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Editorial

TWO YEARS OF THE N.R.C.

JUST under a fortnight ago, the present military government of Ghana celebrated the Second Anniversary of its coming to power. The celebrations themselves were rather extensive and lavish, suggesting that our government is pleased with its own record over the two years.

And indeed there is some justification for the government's confident euphoria. The beggar nation which just over two years ago fed itself on a 180-day credit system has now acquired a respectable margin of foreign reserves as a result of the courageous measures taken by this government—measures such as the repudiation of dubious debts, the unilateral placing of a moratorium on some debts and the introduction of a tight import control system. Equally courageous were the decision to participate in the mining industry and the acquisition of majority shares in a number of previously foreign owned timber companies. It is relevant to note that a number of these concerns have shown increased profits since the government decided to participate. However, there have been unpleasant developments arising from these measures. Owing to the desire to restore the country to economic solvency and the consequent desire to restrict the use of our foreign exchange, government has allowed Ghana to live in an unjustifiable situation of emergency in which most consumer items and industrial raw materials have been in desperate short supply at one time or another during the two years of its administration. The effect of these shortages on the health, the morale and the general well-being of the people of Ghana is serious enough, but perhaps more serious is the effect on industry. In a situation where locally manufactured items have also been in short supply one needs no figures to enable one to realise that our industries are probably producing below capacity owing to a shortage of imported inputs and spare parts. We therefore repeat our call to government to ensure a more rational allocation of import licences than we have seen in the past two years in order that our industries and our people will not suffer unduly.

Concerning the repudiation of doubtful debts, the act of government over which Ghanaians showed such fierce jubilation about two years ago, we have reason to believe that the government has been involved in talks leading to a repudiation of the original repudiation and we have in a previous issue asked for a clarification of the matter. It is our hope that government will soon be able to issue a statement on this. Indeed we hope that the tendency for government to be silent and uninformative on certain sensitive national

developments will be eliminated altogether during this third year of its office and thereafter.

To be taken together with the government's effort to revive the economy are the efforts to provide relief to the people of this country. More than most governments this one has been very responsive to the people's needs, no doubt, as a means to securing a popular base, but some of these relief gestures have been ill-advised. For instance the restoration of certain benefits to higher civil servants appears indefensible when placed against the removal of the subsidy on Middle School Leaving Certificate Examinations; and of course we all remember that embarrassing volte-face concerning the £30 million subsidy on certain imported consumer goods. But in the main, the government's concern with the financial lot of the Ghanaian has been admirable: for instance, there have been increases in the producer prices of a number of agricultural products. The latest exercise in this direction is the adoption of the recommendation of the interim report of the Salary Review Committee which calls for graduated salary increases to employees in government service. However, as a correspondent has pointed out elsewhere in this issue, these salary increases will not amount to much if the government does nothing to arrest the rising of prices.

As has been argued elsewhere in this issue the government's efforts in the field of Foreign Relations have been perhaps the most consistently meritorious of its endeavours. The extent of the enhancement of our international image has been such that Ghana was the first African country to be invited by the United Nations to send troops to help keep peace in the Middle East. Relations with the Eastern bloc of countries frozen at the time of the 1966 coup are now very much warmer, while at the same time, the government has been able to maintain our traditional commonwealth links.

The success in the field of inter-African relations has been even more creditable. Our indifferent image in African affairs, acquired largely as a result of the disastrous policy of Dialogue with South Africa, has been redeemed through the adoption of a more militant and reasonable stand on the issues raised by Southern Africa and Portuguese domination. In recognition of this new stand, we were rewarded last year with the Chairmanship of the O.A.U. Liberation Committee to whose fund the government has in recent months paid Ghana's accumulated arrears. It is our hope that the government will be able to maintain its respectable and realistic stand in African affairs and that the third year which they have entered will see an improvement in our relations with

our immediate neighbours, the Ivory Coast and Togo.

The more practical business of administering the country from day to day has in the last two years not been without lapses. The painful oil crisis which we went through some weeks ago was not due immediately to the oil cutback. It was obvious that an explanation was necessary, yet the government did the most convenient thing of keeping quiet and making the Arabs take the blame. It worked well then, but we may not always have scapegoats at our disposal. The spate of cruel military drilling inflicted on civilians accused or suspected of various crimes has not completely been abated and it is our thinking that this is contrary to the spirit of the rule of law. Equally unacceptable has been the practice of sending the military to remove citizens surreptitiously from their homes for "questioning." There are clear-cut rules for dealing with criminals or suspects and we would urge an absolute reliance on these accepted methods in future.

The government has recently announced that it is going to invite civilians to participate in the administration of the country by serving on three bodies which are to be set up, namely the Charter of Redemption Committee, the National Advisory Council, and the Council for National Economic Planning. In fact already the decision to form a 36-member consultative Advisory Committee has been announced. Undoubtedly, the issue of civilian participation is important and the **Legon Observer** would be the first to welcome any signs of the beginning of a genuine return to civilian rule. However, the measures announced are vague and it does not seem that the civilians will have any authoritative voice even though they may come in for some blame if things go wrong. It is because we feel that their participation will not be genuine, that is to say authoritative, that we entertain serious reservations about this recent announcement.

Finally, we believe that the N.R.C. has over the past two years shown evidence of its good intentions — even if it has made some mistakes. In the youth in particular it has aroused a keen sense of purposeful patriotism which it would do well to encourage, if it can. It has been responsive to the needs of the workers and also to some extent of the farmers. More has to be done in the way of controlling prices, constructing feeder roads to bring the fruits of Operation Feed Yourself to the markets, and to ensure that low-cost accommodation is abundant and really of low cost.

Any appraisal of this government's work over the last two years cannot fail to mention the vital area of Agriculture. Accordingly we propose to discuss it fully in a future issue.

Africa

GHANA AND THE WORLD—TWO YEARS OF REALISM

By

A Correspondent

After two years in office the National Redemption Council has pursued a dynamic African policy that has redeemed Ghana's image which had been severely tarnished by the reactionary foreign policy of the Busia government. By the time Colonel Acheampong came into power in January 1972, Ghana's image in Africa was one of which Ghanaians could not be too proud. Because of Busia's obstinate pursuit of the perverse and naive dialogue policy, Ghana had lost face in progressive African circles. In order to fully appreciate the significant change of policy since January 1972, it will be useful to cast a backward glance at the circumstances leading to Ghana's loss of position in the forefront of African nationalism between February 1966 and January 1972.

The cardinal principle of Nkrumah's African policy was summed up in his famous statement, "The independence of Ghana is meaningless unless it is linked up with the total liberation of Africa." In pursuit of the objective of total African emancipation, Nkrumah devoted considerable energies and financial resources to granting assistance to freedom fighters and also incidentally to supporting opponents of African leaders with whom he did not agree. He became so absorbed in the question of African liberation and unity that he increasingly shifted his attention from internal Ghanaian problems to African and third world affairs without succeeding in maintaining a proper balance between his two pre-occupations. He allocated so much financial resources to the cause of African liberation that one of his racist opponents nastily but quite accurately called him "the Paymaster-General of African nationalism." It was then generally felt in this country that the interests and welfare of Ghana had been relegated at best to a secondary position in Nkrumah's scale of priorities, and this was resented. When he was overthrown in February 1966 while on a peace mission to Hanoi, his successors felt that the balance should be redressed. They therefore concentrated their energies on internal affairs and kept a low profile on African and world problems, even undertaking some objectionably reactionary acts in the wake of the anti-Nkrumaist euphoria.

The inward looking attitude was carried over into the Busia regime. Busia tried to strengthen the bridges that had been built with the West and which had become weakened towards the end of Nkrumah's rule. Busia does not appear to have derived much benefit from this strengthening of ties with the West, if one considers the adamantly unsympathetic stand that those countries took over our foreign debts. On African problems Busia remained generally aloof, only doing the absolute minimum required of any O.A.U. member. When he did venture into an African question in a big way, his intervention was disastrous. In concert with President Houphouet-Boigny of the Ivory Coast he proposed the ill-conceived and unrealistic policy of dialogue with South Africa, which was internally resisted by various sections of the Ghanaian community. Under Busia, then, Ghana had not only lost its position in the vanguard of African liberation, but it had degenerated into something of a negative partner and worse still a fifth columnist. The country's reputation was therefore at a very low ebb in progressive African circles when the military took over the reins of power from Busia in January 1972.

True Positive Neutrality

In the area of foreign relations the N.R.C.'s policy has been marked by realism and the desire to maintain the traditional neutralist position of Ghana. Even though as a result of the repudiation of certain debts, relations between Ghana and most western countries have been cool, that is to say not overtly as warm as under Busia, the relations have been correct even if not particularly cordial. Relations with countries of the socialist bloc which remained in a state of slumber under the Busia government have been improved. Trade protocols and cultural agreements with eastern countries allowed to lapse after the overthrow of Nkrumah have been renewed, and the great cordiality and exuberance with which the Hungarian president was received here last November was clearly intended to emphasize the warmth that characterises the new relationships between Ghana and the eastern bloc of socialist countries.

Ghana has maintained her traditional links with the Commonwealth, and it was fully represented at the Commonwealth heads of government meeting in Ottawa last year, though at a lower level. Ghana has also played an active role in the work of the United Nations Organisation and it must have been a matter of great pride for the government and the country at large that Ghana was the first African country to be invited

to send troops for the peace-keeping operations in the Middle East.

But it is on the African level that the military government has made the greatest impact and redeemed Ghana's reputation. The N.R.C.'s African policy has been marked by pragmatism, dynamism and realism, and its guiding principles are good neighbourliness, inter-African co-operation, and a commitment to total African liberation. Ever since Ghana's independence, relations with Togo had never been very healthy for one reason or another. The first military government of Ghana tried some rapprochement which did not bear much fruit and which was killed during Busia's government, possibly through no fault of Busia's. Under the N.R.C., Ghana's relations with Togo have become normalised: the Ghana-Togo border is open for 24 hours a day at Aflao, permitting the flow of people and goods both legitimately and otherwise; visa formalities have been abolished between the two countries, and for those living in the border towns, identity cards are accepted as valid travel documents, to enable them to visit relatives without too many administrative handicaps. The continuing smuggling of goods across the border is a major source of worry to the Ghanaian authorities, and it looks as if the Togolese government is not being as co-operative on this point as the Ghanaian leaders have the right to expect. Another source of worry to the Ghanaian authorities is the existence of the so-called National Liberation Movement for Western Togoland and the support it appears to enjoy in influential Togolese circles, about which we shall deal later in this paper.

Permanent Joint Commissions

In pursuit of the policy of good neighbourliness and regional co-operation, electrical power from Akosombo is now being sold to Togo and Dahomey, and five Permanent Joint Commissions have been set up by Ghana and each of Togo, the Ivory Coast, Upper Volta, Niger and Mali for co-operation in several fields including health, transport and communications, political, economic and cultural matters. These Commissions, in fact, did exist before the N.R.C. came into power, but apart from the Ghana-Ivory Coast one, none of these had been functioning effectively. What the N.R.C. has done is to reactivate them and to have regular and effective consultations with them. Similarly, the Joint Border Demarcation Commissions which existed between Ghana and the Ivory Coast and Ghana and the Upper Volta are being encouraged in their work. The N.R.C.

has set up one such commission to demarcate Ghana's boundary with Togo, and all indications are that work is progressing satisfactorily.

As further proof of the N.R.C.'s desire to maintain cordial relations with Ghana's neighbours the government has reviewed the Aliens Compliance Order of 1970 whose indiscriminate and tactless application alienated many of Ghana's neighbours. While protecting the interests of Ghanaians and saving them from unnecessary competition from outsiders, the government has reviewed the Order to make it more humane and less arbitrary. It has systematised the regulations governing migrant workers in Ghana so that certain aliens can continue to earn an honest living in this country while contributing to the national economy.

Relations with Guinea

Ghana's desire for co-operation and good neighbourliness has not been limited to her immediate neighbours with whom she is condemned to live and with whom therefore the maintenance of good relations is a matter of political necessity and common sense. It has been extended to cover countries that are not so close to her. Last year saw the restoration of diplomatic relations with Guinea with whom Ghana had fallen out since the overthrow of Nkrumah in February 1966. Last year too, Ghana signed technical, cultural and economic agreements with Liberia and Uganda. The agreement with Uganda provides for co-operation in several fields, including the exchange of advisers, experts, technicians, scholars, university personnel etc. It was under this agreement that 59 Ghanaian teachers left for Uganda last year to help solve part of the problem created by the departure of Asians from Uganda.

In addition to these bilateral agreements of co-operation with individual African countries, the government has taken keen interest in regional co-operation. It has shown great enthusiasm for the establishment of a West African Economic Community, and Ghana took an active part in the Constituent Ministerial Meeting of the projected West African Economic Community grouping all the 14 countries in West Africa, which was held in Lome last December. Ghana is shortly to host a meeting of a committee of experts to draft a treaty for consideration by the Ministerial Meeting later in the year. The keen interest taken by the government in this regional grouping indicates a healthy departure from Ghana's African policy under Nkrumah. Nkrumah was extremely suspicious of regional groupings, seeing them as divisive forces likely to retard the achievement

of a continental union. The present policy of proceeding by stages appears much more realistic since it seeks to bring together national entities having more clearly identifiable and immediate common interests, without ruling out the prospect of the various regional groupings eventually coming together on a continental level. This gradualist approach may not find favour with certain radicals, but it has the virtues of flexibility and realism and hence better chances of success.

It is especially on the question of African liberation that the N.R.C. has shown the greatest dynamism and determination to earn the esteem of all progressive Africans. At one of his earliest press conferences after getting into power, Colonel Acheampong declared the intention of his government to do all in its power to work concretely towards the liberation of those areas of Africa still under colonial rule. To this end one of the most effective demonstrations of this declaration of good intentions was to pay up more than half of the over \$250,000 that Ghana had accumulated in arrears since 1965 in respect of contributions

to the Liberation Committee Fund of the O.A.U. The outstanding balance, it is believed, has since been made good. In addition to these normal obligations the N.R.C. pledged and offered material assistance amounting to about \$380,000 to the Liberation Committee, a large bulk of which went to Guinea-Bissau to speed up the liberation of that colony which has since declared its independence. Last year also saw the holding of the 21st and 22nd sessions of the O.A.U. Liberation Committee, both of which were held under the chairmanship of our Commissioner for Foreign Affairs, Major Kwame Baah, and the first of which was held here in Accra. In view of Busia's disastrous performance in and retrograde views on African Liberation, the choice of Ghana as a venue for the Liberation Committee meeting is in itself a recognition of Ghana's renewed commitment to African emancipation, for which the N.R.C. deserves full credit.

On the question of African liberation, it does appear that the government's intention is not to restrict its discussion to a governmental level

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only, but to arouse in the people a consciousness of its necessity. It is for this reason that the N.R.C. set up the African liberation Fund with a target of C150,000 as a way of getting the ordinary people to become involved both mentally and in a direct material way with the problem of African liberation. In addition the government last year launched the "Volunteers for African Freedom" project to arouse the interest of young men and women who might want to work with liberation movements in their areas of specialisation, or to help with administrative problems in liberated areas, or to volunteer for service in other African countries where their skills may be needed. We are not in possession of facts to show how enthusiastically volunteers have come forward or contributions have been made to the fund, but it would appear that the campaigns need intensification, because consciousness at the popular level is a crucial factor in such matters.

The N.L.M.W.T. and Togo

In all this impressive record of achievement, there is one nagging problem which the N.R.C. needs to tackle with tact and firmness in the third year of their rule upon which they have just entered, and this is the problem of our relations with one of our immediate neighbours, The Republic of Togo. Even though no efforts have been spared to maintain very cordial relations with Togo — witness the frequency with which the leaders of Ghana and Togo have met—it looks as if General Eyadema is not exactly reciprocating our goodwill. We have already mentioned the issue of smuggling; there is also the free flow and open (black market) exchange of cedis in Togo, which can be considerably minimised with a little more co-operation from the Togolese authorities. But the most serious problem is that of the tacit encouragement being given to the partisans of the so-called National Liberation Movement of Western Togoland operating on both sides of the border. Even though there is very strong suspicion that these minority secessionist elements who are asking for a reunification of what used to be the two Togolands are being supported and encouraged by certain highly placed elements in the Republic of Togo, the Togolese government has not found it necessary to denounce these agitators and dissociate itself from them. The fact too that President Eyadema intervened to secure the release of Ghanaian citizens arrested at Ho for secessionist activities during his last visit there, and the fact that he is not prepared to sign any communique in which mention of the secessionist movement is made,

leaves one with the uncomfortable impression that he is not unaware of or unsympathetic to the agitations of those seeking to secede from Ghana and join Togo.

It is also known that at one point when the Ghanaian government in a very subtle diplomatic move proposed a Confederation between Ghana and Togo as a way of solving the problem of those who had divided loyalties between the two countries, the Togolese government replied that it would consider such a proposal only after an initial condition had been fulfilled, namely that the Volta Region of Ghana should become reunified with Togo. In the light of this demonstration of very bad faith on the part of the Togolese authorities, the N.R.C. is well advised to tread with circumspection before anybody bullies it into making any further concession to Eyadema in the name of good neighbourliness and African co-operation and unity. Bad neighbours must be given their just deserts and no more.

This minor irritation from the so-called N.L.M.W.T. and their Togolese supporters apart, there can be no doubt that in terms of foreign relations in general and African affairs in particular, the N.R.C. has achieved notable success within the last two years and restored to Ghana the great esteem that it enjoyed in the not too distant past. It is commendable that the government has been able to maintain the necessary balance between national problems and international preoccupations; this sense of equilibrium seems to have eluded all preceding Ghana governments. In this connection it deserves to be recorded that we have carried our just portion of the African burden within the limits of our resources. Perhaps the most commendable aspect of this record of achievement by the N.R.C. is that all these efforts have been made and successes obtained in sobriety and without undue flamboyance and extravagant fanfare.

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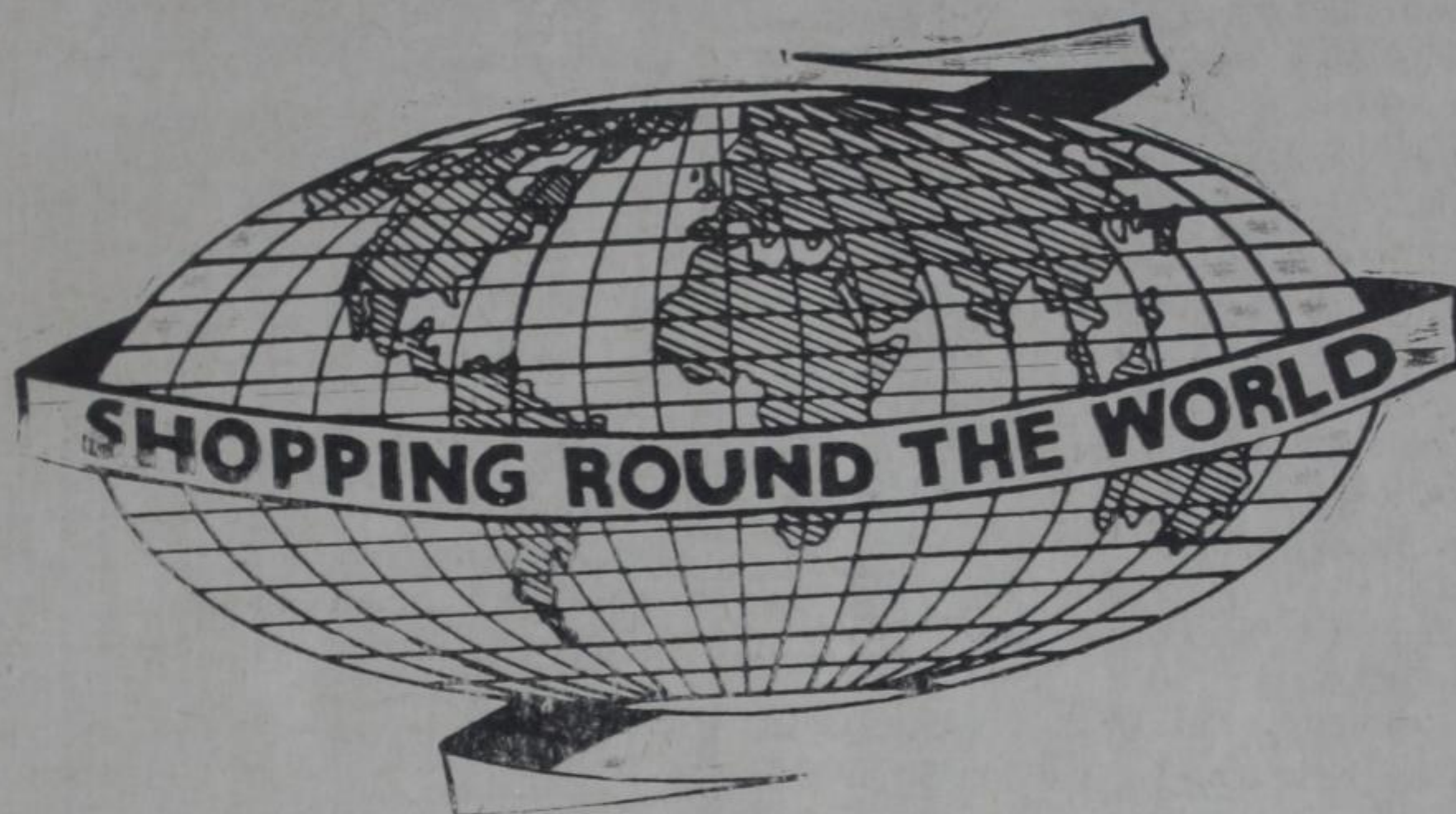
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The Economy

THE N.R.C. AND THE ECONOMY

By

Kwabena Manu

In reviewing the state of the economy last year we were charitable enough to point out that it was unfair to expect the N.R.C. to provide answers to the many difficulties facing the country within the relatively short period of one year. By their own criterion two years is long enough for a proper and objective appraisal to be made of their performance concerning the management of the economy. It is not our purpose to ask whether the N.R.C. had more or less to offer the nation than the civilian government when they seized power, what we need to consider is their progress in pursuing the promises made to us since then. Inspired (we are told) by an exuberant patriotism, the N.R.C. took power and offered, we should remember, to administer a country which had seen one of the most massive devaluations in recorded memory, a country barely solvent internationally, limping along under a crippling burden of foreign debts, a country saddled with massive unemployment and strong inflationary pressures, a country ruled by money power interests and worst of all, a country tearing itself apart with tribalism.

What was the N.R.C.'s response to all these problems? First the currency had to be revalued, import licensing system and export bonuses re-introduced and subsidies placed on certain imported commodities designated essential to our survival, but later removed. The N.R.C.'s second idea was the importance it attached to the principle that everyone should work, and its antipathy to all kinds of idleness. The philosophy of Self-Reliance was underscored by such slogans as "Hards are for Working, not for Begging," Operation Feed Yourself, etc.

↓ The N.R.C. began the unpleasant task of administering a tottering economy in a very purposeful manner. In the cocoa industry, which is the mainstay of the economy, the obnoxious chit system was abolished and replaced with cash payment; dubious buying agents who constantly diverted funds meant for cocoa purchases were summarily dismissed. The timber industry was also scrutinised and fraudulent practices which were prevalent were removed.

Guaranteed minimum farm prices have been announced for a number of crops including sugar cane, rice, tobacco, cocoa and cotton to give

incentives for farmers, although whether the prices offered are sufficient to induce increased output is another matter. On the housing front, vigorous efforts have been made by the N.R.C. to build cheaper houses for the low income earners; however, it has turned out that the houses are not as cheap as expected and few, if any, low income earners can afford to acquire them. The N.R.C. can also claim success in the area of economic nationalism by having taken majority shares in the timber and mining industries which had been owned and controlled by foreign concerns. All in all, one can say that the government has given evidence of very good intentions during its two years of office.

Improvement in Living Standards

To many people, the N.R.C. has scored well on the popularity chart; what remains to be seen is whether the measures taken were sufficient to get the economy moving again. We propose therefore to discuss in very broad terms whether the policies adopted by the N.R.C. in the past two years have led to any material improvements in living standards, whether there has been any greater economic efficiency and whether we have managed to reduce social stresses. In the past two years, we have witnessed a tremendous increase in the cost of living. From a national annual average of 206.1 (Base: March 1963 = 100) the consumer price index jumped to 284.0 in August 1973 — an increase of about 37%. Yet some commentators will have us believe rather whimsically that we have never had it so good. Such assertions are made either from sheer ignorance of the available facts or they are meant as a piece of vulgar propaganda.

It is even more strange when attempts are made to brainwash us into believing that the main cause of inflation in Ghana can somehow be traced to external origins. Even though the phenomenon of inflation is universal, anyone who would categorically assert that inflation in Ghana has been imported from other countries must be conscious, if he has a conscience, that he is postulating a simplicity that does not exist. There is abundant evidence to suggest that the high cost of living in this country has domestic sources, forces which are much stronger than the imported ones.

Among the explanations of the inflationary trend in the country, one can single out two causes; namely, the fact that we do not produce enough to meet demand and the excessive money supply without a corresponding increase in production.

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Despite OFY and the flurry of enthusiasm accompanying it, the blunt truth is that food production has simply not been able to meet growing demand. The largest single item in the cost of living index is local food (over 40%), the production of which requires very little imports except matchets. And yet for some odd reason, farmers were denied this basic tool of their occupation and were made to live on promises of future consignments of cutlasses. And then when a consignment did finally arrive, a Commissioner of State himself had to go to the port to take delivery followed by the mass media.

In an economy where the small farmer still produces 90% of total food output, we can ignore his interest only at our discomfiture. The end result has been that local food production has not increased sufficiently to deserve the undiscerning flattery accorded the OFY by the newspapers. The unconscious humour of it all is that we are all painfully aware that prices of local food commodities keep on soaring high, and yet paradoxically we are constantly being told that food is abundant in the markets.

Salary Increases

The other cause of the rising prices in this country can be attributed in part to the unwarranted increase in the money supply over the past two years. Between June, 1971 and June, 1973 the money supply increased by over 60%. Surely such an unprecedented increase in money is bound to affect the general price level, especially if the money went into such unproductive sectors as construction and the military.

To alleviate the harmful effects of inflation on the consumer the government has granted across-the-board salary increases to certain categories of workers as well as increasing the farm prices of a number of crops, notably cocoa. While these increases are desirable from the point of view of bridging the gap between the low and the high income earners, it is a poor and dangerous method of fighting inflation; it merely puts more money into people's pockets and is unrelated in any way to increases in productivity. We are not suggesting that the farmers and the workers in the lower rung of the income ladder do not deserve the income increases; in fact from the point of view of reducing social tensions and the equitable sharing out of the national cake these increases are long overdue; what we are suggesting is that contrary to what the newspapers write, the increases will only aggravate the inflationary trend in this country so that it is an illusion to think that the

plight of the workers will be ameliorated. Curiously enough the N.R.C. left out the private sector in the salary increase which needs incentives for increased output, and offered wage increases to the government sector — the military, the police, the prisons and the civil service — whose contribution to actual supply of goods and services is minimal. The upshot of this policy is that there is going to be an increased demand on the already limited supply of goods and services without encouraging the private sector to step up production. Presumably the private sector was ignored for fear that wage increases in that sector would be passed on to consumers in the form of higher prices; if that was the reason, then the government has ignored the elementary fact that an increase in demand without a corresponding increase in supply will end up in inflation.

Trade Surplus

The one index of apparent success which the N.R.C. constantly reminds us of is the large trade surplus accumulated in the past two years. But we must remember that the trade surplus owes a lot to the favourable world price of cocoa as well as the strict administrative control of imports. The much talked about improvement in the trade surplus has been variously described as an "illusion of success", a quaint anachronistic policy of mercantilism where exports are good and desirable whereas imports are evil and damnable. As a friend cynically remarked to me, if we all decide not to honour our obligations to our families and the state, we shall all have surpluses of income at the end of the month!

What one would want to know before congratulating the government is the effect of this anachronistic policy on industrial production. The periodic shortages of locally made goods is partly an indication of the irregularity of supply of raw materials. If indeed as we suspect (more than half of our total imports go to the industrial sector) industrial production has gone down then it would be a grotesque over-statement to hail the trade surplus as a major success story.

No doubt this partly explains why the economy could only record a 3% growth rate last year. My guess is that even this growth rate is in current prices and when it is deflated by the general price index (not to mention the natural growth of population) it will be found that we achieved a negative growth rate. Even for such a prudent act as saving there is a limit beyond which it becomes meaningless. To a government that has made hoarding a crime it is unpardonable that it should indulge in the same anti-social practice.

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There is a national cost in holding these reserves in foreign banks at a time when the world's monetary situation is so uncertain and these costs affect capacity utilization in our industries, employment, and general economic development. The age when the power of a nation was measured by excess of exports over imports is gone, a nation is judged and respected by its economic power which can only come about through using all available resources, internal and external, efficiently for economic development. Of course, we are not advocating reckless use of scarce foreign exchange in the purchase of frivolous things, but the present development of a positive affection for the anachronism of neo-mercantilism seems to me not a helpful way to lift the economy from its stagnation.

National Parasites

In the area of equitable distribution of the national cake the urban elite continue to exploit the unorganised silent majority in the rural areas; the die is still heavily loaded against them in terms of social welfare amenities such as access to higher education, health, water, etc. We will need to promote a dynamic rural development programme not only to bridge the gap in the distribution of amenities but also to promote development in the areas. The Civil Service and its auxiliary parts, e.g., the military, have increasingly become national parasites. It is about time government expenditures in these sectors were cut and the resources diverted into improving the rural areas.

No doubt the N.R.C. has good intentions, we do not doubt that. What we question is the manner in which major problems are tackled. Inefficiencies still abound in the use of resources,

valuable equipment lies idle for lack of spares, state corporations continue to make losses and we do not seem to have an adequate solution to this perennial problem.

If the N.R.C. really intends to lay a solid foundations for future development of the economy, it should begin to take the management of the economy more seriously and stop the politics of self justification and survival.

Observer Notebook

NATIONAL HONOURS

The purpose of instituting national honours is to enable the state to accord recognition to the contributions made by individual citizens in those areas of national life that are considered to be of major importance. The selection of the recipients of such honours therefore often serves as an indication of the government's scale of priorities. In the past national honours have been awarded to such a motley assortment of citizens as to leave one in some doubt about what the government would consider as deserving of priority attention.

Since the NRC assumed office it has given very clear indications and evidence that it attaches the greatest importance to agriculture as the most sensible way out of our economic problems. The national honours awarded on the occasion of the January 13th celebrations this year provided further evidence of the priority attention that the government attaches to agriculture. All but one of the fourteen civilian recipients of the Grand Medal have some connection with agriculture. The citation in respect of Mr. Adu Darko, a retired broadcaster, mentioned his contribution towards the education of farmers and the rural populations in general. Some farmers whose performance had been exceptional and who had been voted the best at regional agricultural shows were among the recipients.

There were a priest and a bishop among the recipients of the awards. The citations in respect of these divines did not dwell so much on their normal duties as pastors as on the various social actions they had undertaken to assist or encourage their respective flocks to make effective contribution to the life of the society in the spirit of self-reliance. The Reverend Canon Armah was awarded the Grand Medal for actively encouraging his parishioners to establish a number of farms whose products feed the oil industry with its

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Notebook Contd.

local raw materials. The Right Reverend Bishop Dery, Catholic Bishop of Wa, was also decorated for organising and personally supervising over 400 credit unions and a large number of co-operatives in his diocese.

This departure from the past practice of awarding national honours to people whose only claim to such distinction is that they have been in the public eye for too long is most welcome. The pattern followed this year bears eloquent testimony to the fact that farmers and the other humble rural folk are being accorded the recognition they deserve in the nation. Would that this recognition will be followed by a genuine concern for the welfare of these hardworking people who contribute so much to the survival of the nation. The honour done these individuals should be seen as symbolic of the respect that should be properly accorded the totality of the farmers in the nation.

The **Observer** sends its warmest felicitations to all the recipients of the Grand Medal and salutes the wisdom of those who proposed the individual candidates.

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Letters

25 Years of Adult Education

SIR—It was fitting that the *Legon Observer* should examine briefly in its editorial of 11th January, 1974 the role of the Institute of Adult Education of the University of Ghana since it was established in 1948 as the Department of Extra-mural studies. It is true that the Institute of Adult Education has made a tremendous impact on adult education of the extra-mural kind in Ghana. But it is equally true that it has some shortcomings.

The *Legon Observer* sees the restriction to Accra of part-time degree programme as a shortcoming which needs to be corrected. There is another shortcoming which should be considered seriously, and this is the absence of a literacy programme designed to teach the illiterate population how to read and write their own language at least. Surely this kind of education is badly needed among the rural adult population. In fact, the real problem of adult education in Ghana concerns those masses of the population who are comparatively untouched as yet by any modern education system, but who, in company with the educated few, are inevitably undergoing deep-rooted social and economic changes, and who form a large section of the voters responsible for electing people into parliament whenever it becomes possible and necessary. These people have a right to understand what concerns them and the part they have to play in the community. Let us not forget that education makes a people easy to lead but difficult to drive.

It may be argued that literacy training cannot be a programme of the Institute of Adult Education which is solely concerned with the extra-mural type of education. However, it can also be counter-argued that if the Institute cannot undertake literacy campaign then it is of only limited usefulness and that it does not even respond to the real needs of the country.

Again, throughout the celebrations of the Silver Jubilee glowing tributes were paid to such people as Professor David Kimble, Mr. R. K. A. Gardiner, Professor Lalage Bown, Dennis Austin and W. Tordoff and Mr. Paul Bertelsen who laid the foundation of adult education in Ghana. It was a sad thing to note that no mention was made of the Ghanaians who took the place of Professor David Kimble as Directors before the present one took office. Professor De Graft Johnson and Mr. Kobina Hagan were once Directors of the Institute and some cognisance should have been taken of their work regardless of possible ideological differences.

Finally, the People's Educational Association (PEA) should now release the results of the Essay Competition for the Silver Jubilee, whose prizes should have been distributed to the winners during the 25th Annual New Year School.

Public Service Workers Union
Hall of Trade Unions
P.O. Box 701
Accra

P. B. Arthiabah

Civilians in The Administration

SIR—The Editor of the 'Ghanaian Times' has the right to express his disgust with Col. Acheampong's recent announcement that civilians will be appointed to serve on the National Economic Planning Committee, the Charter of Redemption Committee and the National Advisory Council which the N.R.C. has promised to set up very soon. But when he writes an editorial based on his personal feeling and equates it with the wishes of 'the masses of this country' (see the 15/1/74 editorial of the paper), someone must stand up to him and remind him to have some regard for truth.

Who are the masses? And what means did he employ to consult them before coming out with the statement that 'as far as the masses of this country are concerned, politicians cannot be expected to produce any loftier ideas than they have already exhibited throughout the years'? I doubt if any military regime anywhere in the world can rule without the advice of civilians. By appointing the three bodies, the N.R.C. will only be institutionalising and publicising what has been going on behind the scenes since it assumed office. We should encourage the new move instead of discouraging it with unfounded criticisms.

The editor further says that Ghanaians are "fed up with politicians". That needs to be properly ascertained, but it is certainly true that we are fed up with the bad 'political' advice he has been giving in his editorials to the N.R.C. in particular, and Ghanaians in general.

Legon Hall
Legon

Yaw Amoa-Antwi

The Armed Forces Military Parade

SIR—I am not a military parade fan, but I must confess that I was impressed by one thing about the massed forces' parade on January the 14th, marking the 2nd anniversary of the 1972 coup. For about thirty minutes or more, I noticed that the Head of State, in his battle dress as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, stood at attention taking the salute.

There were, of course, earlier occasions during the parade when the other members of the N.R.C. and the Regional Commissioners stood by the Head of State and took the salute, such as when the National Anthem was played or when the colours were trooped. But after these brief episodes, there stood the Commander of the Armed Forces unflinchingly firm, with the tip of his fingers to the cap, saluting the parade throughout its duration.

One could speculate about the meaning of the gesture. For instance, what was the Head of State paying homage to? Was it to the State represented by the massed forces? Or was he paying homage to the colours marching along, about which the radio commentator mumbled something to the effect of their being the symbolic representation of the heroic deeds of the forces! Was he on this occasion only acting in his capacity as the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and not as the Head of State?

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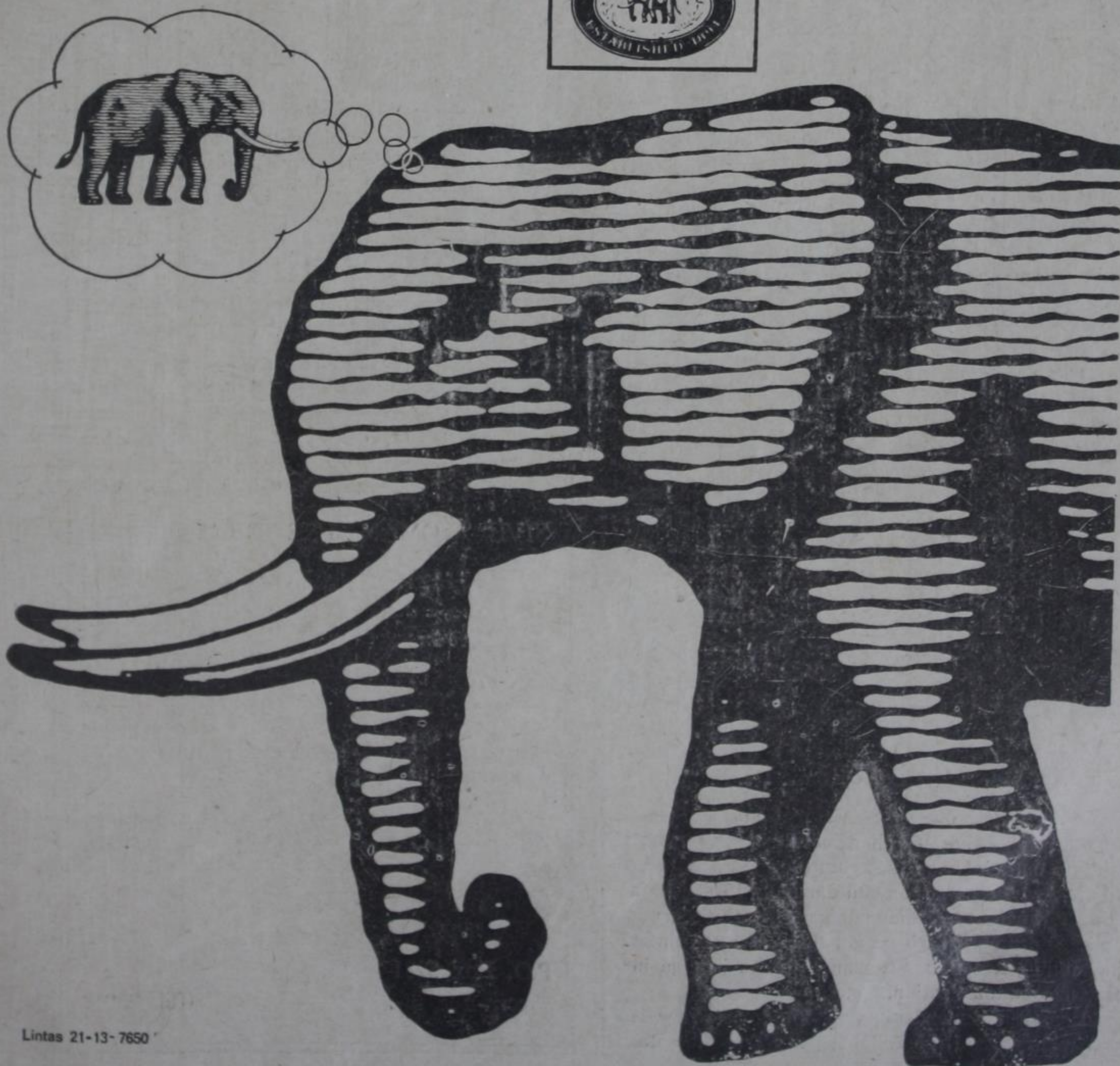
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Whatever it was, the fact remained that there was the Head of State, standing in disciplined control of his nerves and going through it all, while behind him sat the other members of the N.R.C. in comfort.

As I watched this, I said to myself, maybe here at long last we are getting a picture of the awful responsibility that leadership should involve for those called to it from our midst. If the military code has something in its tradition which teaches the self-discipline and control implied by this responsibility, we may be getting somewhere at last.

But then I recalled a story I heard the other day about the military ruler of another country who showed his authority, at a social function where he was the guest of honour, by calling for a hundred sticks of kebab to his dais with the result that his hosts didn't have the opportunity to taste even one stick of the kebab upon which they had lavished their labour and love. So I said to myself: 'Be still my heart, it is not yet time to speculate.' And I went on admiring the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces standing there in immaculate self-discipline, taking the salute for etc. etc.

Department of English
Legon

K. E. Senanu

Paradoxes And Contradictions

SIR — I read reports of Col. Acheampong's press conference at the Burma Hall at which he revealed, among other things that the country's economy is growing at the rate of 3 per cent and that the country had built foreign reserves up to ₵142.4 million by the end of 1972. I also listened to Col. Acheampong's nation-wide Radio and Television broadcast on Sunday, January 13 in which he reviewed the achievements of the N.R.C. since it came into office. The impression I got from reports of the press conference and from what I heard said on Sunday was that Ghana has moved tremendously ahead in two years and that there is plenty in the country at the moment. My heart was filled with joy.

On Tuesday, January 15, I went to the Makola market to buy sunlight and lux soap. To my utter consternation, most of the traders did not have the commodities among their wares. Others took quick suspicious glances at me. Fortunately, however, I was able to get the commodities to buy after a long search. The prices: 25 pesewas for a bar of sunlight soap and 24 for one lux soap. My heart was filled with sadness. I looked on, a little sceptic and bemused. Certainly, the empire is full of "contradictions and paradoxes."

Commonwealth Hall
Legon

Samuel T. Bofo

Criticising The Government

SIR — Colonel Bernasko and Major Selormey were reported to have exhorted Ghanaians to show courage in pointing out Governmental shortcomings.

Said Colonel Bernasko on 8th January, 1974, "It is high time Ghanaians had the courage to speak the truth in public. Post-mortems have got their own usefulness but in building a nation, we cannot always indulge in ex-post facto rationalization. etc".

In an equally commendable vein, Major Selormey is reported to have said the following day that "the Re-

volution demanded that Ghanaians would have the ability to point out the faults of those in authority".

Noble words, these! But perhaps even more important is the challenge these words throw to Ghanaians. Without any prejudice to the sincerity of our two officers, one cannot help asking whether the Ghanaian political scene, both in the past and certainly in the present, makes it easy or even safe for citizens to display the sort of integrity that is being asked of us.

This country cannot be so completely deplete of the type of man that our two commissioners wish to see. However, with the type of law we have, the sort of state-owned mass media that we sport and some occasional alarming display of hyper-sensitivity to criticism by some very important government officials, is it any wonder that not many of us bother to voice out what we think in our minds and feel in our hearts?

There is no doubt that the words spoken by Colonel Bernasko and Major Selormey are indeed noble. The two Commissioners can rest assured that there are bound to be Ghanaians who consider it not only as a right but also a sacred responsibility to offer criticism on government action when and where it becomes necessary. However, it would appear to the present writer that:

(1) until the two commissioners have won all their other colleagues around to appreciate the wisdom of their words, and (2) until important government officials cease to blackmail Ghanaians with the twin decrees on Subversion and Rumours, Colonel Bernasko and Major Selormey might as well stop wasting their own time by asking for the impossible and concentrate on the performance of their difficult tasks.

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Miscellaneous

AND IT CAME TO PASS...

Epistle No. 4

By

Santrofi

AND it came to pass in these days that there was merriment in the land. And the wherefore of all this merriment was the commemoration of the occasion when the chieftains of yesterday were replaced by the pro-consuls of today. The citizens were regaled with instruments of music and all manner of mirth. The pro-consuls, richly apparelled, received the homages of the subjects, and there was not a citizen in all the land that did not hold the emperor in great worship. The gazetteers vied with one another in the choice of hyperboles and superlatives wherewith to proclaim the encomiums of the emperor. And almost all the scribes made haste to praise the emperor, and to affirm that in all the land was neither consul nor chieftain so wise, so noble, and so fair.

The emperor, for his part, gave an account of his imperial stewardship, and in consonance with the ancient usages of the land, decided to address himself to his subjects at dawn. He agreed with the praise-singers that he had wrought mightily well, recalling the edifices that he had constructed, the numerous coaches that had been provided for communal transport, the sanity that had been brought into the economic life of the realm, the accumulation of surpluses on the balance of commerce with the outside world, and the increase in food production—which last item was not very obvious to the subjects. The emperor left out of his account, or did not have time to mention a few non-successes, not wanting to disturb the sleep of the subjects unduly. For example, he failed, or rather forgot to mention that as a result of bad planning or non-planning the distribution of commodities essential or foreign or otherwise had been most unsatisfactory. Nor was there any mention of the fact that due to inadequate transportation, occasioned principally by the dearth of spare parts, poor roads and bad planning, food had not been obtained in the urban centres in sufficient quantities.

These omissions notwithstanding, it was generally agreed that the emperor had not performed as badly as his detractors wanted to believe. That there was room for improvement was admitted by certain komissars and provincial governors who were sufficiently enlightened to call on the citizens to report cases of inefficiency and dereliction of duty. This frankness was most appreciated because, given the mediocrity of the performance of their predecessors, the proconsuls risked becoming complacent, and it was felt that the danger could only be avoided by auto-criticism since all outside criticism was labelled as hostile and destructive.

And so it did come to pass in the course of these commemorative festivities whereof I have been speaking, or rather writing, that the emperor in his gracious mercy deigned to promise that it had pleased him to admit a specified number of citizens to participate, in a counselling capacity, in the governance of the realm. This solemn declaration of pious intent was received

with mixed feelings. There were those who suspected that the emperor was only seeking to create the impression that he was taking counsel from various sections of the citizenry while leaving himself free to reject such counsel as did not accord with his own views. Furthermore, it was suspected that he was looking for convenient scapegoats who might be given the blame for subsequent failures and non-successes. Success of course would be attributed to the fountain of honour and high dedication, that is to say the emperor and his immediate human surroundings, whereas failures would be blamed almost naturally on those benighted and discredited politicians who through all manner of wiles and false pretences would have wormed their way into the high position of the realm. Others charitably believed in the good faith of the emperor and interpreted the announcement to mean a genuine effort to allow effective participation in decision-making in the empire. It was agreed by both sides that they would wait and appraise the emperor's intentions after the manner in which the counsellors would be selected, and the preparedness with which their counsel would be taken into consideration.

Auto-election

But the emperor's new position on participation in imperial powers was in such sharp contrast to his earlier pronouncements on the subject that many were those who wondered about what could have occasioned this shift of position. For the emperor had left no doubt in anybody's mind that he most firmly believed his manner of governing to be superior to any other that had been seen in the land. It was his wont to argue that since he had acceded to imperial powers through auto-election or rather non-election, he was in a better position to gauge the best interest of each element in the realm without fear or favour, affection or ill will than anybody who would have gone into power through the free decision of his peers. The emperor believed that since he did not depend on any section or sect or class or ethnic group to maintain himself in power, having his guns and mortars and tanks for adequate protection, he would the more easily resist the temptation of pursuing or protecting any particular sectional, sectarian, class or ethnic interest. What he forgot to add, and what nobody dared tell him to his face, was the corollary of his argument, namely, that by that same token, he was not bound to pursue or protect anybody else's interests but his own and those of the legionaries by whom he was surrounded, considering that he had not sought any mandate from anybody to do anything for him, but it was obvious that such was not what was happening in the empire.

For it came to pass that the emperor had the interest of his subjects at heart. When he realised, for example, that the purchasing power of the drachma had so fallen that keeping body and soul together had become a matter of grave concern, he was mightily rueful. He set up a body to explore the possibility of making upward adjustments in remuneration and even before the said body could complete its assignment, remunerations were augmented twice within half a year. Those in the lower scales got a higher percentage increase than those relatively better off, and the sympathy behind the gesture was deeply appreciated. The empire had its fair share

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of economists who appear to have created more problems than they could solve, and they were quick to warn that unless certain measures were taken simultaneously, there would be more illusion of wealth in the land than actual wealth, for prices would soar so high and so fast as to make the kind gesture counter-productive by eroding the power of the drachma even further. The necessary measures to be taken, these economists suggested, were to be entrusted to the Fees and Wages Board.

For they had in the land a body with such a name whose function was to ensure that there was a correlation between fees charged for services, prices paid for goods and remunerations paid for work done. The existence of such a board was known throughout the length and breadth of the empire, but prices had so outstripped wages that it was presumed that the board did not exist. Occasionally it made noises when individuals wanted to increase the prices of their commodities, but it always found some reason or other to justify the increase in the prices of goods for whose distribution the government was responsible. The Board announced in all solemnity that the citizens should report any evidence of unauthorised increases so that remedial and punitive action could be properly taken. This was considered a monumental joke by all the citizens for as one of them opined, a person who had gone from shop to shop looking for a particular item without success is more disposed to pay a higher price for it when he eventually obtained that item than to take the further trouble of reporting the matter to the aforementioned Board, for fear that he would thereby lose his source of supply. This attitude was condemned as most unpatriotic, and some even felt that it might properly be considered subversive. For as one highly placed legionary had defined before a judicial forum, a criticism of the emperor or his government was without doubt a subversive act and most unpatriotic.

Nationalistic Patriotism

And patriotism, it so transpired, had become the new slogan in the empire. In the course of the celebrations whereof I have spoken, the emperor made another addition to the already formidable arsenal of slogans. In addition to Auto-dependence, the Auto-Nourishment Campaign and other such slogans had been added that of Nationalistic Patriotism, the purpose of which was to instil in the subjects love of country, a sense of duty and integrity in public life.

And it was agreed upon by all that the launching of the Nationalistic Patriotism appeal was long overdue, for, despite all the efforts made by the imperial leaders past and present, love of the empire was not one of the subjects' civic virtues. Everybody wanted to squeeze from the empire what he could get, without offering anything in return. It is true that the leaders in the land had not themselves given many examples of self-denial for the greater good and glory of the empire. For when they asked the subjects to tighten their belts, they made certain that they themselves wore elastic belts which always left room for manoeuvre in the case of any tightening. Such was the practice of the leaders of old, and those of today, despite all their pronouncements, did not do any better or worse than their predecessors. For example, the professional legionaries had their own shop called the Imperial Forces Institute,

wherein might be bought such commodities as were not normally available to the ordinary subjects, no matter how long they were prepared to queue for. Those on top were so concerned with the maintenance of privileges and the restoration of amenities that, since nobody was seen to be making any sacrifices for the greater glory of the empire, all that talk of Nationalistic Patriotism was doomed to leave the subjects unimpressed and even cynical. But the emperor had, of course, done his duty by making that particular appeal, hoping that some of the social evils in the empire would be ended thereby.

And it came to pass in those days that the necessity for launching this new ideology of Nationalistic Patriotism was recognised by all, since it was admitted that the citizens needed to be educated on their duties and rights. True, there had been in the past a centre set up to instruct people on these civic obligations and rights, but this centre quickly degenerated into a propaganda machinery for those who were entrusted with this specialised type of mass education. So ignorant were the subjects of their just entitlements that when the government carried out its normal duties, they believed that they had been done a special favour for which it was deemed meet and proper to render thanks unto the government. Out of this self-same ignorance, the subjects did not protest against the scandalously poor condition of roads, despite the fact that they had paid all the dues that were supposed to be used in maintaining the roads. In the same way after people had been released from detention, it was found proper by the ecclesiastical leaders in the land to render thanks unto the emperor for his magnanimity, forgetting that all that the emperor had done was to restore to people what he had forcibly taken away from them, namely, their fundamental human liberties.

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Check for correct tyre pressure when the tyres are cold.

Go out now and look at your tyres to see if results of over or under-inflation are evident.



For more hints on tyre care, consult your Firestone Distributor or send a stamped and self-addressed envelope to Firestone Ghana Ltd., P. O. Box 5758, Accra.

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It was this basic misconception of their proper entitlements that led the citizens to flatter their rulers beyond all reasonable bounds. The citizens appeared to have ceded all their rights to the emperor who in his bountiful mercy, occasionally decided to show them favours. Thus was it that when villagers whose sweat and toil provide a major portion of the wealth of the empire are provided with water by the consular authorities, they find it necessary to express their gratitude to the emperor in acclamations hyperbolic, as if the emperor had not only fulfilled a minor portion of his obligations towards them, in conformity with the demands of the social contract between the subjects and the emperor. The emperor, as all his predecessors had done before, took full advantage of this monumental ignorance or foolishness on the part of the subjects, since the situation enabled him to present as favours what should have been properly construed as binding duties.

And so it came to pass that the emperor was mightily praised in the land, both for what he had done and what others had done. While the emperor held court and kept the feast with pomp and revelry, the subjects debated on what had been achieved within the two score and four lunar cycles that separated the consuls of now from the chieftains of then. Many of the subjects felt that though the emperor's achievement was not "bad at all", there was still room for improvement. The emperor, for his part, persisted in believing that in terms of achievement, the sun did not shine upon his peer in the land, and the professional praise-singers concurred that the emperor, as usual, was right.

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Kontopiaatkrom Revisited — I

By

Kwadwo Kontopiaat

KONKON, konkon, konkon. Know ye all that I, Kwadwo Kontopiaat, have not joined my ancestors as yet, much as I love them! Indeed I have no intention of doing so voluntarily. Nor have I been incarcerated, silenced or repatriated, under the alien's compliance order, into the sky from where my clan members, the Agona clan, are believed to have descended on a chain down to this earth. I am very much alive, free and kicking, and I would like to thank all those who have been enquiring and worrying about me, and to say 'hard luck' to those who have written my obituary notices which, incidentally, I enjoyed reading, or those who thought they had heard the last of me.

To put an end to all speculation and rumours, I had better explain why I have been so silent. You see, there is only one species of *homo sapiens* that I, Kwadwo Kontopiaat, am scared of, or as it is put in polite circles, allergic to, and that is an armed soldier! Please don't misunderstand me. I am not saying that I am a coward but since I have no gun, not even the good old **Te abofre** (shot-gun), let alone **Agya pin do hoaa** (Dane gun?), and since I do not believe in unfair and uneven matches, I always try to avoid these armed soldiers.

Unfortunately, exactly two years and a few days ago, not one but four armed soldiers appeared in Kontopiaatkrom quite unannounced and definitely uninvited. Not only that but they proclaimed from the marketplace that they had taken over the administration of Kontopiaatkrom from the Management Committee hitherto under the dynamic chairmanship of my own dear brother Kwame Kontopiaat and that they would be known as the National Radioactive Committee. This announcement was received unlike the previous occasion when a single soldier turned up and made some such pronouncement, with shock and in stolid silence.

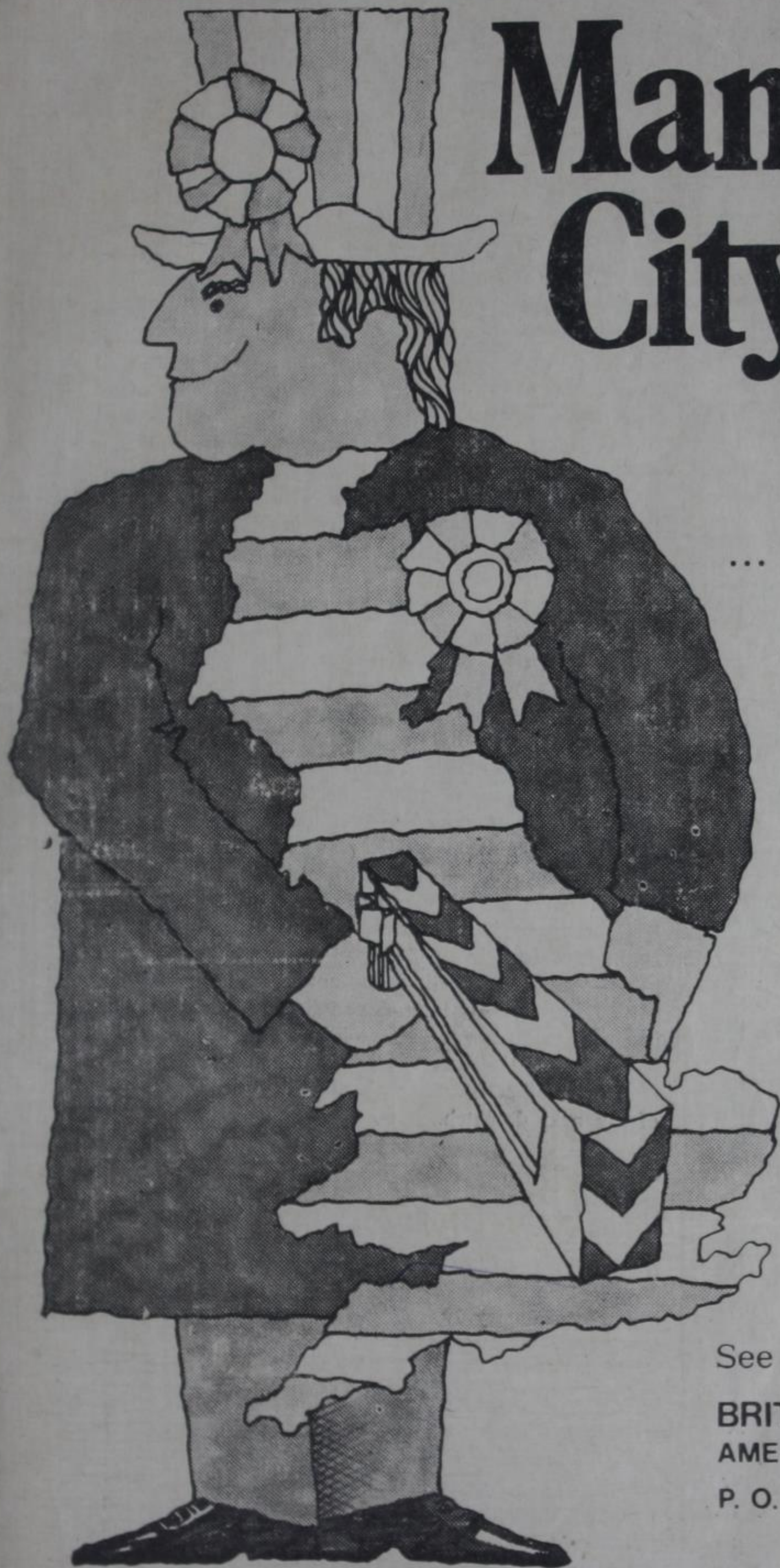
Even though I am allergic to armed soldiers, I decided to put up with them for some time to see whether they would turn out to be any different from all other armed soldiers since the time of the Yaa Asantewaa war! However, it took me only a few days to come to the conclusion that these ones were more deadly than the previous ones. Not only did they lock up Kwame

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and virtually all the other members of the Management Committee—an action which we have come to expect from soldiers who decide to undertake liberation or salvation—but what was now and truly revolutionary, they started drilling even the old men and highly respected elders of Kontopiaatkrom for not paying their **lampo**. My decision was of course obvious: Retreat is the better part of valour, and retreat I did into my farm called **Ehia Ma Nkyen**. For obvious security reasons, I am not prepared to divulge its whereabouts to you, my dear readers.

As its name implies, the farm is self-sufficient, and self-reliant as far as food goes in practically everything except salt, and it has been so for decades. Indeed, I would not have decided to revisit Kontopiaatkrom but for the fact that our salt did run out. Besides, we felt the need for some commodities, some of them truly essential, at least as far as myself and my other two mates, Atia Frafra and Kofi Dagarti are concerned. These included cutlasses, **obroni waawu** (or second-hand clothes) especially shorts and trousers, **tawa** (tobacco) which Atia in particular simply cannot do without, **kako** (Kofi Dagarti's favourite), soap and a pair of farm boots. It was for the purchase of these essential commodities that I decided to lift the self-imposed exile and to revisit Kontopiaatkrom and it was because of what I saw and heard during my visit that I decided to break my silence and to report to you, my dear readers.

Revolutionary Oil Palm

I must start by saying that I arrived to find Kontopiaatkrom looking really very neat. All the drains were clean, the by-ways and alleys were swept and there was not a patch of grass anywhere. Even some new streets had been constructed. All this, I was told, was the product of the new philosophy known as 'Walatu Walasa' which means simply self-help or do it yourself! I was a little disturbed, though, that work on the main branch lorry road to Kontopiaatkrom which was being constructed by the previous Management Committee had stopped.

Not only was Kontopiaatkrom looking neat, but it was also in a gay mood on my arrival. On enquiring, I was told that it was the second anniversary of the arrival of the soldiers. All the churches were packed full and I was told that all of them were saying prayers for the National Radioactive Committee. This, I must confess, struck me as rather interesting! I do remember that these same churches said prayers for the very first Management Committee we had had in Kontopiaatkrom, then for the second Committee composed of soldiers who routed the first Committee, then for the third Committee which took over peacefully and constitutionally from the second, and now for the fourth Committee composed again of soldiers. I do recall that the prayers for the third government were particularly frequent and very vociferous since the leader of that Committee was himself a preacher who used the pulpit as often as, probably even more often than, he used the soap-box. Indeed, some of us came to the firm conclusion that never would these same churches pray for any one who would sack such a God-fearing Committee. Such was the fervour, sincerity and devotion with which the Churches prayed for that

Committee. But alas we have been proved wrong, and the holy word that the church does move in a mysterious way has been amply justified.

Of course, the news of my arrival spread like wildfire through Kontopiaatkrom, and before I could say anything, I found myself swept off my feet by a frantic group of relatives and friends led by Kwame Kontopiat and our cousin Santrofi. Instead of sending me home, Kwame and his group insisted on taking me first and foremost to the highlight of the anniversary celebrations, and this was the agricultural show taking place on the football park of the village school.

It was indeed a fantastic show which was meant to portray the achievements of the "Operation Cultivate Your Back-yard" campaign launched by the National Radioactive Committee. Everything was there—huge bunches of plantain, basket-loads of cocoyam, yams, rice, cassava, oranges and so on. But what fascinated me most was a really huge bunch of oil palm. It was the largest single bunch that I have ever seen and I think as a good farmer who narrowly missed the best farmer's trophy at the last agricultural show prior to the arrival of the soldiers, I have seen quite a few. Naturally I did spend some time at the stand and the person manning it was very proud of this particular achievement and was making quite a lot out of it. "See what a really revolutionary government can accomplish in a matter of two years; this is radioactivity", he was proclaiming at the top of his voice. The government must indeed be revolutionary if it has produced that type of bunch in two years, and that particular breed of oil palm must also be revolutionary indeed. When, rather overwhelmed by this, I asked the gentleman in question how an oil palm seedling could bear fruit in two years, I was told that I should not ask rude and anti-revolutionary questions! Taking a hint from this remark, I convinced Kwame and his group to make for the safer cloisters of the palm wine bar, the seat of democracy in Kontopiaatkrom, and the discussions that went on there will form the subject of my next despatch.

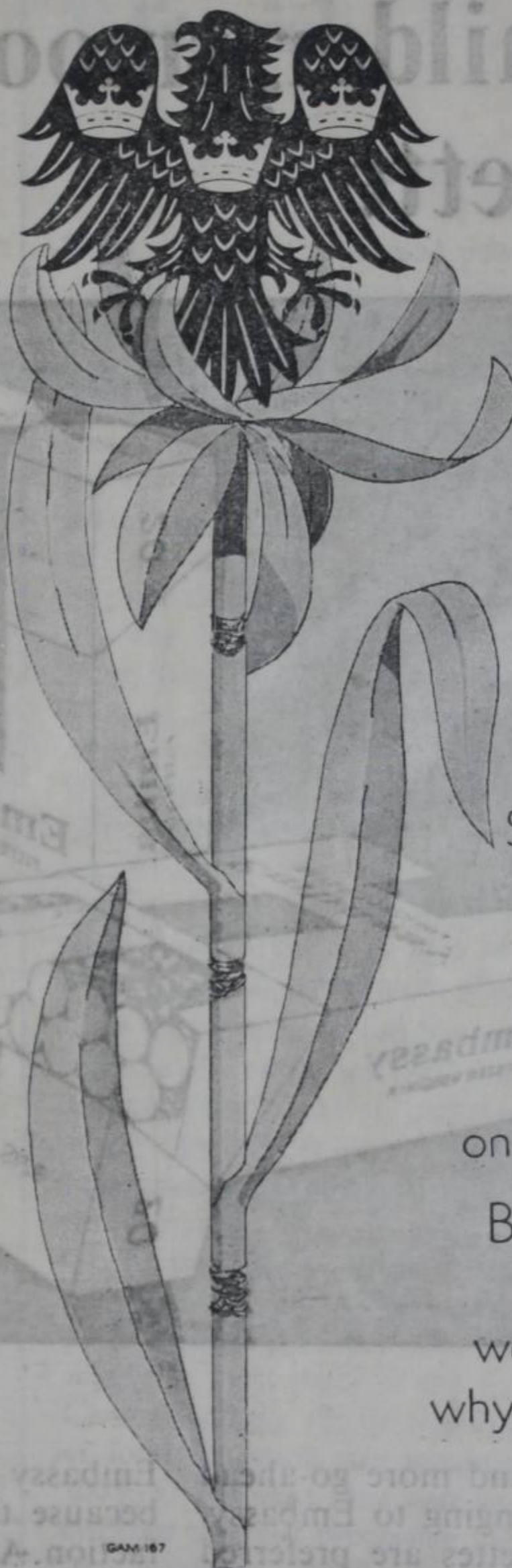
For The Record

Saturday, January 19

Advisory Committee

THE N.R.C. today decided to form a 36-member Consultative Advisory Committee to advise the government on matters of national importance, according to an official statement issued in Accra. The statement said the Committee will consist of six service and formation commanders, two representatives each of the Youth Movement, The Civil Service, The Council of Churches and the Ghana Police Service; a representative each of the T.U.C., of Women, the Ghana Chamber of Commerce, National House of Chiefs, the Manufacturers Association, farmers, Universities, the Timber Association; a representative from each region, and two other persons to be appointed by the N.R.C. The statement added that details about the committee would be announced later.

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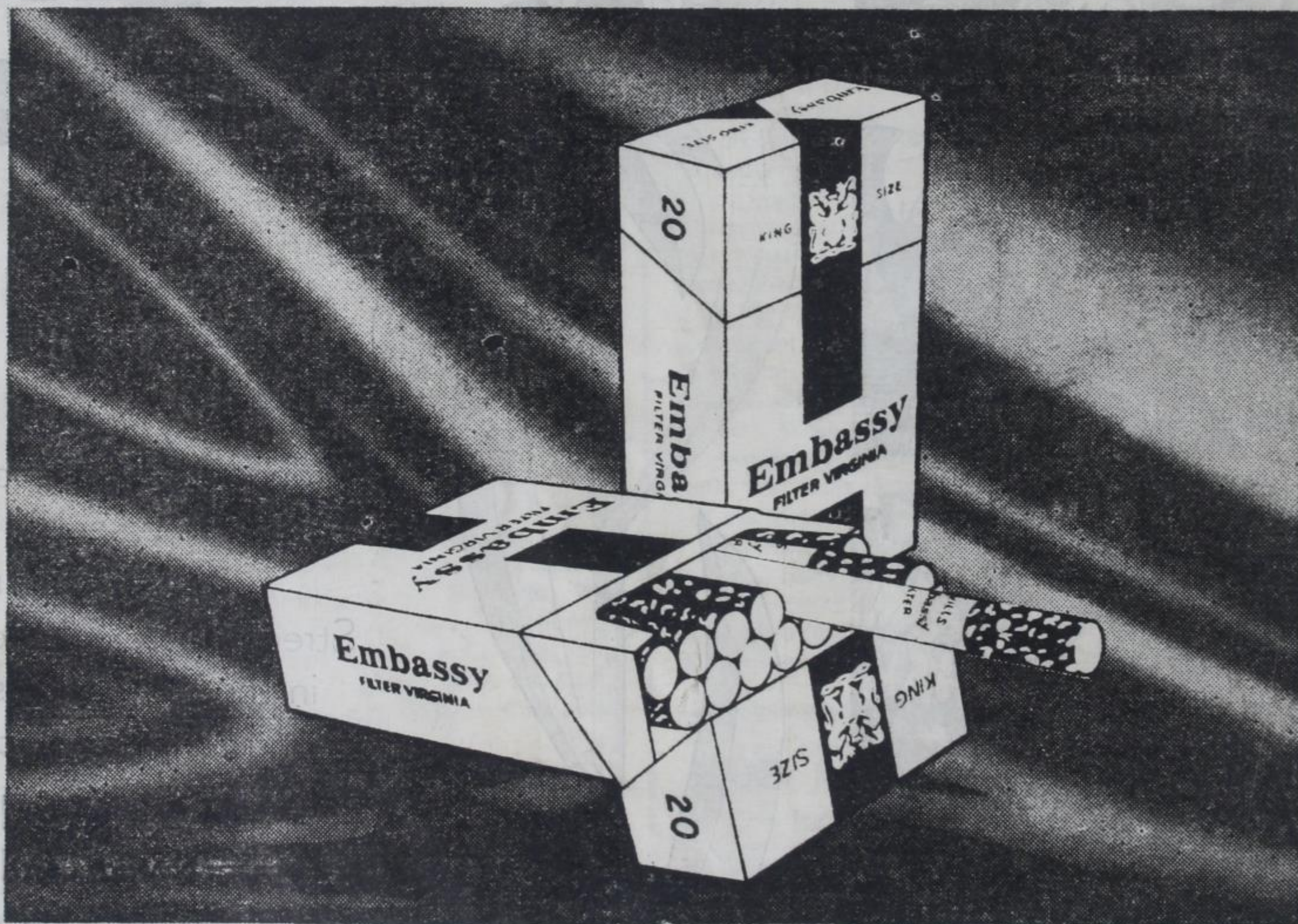
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