite the commitment to SPAR and the sum already paid to it, the government has now signed another agreement with another American company for the supply of a Standard "B" System at a cost of US\$3 million. This Standard "B" System has a much smaller capacity and can only partly improve our external communication without making any impact on our internal communication. It is intended to be a stop-gap measure while waiting for the "A" system which will become operational by February 1980, or even earlier, if the foreign exchange difficulties can be removed. It is also pertinent to remember that in the case of the "B" system there was no open international tender as was the case for the "A" system.

What is particularly disturbing about this Standard "B" system is the haste with which the Ministry of Transport and Communications wants to push it through. It is known that the P. & T. Board is thoroughly opposed to the "B" project and made its views known to the new Commissioner in a letter dated 12th July, 1978, less than a week after the Commissioner's appointment. In the letter, the Board said that the over US\$3 million to be spent on the "B" system will be wasteful and uneconomical over the two-year period and that the "A" system is much more preferable from both a technical and a financial point of view since it has lower operational costs. The Board further added that the P. & T. Corporation needs £300,000 in foreign exchange for spares to nurse the existing external communication system until February 1980 when the Standard "A" Earth station is expected to be commissioned. They are categorical in their rejection of the "B" system whether on the basis of a lease or outright purchase, and yet it appears the Ministry is bent on going ahead with this project which means spending over US\$3 million for the two-year period.

One would like to know why the government is ignoring the advice from the P. & T. Board just as it ignored the advice offered earlier on the "A" system as contained in reports by the ITU, by Japanese consultants, by the Technical Committee of the P. & T. and by the P. & T. Board itself. We would also like to know whether despite the heavy financial commitment made in respect of the Standard "A" system, the contract is to be scrapped. If not, is it not wiser to give the P. & T. the £300,000 in foreign exchange it needs to improve the existing system than to waste US\$3 million just for a system which will become redundant after 18 months? The arithmetic of the matter is quite straightforward to us, but if the Ministry has compelling reasons why it thinks it is better to spend three million than £300,000 to achieve the same objectives, we would like to know.

THE NOBEL PRIZE FOR PEACE

President Sadat of Egypt and Premier Begin of Israel are easily the most controversial recipients of the Nobel Prize for Peace in recent years. While it is true that Sadat's initiative in visiting Israel and Begin's return visit to Egypt were epoch making sceptical observers of developments over the past twelve months do have a case worth examining. It may well be that listening to them now will prepare the world for a later situation if and when these two peace-mongers turn coat.

The key issue in the Middle East is the dispossession of the Palestinian people of their homeland. Begin, has sworn not only to guard the pre-1947 frontiers of Israel, but also to consolidate his country's hold on territories captured in the six-day war in 1967. This he is doing by expanding Israeli settlements in the occupied Arab lands even while the Camp David talks are under way, and by retaining his option of militarily intervening in Lebanon.

Sadat on the other hand, has equivocated in a most amazing manner. He swears that he will not seek a unilateral agreement with Israel without drawing in other Arab states. But he must have been aware that Begin's intransigence on many fundamental issues was bound to alienate all other defenders of the Arab/Palestinian cause. So, although Begin has broken pledge after pledge, Sadat is doing his solo act, knowing very well that no other Arab state is likely to accept the terms of the Camp David Agreement.

What then are the chances of peace following the "victory" of Sadat and Begin and their receipt of the Nobel Prize for Peace?

Since the Palestinian issue remains unresolved, we can expect further flare-ups in the Middle East. Since Israel has been allowed by her mentors to flout UN resolutions on the evacuation of Arab Territories occupied in 1967, one can expect international (especially Socialist and Third World) diplomatic support for the Palestinians and the majority of Arab States in their continuing confrontation with Israel.

President Sadat faces considerable opposition at home on his stand on negotiations with Israel, opposition which will weaken his clout at home in direct proportion to the conduct of Premier Begin, whose course of action has been clearly stated through belligerent acts belied by dovish talk.

Ultimately, what will vindicate the Nobel Committee in its choice of these two would-be peace-makers is the unfolding of events. Will there be peace in the Middle East? The realistic answer is "no". Secondly, will there be peace between Israel and Egypt? The most sanguine answer is "probably". In these circumstances, and having regard to the fact that Israel and Egypt are but two of many countries at the heart of this generation-old belligerency, one comes to the painful conclusion that the award of this year's Nobel Prize for Peace to Sadat and Begin may well turn out to be an echo of the invention that brought fame to Alfred Nobel—dynamite.

Need we remind ourselves of the customary behaviour of dynamite?

PURCHASES IN THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

In the October 27 issue of the *Pioneer* a writer made serious allegations of financial malpractices in the matter of overseas purchases by the University of Ghana, Legon. The allegations involve straight malpractices as well as a rather perverted scale of values for an educational institution. The statement in the newspaper showed that the author appeared to know what he was talking about.

We call on the Vice-Chancellor to order an immediate enquiry into these very serious allegations and also to probe the whole system of purchases, both local and overseas, in the university. We also call on the Vice-Chancellor to investigate the manner in which certain so-called "unserviceable" vehicles were disposed of by the Medical School. In particular, the probe should seek answers to the following questions: (a) Who or which committee declared those vehicles "unserviceable"; (b) the method of sale; (c) those who purchased them and at what prices; and (d) how soon after the sale these vehicles became "serviceable", and where the spare parts were obtained to repair them.

We further suggest that since this is a matter of public interest, the investigations should be held in public.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Albert Van Dantzig: Senior Lecturer, Dept. of History, Legon.

K. Agbeli Mensah: Legal practitioner, Accra.
Amu Djoleta: Executive Director, Ghana Book Development Council.

T. Kodjo-Ababio Nubuor: Final year student in Philosophy and History, Legon.

Letters

"ONE-MAN SHOW" INDEED!

SIR—Did I hear the phrase "One-man show" correctly during the radio and television broadcast of the new chairman of the S.M.C. on 10th July, 1978 after the overthrow of General Acheampong?

If I did correctly then, Mr. Editor, it will be pertinent for the broadcaster of that phrase to answer the following few questions:

(a) Was it from Acheampong's personal arsenal or armoury or ammunition dump that about eight (8) Police Armoured Cars tramped to the University of Ghana, Legon, where on the 13th of January, 1978 the Police monstrously brutalized lecturers, students, workers and visitors?

My family and I were caught co-incidentally in the whole fracas on the day in question. Oh! my goodness, reason had fled to the British beasts. We, visitors, were detained at Legon and also at the Achimota Police Station Barrier for more than four (4) hours while the lecturers, students, workers, male and female alike, continued to receive the strokes of Police batons even as we were leaving.

(b) Upon whose command were soldiers let loose on the Headmaster, tutors and students of Opoku Ware Secondary School, Kumasi?

(c) Upon whose command were soldiers or Police or Border Guards let loose on the student population of Winneba Specialist Training College?

(d) Similar questions may be asked of the incidents involving Wesley College, Kumasi, Mfantipim Secondary School, Cape Coast.

(e) Upon whose command did soldiers hold "military exercise" at Korle-Bu, a teaching hospital?

(f) Upon whose orders was the symposium of the Registered Professional Bodies Association organised at the Accra Community Centre on 12th October, 1977 disrupted with so much brutality?

(g) Was it out of Acheampong's personal arsenal and was it upon his personal orders that so many soldiers with highly sophisticated weapons occupied the offices of the Electoral Commissioner for about five (5) days as from the night of 30th March, 1978?

(h) Was it Acheampong alone who ordered the detention of several eminent Ghanaians after the monstrous Referendum of 30th March, 1978?

(i) Was it Acheampong alone who toyed with the demands and strikes of the Professional Bodies?

(j) Was the broadcaster not the Chief of Defence Staff during the time of the events listed above?

(k) All this time, what were the other members of the S.M.C. doing?

We, Ghanaians, know that all the above events took place when the broadcaster of the "one-man show" phrase and many of his colleagues of the S.M.C. were prominent members of the said S.M.C. during those times. Speaking of today, how reconstituted is the S.M.C. anyway?

Perhaps, after we have been able to identify the looters of the State monies kept abroad and locally, all Ghanaians will definitely be in a position to ask many more questions at the proper forums which intelligent Ghanaians are capable of creating.

CURIA Chambers
Accra

H. K. Akuffo

USE LOCAL CONSULTANTS

SIR—The report that a consultancy contract for rehabilitating and extending the Military Hospital has been given to NTARCO, a Dutch consulting firm is rather depressing. All those who were involved in arriving at the decision that no firms of consultants in Ghana are competent to handle the Military Hospital extension and that technical assistance must be sought from outside, deserve pats on their backs.

A country where decision makers look down upon their professionals (architects, engineers, quantity surveyors etc.) and consider them incompetent to handle a project like the Military Hospital extension (reception and waiting areas consulting rooms, wards, operating theatres, dispensaries, kitchens, stores, other ancillary rooms and houses for doctors and nurses) must be a very progressive country indeed! This is self-reliance in action.

Expertise in the design of hospitals is not a prerequisite. Any group of architects, engineers and quantity surveyors worth their salt working in collaboration with doctors can work out a good brief to enable the design of a first class hospital to satisfy the demands of even the military. The Military Hospital project is not the only project thrown out to foreign firms. Others like the Toño Irrigation Scheme, Kumasi Airport and Olympic Complex have all gone the same way.

The design of the whole Ghana Medical School for the University of Ghana, a hospital the complexity of which cannot be matched by the military hospital, is being undertaken by Ghanaian professionals. What then is so special about the Military Hospital extension which Ghanaian architects and engineers cannot tackle? Even if it is a case of security, can we count more on the loyalty of foreigners than of our own people?

I cannot accept the argument that if preliminary preparations of any proposed project are made, like the hospital in question, before inviting foreigners to help finance and equip it, they will say no. I am of the opinion that this is exactly what the developed nations expect from us now.

If we pause to think of how other countries have built up their experts after whom we rush so much, we shall realize that those countries have purposefully built up their human resources by creating for them the necessary opportunities and leading them through varied experiences.

I would like to suggest, taking a cue from developed countries, that almost all projects must be commissioned to Ghanaian consultants. They will be able to identify the aspects of the project which would require foreign experts and will advise the authorities accordingly. By this method, Ghanaians will be involved with every project that is undertaken in the country. They will build up the necessary expertise and this will also reduce to the minimum foreign exchange elements of even very highly technical projects.

P. O. Box 8565,
Accra-North.

W. K. Akude,

IS THE "THINK TANK" FUNCTIONING ?

SIR - Following the realization by the new SMC/NRC that the country had been brought to the brink of complete disaster as a result of the administrative incompetence, corruption and flights of fancy, economic ignorance, military imprecision, warped visions of personal grandeur, expensive miscalculations and fitful vituperations that characterized the Acheampong regime, a "Think Tank" under the Chairmanship of Dr. Amon Nikoi was set up to help Government in the determination and execution of its policies.

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I do not know whether other members of that usually high-powered group have been named; but my worry is that since the initial noise made about the "Think Tank", not much has been heard about it. I do not suppose that the composition of the group and its operations are covered by the Official Secrets Act.

I submit that, in view of the current justifiable and democratic cry for public accountability, it is only fair and proper for the press to be in a position to inform the public about the "Think Tank". There are at present a lot of matters relating to policy formulation to which the "Tank" may be expected to address itself: probes, declaration of assets, long-lasting political direction, post-budget prohibitive cost of living, rural development, inter alia.

University of Cape Coast, Y. S. Kantanka Bofoa
Cape Coast

WHO HAS TO FACE THE MUSIC?

Sir—The C.D.S., Gen. Hamidu, has the right to deplore the exodus of teachers from the country, but for him to go on to say that "we all have to face the music together" borders on the grotesque.

One may pertinently ask the General why we must all face the music. Why should suffering Ghanaians bear the brunt of sadism, folly, crass corruption and moral turpitude of our leaders and their equally depraved hirelings and bootlickers? Are we masochists?

The only effective way to stem the exodus is to clean meticulously the Aegean stable. The public urgently demands a probe of all our military governments including those who are retired, together with their top civil servant and "businessmen" accomplices. It is only such action that will give the General's exhortation some iota of meaning.

A call for patriotism from the hungry and economically deprived is nothing but a hollow exhortation; even soldiers have to "march on their stomach". Some of us are ready to go hungry for days on end, suffer all deprivations and show all the sterling qualities of a patriot, if and only if we have confidence in our leaders.

The names of the economic "murderers" should be published with the amounts involved, no matter whose ox is gored! The few who float in tainted opulence and gaudily flaunt it about should face the music. But the question is: who will cast the first stone?

Mensah-Sarbah Hall Senyo Kwabla Daddah
Legon.

LEGON OBSERVER SOLD FOR C1.50 IN KUMASI

SIR—It is rather unfortunate that the Ghanaian greed for money has been extended to the sale of the *Legon Observer*. In Kumasi, the *Legon Observer* sells for C1.50, whereas the official price is C1.00.

Don't say this is a story, I have gone round almost all the vendors and they sell it openly at that price. In some places, one is forced to buy a copy of a *Lotto Magazine* before one is given a copy of the *Legon Observer* for C1.50.

I am suggesting that the producers should not only warn those concerned in their next issue, because the vendors in Kumasi here WILL NOT heed any such warning. The *Graphic* and the *Times* are sold everywhere in Kumasi for 40p each instead of the official price of 20p. The papers have warned several times on this but it is still done here in Kumasi.

What I suggest is that the producers of the *Legon Observer* should investigate this issue and when I am proved right, should terminate all arrangements with the vendors in Kumasi forthwith and arrange with the GNTC, UTC Kingsway, Methodist Book Depot, Presby Book Depot and the State Publishing Corporation to sell them to the public. They will sell strictly according to the prescribed price.

Please act promptly on this and halt this shameful practice which is too rampant in Kumasi.

P. O. Box X84 Kofi Adomako
F.N.T., Kumasi

Editor's Note: We have taken note of your complaint and are taking appropriate action to ensure that there are adequate copies around to frustrate the tendencies of the avid vendors. Meanwhile, we advise all our readers to refuse to pay more than the stipulated price of C1.00 and to report such vendors and agents to us.

VEHICLE LOAN

SIR—At present, the maximum advance granted for the purchase of any make of motor vehicle is C7,000.00. This is governed by the Ministry of Finance Circular No. 275 issued on 13th February, 1975. The Ministry of Finance which solely controls such advances may have good reasons for upholding this maximum to date, yet looking at the rate of inflation in Ghana today, no argument in favour of the C7,000.00 maximum could be tenable now.

After all, what kind of car can C7,000.00 buy today? It is worth calling attention to the fact that when that circular was issued in 1975, one could easily purchase a small new car with C7,000.00. With the changed situation now, one expects the Ministry of Finance which, fortunately, is responsible for budgeting, devaluation, etc. to adjust its lending policies to suit the times.

A maximum of C18,000.00 is suggested, viewing the over 100 per cent increase in the price of motor vehicles during the past few months. Repayment should spread over 12 years for the capital loan and all interest charges.

Ghana Education Service, Kwame Opoku
P. O. Box 2914, Accra

DOUBLE STANDARDS

SIR—I would like to suggest that it is not enough for the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs and Cooperatives, Mr. Kofi Badu to maintain a low-profile on the political scene following the resignation of his mentor, General Acheampong. He should recall and act out the prophetic words he wrote as editor of the *Spokesman* just before the fall of the Second Republic: Go, Busia, go.

He is supposed to minister to the needs of all consumers of Ghana. In reality, while the majority, especially those in the "democracy of unbee" (remember these words?) have suffered a benign neglect, the privileged few consume most and the best of the consumer goods supplied by his Ministry.

He lampooned the late Dr. Busia as "Professor Kafo Didi" for his frank statements on the rescheduling of debts owed by Ghana to some foreign countries. Yet, not long ago, Kofi Badu himself vanished from the country only to resurface with a loan he had negotiated with Britain on behalf of Ghana.

The unkindest cut of all is that as an insider in the Government he failed to inform the public of the fact that Ghana was bankrupt. Rather, he had the effrontery to court cheap popularity by calling a press conference on his return from Britain to declare, with regard to Ghana's economic problems, that there was light at the end of the tunnel.

Konongo-Odumasi Secondary School
Odumasi Ashanti/Akim.

Yaw Amoah-Antwi

JOURNALISTS ON STRIKE?

SIR—At first I thought I was dreaming, so I pinched myself to feel pain and make sure that I still belonged to this planet. Then it sounded like a fairly tale "full of sound and fury signifying nothing". It was all about the news that Ghanaian journalists had resorted to "industrial action" to back their

demand for the release and implementation of a report on their service conditions.

The whole drama was as funny as it was ironical and hypocritical. The very people who lashed persistently at the students and professionals when they boycotted lectures and withdrew their services respectively to back their demand for the resignation of Kutu the dictator (mind you, it was in the national interest) have found it reasonable to employ the same method to press home their selfish demands.

Shame unto all those who failed to join the call for a concerted action to remove that tyrant, and yet find it necessary to go on strike after July 5 for their narrow interests.

P. O. Box 14,

Kwesi Karl

Kpeve.

SCHOLARS AND DICTATORS — A REJOINER

SIR—I am sure Dr. Jones Ofori-Atta is capable of replying to what Mr. Kofi Kumado of the Faculty of Law, Legon, said about him, (L.O. X, 4) but certain remarks of Mr. Kumado's must be examined further.

In the first place, what does Mr. Kumado want the *Legon Observer* to find out about Dr. Ofori Atta's position in the Progress Party, and what does he want the paper to do with the knowledge?

As a Junior Minister of Finance in the Progress Party Dr. Ofori-Atta helped the government come out with a bold economic policy which, for the first time in our country's history, realistically challenged the inequitable economic and social system bequeathed by the colonial administration of the country, by attacking such areas of inequality, and injustice as the paying of uneconomic rents by certain categories of well paid workers and contributing towards a development levy, which was an attempt to tax the rich for the benefit of the rural poor. If people had not complained against the loss of special amenities and had not listened to the insistent urgings of power-drunk tin gods, the harsh but realistic economic policies of the Progress Party might by now have taken us out of the economic woods. Dr. Ofori-Atta therefore has every reason to be proud of his role, and should feel eminently qualified to speak on any aspect of the present parlous state of the economy.

I find Mr. Kumado's comparison of the theories of people like Dr. Jones Ofori Atta with the crudities (or practicalities?) of people like General Acheampong very interesting in the way he displays his bias in favour of supposedly practical dictators. In preferring dictators to scholars Mr. Kumado is certainly in good company, notwithstanding the palpable *par a dox*. Ghana has many people who have passed through the doors of universities but who find it convenient and conscionable to help illiterate dictators take callous measures against defenceless students and well-qualified professional people; the ministries and corporations contain thousands of them who hide behind files and write harmful memoranda and unsupportable situation reports that prop up the regimes of insensitive, practical dictators. But when the dictators fall, they continue to maintain their positions with equanimity and clear conscience.

The sarcastic tone of Mr. Kumado's letter may be strange only to the person who is not aware of the extent of anti-intellectualism in Ghana — it is not only among the rank and file of the Armed Forces, the Trades Union Congress and the kalabule business community but fairly widespread. It is also so typically African in its wider content — pull him down!

AS2 Dansoman Estates
Accra

J. Oppong-Agyare

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Applications are invited from qualified candidates for the above post at the office of the Society at Legon.

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Qualifications: Candidates must possess the minimum educational qualification of School Certificate with credit in English Language, or G.C.E. 'O' Level with passes in at least 5 subjects including English Language. Must be able to type at the rate of 50 W.P.M. and take shorthand at the rate of 100 W.P.M., and must possess a certificate to that effect issued by the Principal of the Government Secretarial School, or any recognised body.

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(Secretary)

GHANA'S DEVALUATION

SIR—If there was any justification for the recent devaluation of the cedi, then I think it was just to restore confidence in our currency and nothing else. Devaluation has nothing to offer Ghanaians except asking them to "tighten their belts".

Before the devaluation by SMC Chapter Two, the Cedi was highly overvalued. This was made possible by an incredible increase in money supply from a total of C320.2 million in December 1971 to C1763.1 million in June 1977. If we add the amount spent on the Union Government campaign, then the figure for 1978 could be anybody's guess. Such an increase in money supply without a corresponding increase in production cannot work hand in hand with the fixed exchange rate of the Cedi to the dollar. (ie C1.15 to \$1.) Such an incompatibility was amply demonstrated by the black market rate of the dollar to the Cedi. It is therefore no wonder that the IMF lost confidence in our currency.

At present we have women "Cedi millionaires" and men who can issue cheques to cover the cost of ten Neoplan buses for their wives and helicopters for themselves. There are at the same time people who earn strictly C4.00 a day.

One question that needs answering by the powers that be is should everybody be made to suffer the impact of this devaluation as a result of an increase in money which benefited only a few?

If the above question was posed to me, my answer will be an unequivocal No! I will seek to know all those into whose hands the money was pumped and have the monies both at home and abroad confiscated to the state. This will be enough to restore the confidence in the Cedi. If I have my own way too, I will recommend life imprisonment of all those people. So long as these people continue to live among us, they will do everything within their power to safeguard their ill-gotten wealth. They may even try to impose a system of government which they feel will be in their own interest. Devaluation will not in the least affect them. Price increases will rather benefit them. Their Neoplan buses will continue to charge higher fares, thus increasing their profit margins. They will continue to ride in BMW's whilst the ordinary man will now choose to walk for miles to dodge "tro tro" fares. These are the people who must be made to face the music.

E34 Legon Hall,
Legon.

Kwame Opoku-Agyeman

SPECIAL AIRPORT BUS NEEDED

SIR—I believe that the introduction of a bus to Kotoka International Airport and others in the country can be a great relief to passengers. I suggest that service should be operated by the Ghana Airways Corporation which knows the movements of planes.

I believe that this will not only be convenient to travellers but also assist them to free themselves from possible attacks by thieves and "murderous" taxi fares.

Liberty Press Limited
Accra.

J. K. Ampah

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TAYLOR WOODROW

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The Project Manager,
Taylor Woodrow of Ghana Ltd.,
Tono Irrigation Project,
Private Mail Bag,
Navrongo,
Upper Region.

TAYLOR WOODROW



Opinion

DON'T BLAME THEM ALL

By

A Correspondent

In his arrogance, Acheampong and his close associates tended to give the impression that civilians as a corporate body suffered certain moral defects which caused the misfortunes that prompted the military to step in to "redeem" the country. Hence, for a considerable time after the coup, not only were members of the ousted civilian administration incarcerated but also civilians of all manner of status and position—principal secretaries, corporation managers, clerical officers, messengers and even common harlots—were equally made, at times, to undergo the indignity of so-called therapeutic or punitive drilling in public view for either lateness at work or "loitering". Civilians, as a whole, were going to be taught lasting lessons in military discipline and the country was to be put on course to both economic and political sanity.

In addition, Acheampong posted some army officers to civilian organisations as a sort of political patronage and dispensation of favours or perhaps, in his bid to control the Armed Forces, as a tactic for getting rid of potential rivals and opponents—but all ostensibly in order to teach civilians proper lessons in patriotism, efficiency and probity. By such means, the entire Armed Forces appeared to be unfairly pitched against the civilian population (and even initially, the Police), and the stage was set for a collision between the Armed Forces and civilians.

Since it became possible after General Acheampong's "resignation" on 5th July for people to express themselves freely, it has become clear from what one reads in the newspapers and hears on the street that there is an almost general resentment against the military. The feeling takes the form of a general condemnation of military people as arrogant, inefficient, corrupt, callous, unsympathetic and selfish. The impression is formed that the country has been ruined virtually beyond repair and our national coffers depleted for the benefit of the whole military. There has thus developed a kind of unhealthy polarisation between the military and the civilian section of the population, and it will be in the interest of all concerned to ensure that misunderstandings are cleared for the health of the nation and the tasks ahead.

In this regard, we need to remind ourselves of certain basic facts, the most important of which is that only a few military personnel were directly involved with the regime and, even then, only some of those who were members of the NRC/SMC (ancient and modern), chairmen of corporations, regional or ministerial commissioners or who occupied other special positions normally reserved for civilians, have performed so badly as to deserve to be roundly condemned and punished accordingly. We must, however, stress that just as it is unfair to condemn all civilians for the sins of some civilian politicians, so care should be taken not to visit the sins of the "military-politicians" on all military personnel. For, those "military-politicians" were appointed by Acheampong and his immediate collaborators and not elected by an Armed Forces caucus; they could, therefore, not be regarded as necessarily representing the best that the Armed Forces could offer.

The second fact is that the Acheampong regime and its part successor have left us in no doubt that military rule is not good for this country—a lesson that did not clearly register under the National Liberation Council (NLC) regime. The military politicians have shown, in even more palpable and ominous manner, the same human failings of which they initially accused their civilian predecessors; since military rule is based on force and respect for the gun whose power we were made to feel forcefully around the referendum period, the conclusion is inescapable that military rule could be more menacing, more uncontrollable, more detestable and more ruinous to the country than the worst of civilian regimes.

The openly ravenous amassing of immovable property in Accra and other urban centres by military politicians (within such a short period), the acquisition of huge tracts of farm lands and the exploitation of cheap labour particularly in the North, the purchase of scores of road-destroying "juggernaut" trucks that serve no purpose than to gratify the financial appetite of some military personnel and their associates, the abuse of positions on public corporations for selfish ends, and the impunity with which smugglers have been permitted to ply their illegal business—all at a time when there has been such high inflation, economic retrogression and so much general misery—are incontrovertible evidence of the depth to which a determined military regime could sink their own country and the population whose interest it is supposed to serve.

Unsuitability of Military Rule

There are some who would even designate Acheampong's regime as the period of blatant and unashamed oligarchic piracy. However, we should, in a sense, be grateful that the military government's performance has provided the strongest evidence for the unsuitability of military rule. It has educated us and, hopefully, we shall in future receive news of a military takeover with the necessary circumspection and healthy scepticism.

All this leads to the third fact, and that is, assuming the present mood of the country has any lasting elements in it, future military coups would certainly require, much more than an early morning stealthy march to Broadcasting House to announce the removal of unarmed members of a civilian regime and the muzzling of defenceless kith and kin, whose protection against external enemies is the reason for the maintenance of the Armed Forces on the tax-payer's money.

On the other hand, it must also be said that those whose detestation of military rule has reached such a pitch as to implant in their minds the desire to abolish the Armed Forces, are simply being naive and unrealistic. It really demands more than the mere passage of a law to abolish an army that is determined to stay on. Moreover, this country already has an army, and it needs one not for simply cosmetic purposes but for fighting any of our peer countries that might be tempted to wage war against us. The fact is, therefore, that henceforth neither can the Armed Forces push the civilian population around with impunity nor can civilians do away with or disregard the presence of the Armed Forces.

But this country cannot long survive the present unnecessary explosive atmosphere of "no peace, no war" between the military and the civilian population. A way has to be found out; but this is not possible unless the present SMC clearly demonstrates its determination to take realistic steps towards harmony and reconciliation. It must, first of all,

manifest a resolution to put its own house in order. This is not to say that we are unaware of the current commissions and committees of enquiry. The truth of the matter is that as citizens of this country, military and civilians, we are not equally blameable for the present economic and political mess. Is it, for instance, being seriously contended that, while the properties of former civilian politicians are being confiscated and reconfiscated, persons being deprived of their citizenship, deported and their property seized, there is as yet no evidence on which to drastically deal with a single important member of the military regime and his collaborators, military or civilian, foreign or national?

Unfortunately, the half-measures taken by the "new" SMC are only creating the impression that the evasive of July 5 has only provided an opportunity for a gigantic shielding and cover-up operation. Too many irresponsible officers are escaping scrutiny and censure; their counterparts in the public services and private business who collaborated with them also appear to be slipping through the net, and people are becoming sarcastic. If the Armed Forces really want to rehabilitate their image, then they need to do some house-cleaning to show us that we are operating a single standard of public morality and accountability. Then only can the unfortunate polarisation evaporate into a bad nightmare.

This particular type of reconciliation is necessary because the Armed Forces indeed do have a role to play in society—to ensure the security of the state. The wholesale condemnation of all military personnel can only harm this country in the long run. Not all of us, military and civilian, came under the polluting influence of the leadership of Acheampong and his close associates.

We therefore should learn to separate the goats from the sheep, those unformed politicians who have displayed their ineptitude and cupidity beyond doubt, and the ordinary officers who have done no more and no less than their normal duties. It is as unfair to blame the whole civilian population for the failings of their immediate rulers as it is not equitable to permit the self-centredness of a few military officers to tarnish the image of the entire Armed Forces.

The restoration of respect and confidence should be the beginning of our search for the kind of Armed Forces that we need and want in this country. The present SMC has no less a duty to leave behind a respectable and respected military than the National Liberation Council (NLC) did in 1969.

Matters Arising

THE SEMANTICS OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT — A REJOINDER

T. Kodjo-Ababio Nubour

It is certain that Prof. Kwasi Wiredu's Open Letter to the SMC on the Semantics of National Government in the *Legon Observer* Vol. X, No. 1 constitutes a new development in what might be termed the national search for a suitable system of government for this country. The said letter, rich in logic and philosophically profound, does not merely raise semantical problems in the SMC's instructions to the Constitutional Committee but as well implies a permanent National Government in which political parties and associations are a necessary part, the very foundation.

Prof. Wiredu states that "there appears at the present time to be something like a consensus on the need for a National Government in this country". However, "a great many citizens of this country entertain the gravest misgivings about" the SMC's national government proposal because of "the assumption that the proposal for a national government implies the outlawing of political associations". This latter thinking, he holds, is "a simple fallacy". According to him, the expression "national government" normally refers to a government embracing all the parties in a state. One cannot, for example, describe Acheampong's government a national government but rather a non-party government.

Talking about a non-party government, one needs to be clear about what Prof. Wiredu understands by it. He says that this notion and that of a government not formed on the basis of parties should be differentiated. The one is broader, the other narrower. A government not formed on the basis of parties might rightly be called a non-party government but so also would that formed in such a way as to reflect the relative strengths of the parties in a nation.

What Is a Political Party?

Thus a non-party government is one in which either nobody in the government belongs to a party or individuals from a number of parties form the government. This latter conforms to Professor Wiredu's notion of a national government, as we shall see presently. When in the preceding paragraph, therefore, he says Acheampong's government was a non-party government he means by this phrase that type of government in which the members do not belong to parties.

From the foregoing it should be understood that for Prof. Wiredu a party government is one in which only the members of the winning party form the government. And it is this kind of government he tells the SMC he does not want, in the following set terms: "I am mindful, Sirs, of the fact that your proposing a National Government was motivated by the quest for national unity and stability. I quite agree that when parliamentary elections are organised on a rigidly party-financed basis and government is formed by the winning party to the exclusion of all losers, national unity and stability can become an elusive target. Undoubtedly this kind of politics has not been conducive to the achievement of these aims in our national history. If this is what you mean by saying that the nation is not ready for party politics, then your position is one which, by all contemporary indications, is shared by most shades of opinion in the country. And I for one would hope that the nation will not be thought to be ready for this kind of politics so long as there is a significant variegation in political opinion".

Tracking down the aspects of the national government Prof. Wiredu would like to see in Ghana, we should begin by observing that he holds that political parties or associations are indispensable to the notion of national government. But now, what does he understand by a political party? He supposes that "a political party is defined as any organisation of freely associating citizens concerned with the mobilisation of opinion for the purpose of influencing the conduct of national affairs or of participating in government through parliamentary representatives in pursuit of stated national goals" (our emphasis).

Thus, for example, the Legon Society on National Affairs which seeks to influence the conduct of national affairs is qualified as a political party. It is the same thing if the Society has some of its members as parliamentary representatives not of the Society itself but of some constituencies somewhere in the country, which representatives would carry to parliament the views of the Society. Such representa-

tives are, however, not controlled by such a political party which neither nominates nor sponsors them and are therefore not responsible to it for their political behaviour. They are independent candidates sponsored by the state.

This kind of situation, Prof. Wiredu analogizes, is akin to that in which a person belongs to some religious organization or professional association and stands for election into parliament not as a nominee of any of these but as an independent candidate who, if and when elected, is capable of making the views of such an organization or association known to parliament in a debate seeking to make some law that affects the former. Such a candidate is completely independent of his organization or association so far as his national duties as a parliamentarian are concerned.

This, Prof. Wiredu holds, is not incompatible with allegiance to such organization or association. Which is true. You may have a Progress Party of the Busia type but such a party would merely be like the Presbyterian Church, the members of which could stand elections but would not be responsible to the party for their parliamentary behaviour — they not being nominated and or sponsored by it.

No Party Nomination

If one asks Prof. Wiredu about the political programme or politics of such independent candidates one is told that the latter, belonging to political parties or associations which have their own policies, would advocate such policies.

Summing up Prof. Wiredu's notion of a national government we may say that it is one in which political parties and associations of the nature of the National Alliance of Liberals and the Legon Society on National Affairs form the basic units; in which individuals belonging to such political parties or associations shall stand for elections, independently of the parties which shall not nominate candidates, who are sponsored by the state but shall nevertheless advocate the policies of their parties; in which constituency representatives belonging to different political parties form the government to pursue stated national goals; in which, therefore, no single party shall form the government to the exclusion of all others. This is what we should like to call a non-parties-nominated national government or NOPANO-NATIGOV.

It appears to us that there is much originality in this Nonapanatigov notion which should recommend itself to any society in which there are no serious fundamental disagreements regarding the basic assumptions of the socio-economic system. That is to say that Prof. Wiredu's arrangement corresponds to that stage of historical development where classes are on the eve of their own disappearance and the institutional state has almost withered away. For, there, you have almost all individuals within the body polity sharing fundamental common interests but who disagree only about the secondary question of how best to realize such interests.

It is in such a society that one can have stated national goals which all sections of it would naturally, that is, freely, instinctively, pursue. Such goals or what Prof. Wiredu also calls "the Common Good" would never be contradictory: you would not have workers demanding wage increments whilst employers, the bourgeoisie, demand decreases or a freezing of wages.

But, you know, our present society manifests generously this latter contradictory situation. Thus in today's class-wretched-Ghana the idea of "the Common Good" has no reference since what is "the Common Good" of all wage earners is "the Common Hatred" of the wage payers, the bourgeoisie, that is, the employers. But the whole of Prof. Wiredu's system is founded on this irreferential category

and therefore crumbles with the disintegration of that category. This means that what political organization best corresponds to our present historical condition must reflect the conflicting interests within the society - and that organization is party politics.

For The Record

BELOW is the full text of the Head of State's speech on radio and television on the declaration of a State of Emergency, November 6, 1978.

Fellow Countrymen

I have come to the studio tonight to speak to you about certain dangerous happenings on the national labour front which are posing a serious threat to the nation's social, economic and political stability. My intention also is to acquaint you with the consequences and implications which this grave labour situation bears for the entire people of this country.

Countrymen, you would recall that in my broadcast to the nation as Chairman of the reconstituted Supreme Military Council on July 10, 1978, I laid bare before you all the essential features of the type of economic policy and strategy that the Government intended to adopt and the reasons which have compelled us to seek to go in that direction. Specifically, I did stress the point that the greatest challenge facing our country today was that posed by the high rate of inflation.

Countrymen, no state under the sun can effortlessly survive the affliction of such vicious and crippling economic and monetary adversity. It stands to reason therefore that some very decisive and positive steps had to be taken to halt and reverse this negative trend once and for all.

It is in the light of all this that we have had to adopt radical and austere measures which are bound to hurt all of us and which would further place upon all of us without exception the moral obligation to make considerable sacrifices all round and to endure a certain amount of hardship in anticipation of a better tomorrow.

In embarking upon all these economic reform measures, we were not thinking of ourselves as a Government, let alone seeking to court glory or praise for ourselves. We were more mindful about tomorrow, about the successor political administration when we have left the scene and we were indeed motivated solely by the supreme interest of the nation.

Regrettably, however, recent events on the labour front have shown that amongst our population today, there are some who are determined to prove through means which are at once crude, foul, violent and criminal, that they are such a special breed or class of Ghanaians who should not be counted upon to suffer with all of us in order to gain the benefits to be ultimately and surely derived from the economic reform measures which we have set ourselves.

I am of course referring to those involved in the wave of strikes which have threatened the peace and stability of this country for some time now, and the hoarding and profiteering activities of some commercial houses and retailers, the activities of smugglers and importers and some trade malpractices.

In the recent past the industrial calm of this country has been threatened by not less than 80 strikes and lockouts involving over 70,000 workers of various sectors leading to

the loss of several millions of cedis and more disturbingly, loss to life and property.

It is noted that not only unionized labour are engaged in this onslaught on the industrial peace of the country but also non-unionized labour such as the Association of Civil Servants of Ghana and even Management personnel such as the Engineers of the Electricity Corporation who plunged Accra into a state of darkness from about mid-day on Friday, 3rd November till late evening the next day.

What is particularly distressing about all these strike actions is the fact that everyone of the individual groups involved decided to ignore the statutory and administrative procedures laid down for dealing with workers' grievances and treat with unjustifiable contempt conciliatory moves which had actually been initiated in response to the demands and claims made by them.

It is important to note that Government has never disturbed any of the arrangements which have been agreed between workers and Management for processing workers demands, claims and grievances.

On the contrary, Government recognizes the necessity for instituting these arrangements and has at all times sought to observe and protect the status quo against abuse.

Unionized workers are fully aware that in terms of their collective agreements, which represent formal contracts of employment between them and their employers, the appropriate forum for the determination of their claims and demands is the standing negotiating Committees existing within their various establishments.

Where agreement could not be reached on any issues by the standing Negotiating Committee, the parties to the dispute would then mutually decide to approach the Commissioner responsible for Labour to appoint a sole conciliator to go into the matter. If there is still no settlement, the Industrial Relations Act makes allowance for an additional Conciliator to be appointed by the Labour Commissioner.

In situations where all these steps have not produced the desired results, the Labour Commissioner can refer the matter finally to an Arbitrator whose findings would be binding on the parties involved, according to the terms of the Industrial Relations Act. With respect to non-unionized labour similar arrangements exist.

If the issues that were supposed to have occasioned all these strikes had been allowed to go through the full test of the mandatory or relevant procedures, it is highly inconceivable that it would have become necessary to stage any strikes at all.

It was also often the case that in staging some of these strikes, the individual groups of workers did not care very much about whatever conciliatory steps their national union leadership or the Congress itself were pursuing on their behalf, through the normal channels. As if in a stampede these workers just decided, group after group, to set aside the law, the ethics and all the known requirements of normal industrial relations and to lay down their tools.

But if laying down tools or withdrawing services was all that these workers set out to do, perhaps our concern would have been less. The fact of the matter however is that some of these workers were bent on doing a lot more than merely going on strike. They wantonly damaged and destroyed their employers' property; they tampered with sensitive installations and employed their technical skills to sabotage the

means for restoring services.

The leaders of these various groups of strikers, with whatever intentions, went underground and failed to come out from their hiding places to sit with Management to go into their claims and demands. They finally surfaced for dialogue only after satisfying themselves that the predetermined effects of their diabolical schemes had started to tellvisibly and severely on their innocent fellow citizens.

All the foregoing observations apply in varying respects to the strike actions of the Civil Aviation Engineers, the Breweries workers, Ghana and the Engineers of the Electricity Corporation.

Countrymen, the question which the Government is asking itself and which all patriotic Ghanaians should be asking themselves now is whether in normal Labour/Management relations we should expect to be dealing with disciplined workers legitimately pursuing their demands through the appropriate machinery or whether we should automatically expect a confrontation with misguided gangs of saboteurs, subversionists, and obstructionists.

Government is disappointed by this misuse of the strike weapon by workers to seek redress for their grievances. We see in this wanton show of strength by the striking workers, particularly in the accompanying acts of sabotage and destruction, a deliberate and co-ordinated design to disregard the economic realities of our present day national life, and to wreck the very foundations of the new economic reform measures we have initiated.

We have no illusions whatsoever that these workers are out to disturb the peace and stability of the state and I wish to take this opportunity to assure the entire nation that the Government is firmly resolved to protect the interest of the nation.

Countrymen, Government has displayed considerable flexibility and forbearance by granting a fairly sizeable package of concessions to workers in spite of the prohibitive pressures that are currently plaguing the economy and regardless also of the difficulties which such gesture could place in the way of the realization of the development content of the budget.

Typical among the relief concessions made to the workers is the tax waiver on bonus, rent allowance, night duty allowance and severance pay.

As I have earlier on stated in this address, the Government's expectations of reciprocal co-operation, restraint and understanding on the part of the workers have been betrayed. In all this welter of labour unrest, the indications are that the plight of the workers is being exploited by aspiring self-seeking politicians, foreign agents and aggrieved businessmen who fear possible exposure by current probes, and some disgruntled elements in labour and management leadership.

Countrymen, in spite of the fact that we are still in a military regime, my Government has endeavoured to be very liberal and accommodating in all our actions. We have now reached a stage in our national life when it has become expedient for the reconstituted Supreme Military Council to adjust its attitude in keeping with the circumstances which the current events demand.

We have therefore resolved to invoke all the measures which go with the declaration of a state of emergency with immediate effect and to lead this nation in that spirit. I would like to assure the nation that we shall return that to normalcy as the situation improves.

Accordingly, the Government has firmly decided as follows:

(a) The main objectives of the 1978/79 Budget shall not be sacrificed. The current budgetary deficit in the region of C800 million already aggravated by the additional pressure of C100 million resulting from the new relief concessions granted to labour shall not be pushed beyond the limit that the economy can possibly bear.

(b) All the economic reform measures initiated by Government to sustain the objectives of the budget shall be pursued to the letter and any attempts detected to be aimed at sabotaging the Government's efforts in this direction shall be dealt with promptly and severely.

(c) The resort to pressure, blackmail, strike action, and damage or tampering with Employer's property or installations by workers to secure redress outside the framework of normal procedure shall be regarded as criminal acts against the security of the State and dealt with in accordance with the relevant laws of the country.

(d) An investigation is to be mounted immediately by Government into the extent of damage reported to have been caused to property and installations by striking workers of Electricity Corporation of Ghana and appropriate steps taken to recover the costs involved in repairing the assessed damage from the workers concerned. In addition, disciplinary action should promptly be instituted against particular individual workers identified as being responsible for the damage caused to property or installations. For the public and private sectors, respectively, the responsible Commissioners and the Ghana Employers Association are to ensure these measures are instituted promptly and earnestly.

(e) All public and civil servants who would not have gone back to work by 8.00 a.m. tomorrow should consider themselves dismissed.

Countrymen, in closing my address I wish to appeal to you all to remain calm and law abiding and to go about your normal vocations in the assurance that Government will take all possible steps to protect life and property. Good night.

Book Review

THE HEALERS

By

Ayi Kwei Armah

East African Publishing House, Nairobi, 1978,
377 pp., 25 shillings, paperback.

Reviewed by
Jawa Apronti

Ayi Kwei Armah is not acknowledged as one of the most important craftsmen in the realm of modern fiction. His first novel raised a controversy that has not subsided in the ten years since it appeared, and he has followed up with three others which also received much critical acclaim. In his personal life, however he has struck observers as a somewhat camera-shy recluse, a "reputation" which gave birth to some wild statements about his person, notably by the American critic Charles Larson, in reply to whose speculative exaggerations Ayi Kwei Armah produced his now

well-known piece titled "Larsony" (see Asemka Vol. 4, Cape Coast; First World Vol. 1. No. 2. USA, Positive Review No. 1, Ibadan).

What, we may ask, has he been doing in the area of fiction since *Two Thousand Seasons* appeared in 1974? The last page of his fifth novel indicates that, in fact, he had completed *The Healers* in Dar es Salaam at the end of 1975. In short, far from being an "exile", he was on African soil, researching the fall of Kumasi to the forces of Sir Garnet Wolsley and producing a monumental novel of intricate structure to commemorate the centenary of that important tragic event that heralded the loss of our territory to European colonialism. Now, at last, *The Healers* has appeared.

It has more than passing historical significance. Besides commemorating the centenary mentioned above, *The Healers* (note the symbolic meaning of the title) carries forward Ayi Kwei's fictional analysis of the reasons for our continental subjugation. It has a broad canvas, stretching from the central and eastern littoral of present-day Ghana into the forest zone of Asante. At the same time, the novelist localizes the action through the clear juxtaposition of two indigenous forces - *Inspirers* and *Manipulators*.

Inspirers are those who seek to utilize their individual potential for the good of the majority of society. Like the healers of the title, they seek to awaken a people who have slept too long. *Manipulators*, on the other hand, are opportunistic schemers for power, ambitious men who use every trick they can marshal to gain control over their fellow men so as to attain the self-aggrandisement at their gluttonous hearts yearn for. The applicability of this bi-focal categorisation to our current African reality must be obvious to the careful reader.

Structurally, the novel is reminiscent of authentic folklore tradition. It is divided into seven parts, each of which is sub-divided into six sections. The narrative can therefore be viewed as being "told" in seven weekly cycles, with a day of rest in each week. The atmosphere of a spoken narrative is clearly underlined on the second page by the invocative of the "tongue" of the story-teller, descendant of masters in the art of eloquence". As early as this, the tragedy of unwarranted suspicion of murder hanging over the head of the hero, 20-year old Densu, is also adumbrated. Of this, more later, after a description of the argument of the novel.

As was the case in earlier Armah novels, the protagonist is marginalised. When solitary marginalisation proved ineffectual in *The Beautiful Ones*, and *Fragments*, Armah turned in his third fourth and fifth novels to co-operative marginalisation. The "Saviours" of society are compelled to distance themselves from the canker-worm eating into the fabric of society so as, from the outside, to concoct the drug compounded of abstinence, meditation and selflessness which alone will purge the society of the plague of manipulators. In *The Healers*, Densu casts in his lot with the reclusive healer Damfo who has withdrawn from normal society into the forests to pursue his vocation of healing, away from the defilement, treachery and worldliness of competitors for political power such as Ababio. But he is in touch with society, or many others flee to him in disenchantment at the class emptiness of the models set by contemporary princely authority. That Damfo is no mere theorist is proved by his singular role later in preparing the Asante army for their final combat with the invading British forces. The marginal man has shed the inactivity

of the Teacher in Beautiful Ones!

If Ayi Kwei's model is the healers, that model also carries with it an unfortunate and redundant air of mystification. In the early chapters when we are treated to a description of the games that accompany the coming of age of Densu's age group, the novelist carefully delineates his hero as one who eschews pointless competition/aggression. An athlete par excellence, he refuses to outrun his age-mates merely so as to a tract public acclaim. And later, in the sanctuary of the clear waters of the local river, he and his companion Anan dive for extended periods, and they (like the old lady Naana in *Fragments*) are able to SEE with their eyes closed. This kind of image, reminiscent though it is of the spirituality of Herman Hesse's *Sidharta*, tends to invest the main character with supernatural powers which he otherwise does not need. Although Densu is the pivot on which the narrative revolves, at none of the climactic points of the story does Densu need anything more than his human capacity for altruism, devotion and integrity to solve the problems that confront him. Indeed, these supernatural attributes are no sooner mentioned than they are dropped. Pity that the author devotes so much descriptive power to those underwater scenes.

Ayi Kwei Armah gives much evidence of being richly endowed with descriptive power. In Part II, Densu's age mate Prince Appia is discovered murdered. The novelist makes the scene live by the sheer force of his detailed description of the treacherous wounds inflicted on the deceased. Ambitious Ababio, who has previously failed to fill Densu with a cupidity for the throne, manages to direct society's suspicion to the innocent Densu. And yet, at the burial of Prince Appia, all onlookers are witnesses to Ababio's farcical "offer" to be buried alive with his beloved deceased. If the nimbleness of his limbs had failed him by just a few seconds, his "wish" would have been granted. The description of how his bluff is called is indeed memorable.

Equally memorable is the description of the Asante preparations for the decisive battle against the forces of Sir Garnet Wolseley. Indeed, the breadth of the canvas, the evocativeness of the description of the actual battle, the technical plausibility of the action all confirm the favourable impression one gathered of Ayi Kwei's description of a battle at sea in *Two Thousand Seasons*.

Armah has been criticised for projecting too pessimistic an outlook on life in his earliest novels. By the time his fourth novel *Two Thousand Seasons* appeared in 1974, it became clear that he was not without positive solutions. This impression is confirmed in *The Healers* where the amance between Densu and his mentor Damfo underlines the novelist's positive (if not optimistic) vision. These two are invested with physical and psychological attributes of a high order. Their integrity is their principal quality, an integrity to which the duplicity of manipulators such as Ababio and Buntui are a foil.

Thanks to the efficacy of these inspirers, the novel is able to close on a multi-ethnic celebration at Cape Coast beach as Wolseley sails away, and the healers note with satisfaction the positive unity that has been achieved among the various indigenous peoples, a unity that was possible only through the discomfort of the manipulators.

The texture of the novel is further enriched by several subplots, for instance the idyllic love story of Densu and Damfo's daughter Ajoa; or the bacchanalian scenes in Cape Coast when the sub-chiefs of the locality gather for a palaver in Part IV. There is a subtle hint that the drunken stupor of more than one chief in this scene must be a reflection of the

mood in which vast concessions were granted to European adventurers in past century.

The Healers is thus very much a novel related to present-day realities. Ghana and most of Africa are yet to repay the Garnet Wolseley's of contemporary times in their own coin. But, clearly, the manipulators on the political scene cannot be relied on to defend our interests. Salvation will come only when inspirers assume leadership.

TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS

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