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THE GHANAIAN SPHINX:
Reflections on the Contemporary
History of Ghana, 1972–1987



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INTRODUCTION

I must express my very sincere thanks to the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences for giving me this golden opportunity to participate in the now famous J.B. Danquah Memorial Lectures. I deem the opportunity golden for three main reasons; first, it enables me to pay a brief tribute to the great man after whom the series are named; secondly, it gives me an opportunity to correct the very common but nonetheless erroneous impression that academics, current and retired, are concerned only with what went wrong; thirdly, it affords me the chance of responding to the appeal to break the 'Culture of Silence'¹ first launched by the Head of State himself and even more vigorously and passionately by the Secretary to the National Commission for Democracy. It is indeed these very reasons that determined the choice of the title of these lectures, namely, *The Ghanaian Sphinx: Reflections On The Contemporary History Of Ghana, 1972 -1987*.

But why the Ghanaian Sphinx, or, is there in fact a Ghanaian Sphinx? As the classical scholars among you do know from the mythology of the ancient Greeks, the Sphinx was a monster which had a woman's head, a lion's body, a serpent's tail and an eagle's wings. This monster, according to the myth, always way-laid travellers on their way to the city of Thebes, posed them the riddle "What creature walks on four legs in the morning, on two at noon and three in the evening", and killed all those who failed to solve that riddle. One day, Oedipus, the son of the King of Thebes, was confronted with this riddle by the monster and to the shock of the monster, he was able to give the correct solution. "The creature", replied Oedipus, "is man, who crawls on all fours as an infant, walks upright in his youth, and leans on a cane in his old age". The story goes that when the monster heard this answer, she killed herself and Oedipus became a national hero of the city.

Now, as I reflect on the present state of our dear country, I cannot help recalling this ancient Greek myth, for Ghana does pose a riddle: the riddle being why it is that a country which is

so well endowed by Nature has failed so dismally to develop and progress? Or, as the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) put it in its policy guidelines issued in May 1982, 'how a nation so endowed with such resources could be entangled in an ever deepening crisis'.² And Ghana is indeed endowed. Her material resources are second to none; her soil and climate are ideal for the production of every conceivable tropical and savanna crop; her mineral resources of gold, diamond, bauxite, manganese and possibly oil are the envy of many countries. Her human resources are unparalleled in Africa. She has the highest literacy rate, the best trained manpower and the largest professional elite in West Africa. Ghana is the most urbanized country in West Africa. Above all, she is free from all the religious conflicts, confrontations, bigotry and sectarianism that have been the bane of other countries such as Nigeria and the Sudan. Yet, inspite of all these enormous human and material assets, Ghana is today a country that cannot even feed herself, that is saddled with mind-boggling foreign debt recently estimated at about 2.6 billion dollars, whose infrastructure has virtually broken down, whose industries are producing well below capacity, and a majority of whose citizens are facing all sorts of privations being in dire need of such basic amenities as water, electricity, drugs and school textbooks, and whose political culture has been characterised by chronic instability, violence and bloodshed. If Ghana's present predicament is not sphinx-like, then I do not know what it is. Why then has Ghana become such a riddle?

I am sure that if J.B. Danquah (or simply JB as he was popularly known) were alive and had been invited to deliver these lectures, he would have chosen a topic such as mine and would have attempted to solve this riddle. A great statesman, politician, scholar, lawyer, philosopher, writer and above all a patriot, J.B. devoted his life to a fearless and indeed fanatical pursuit of two main objectives: the liberation of his country from British colonial rule and secondly the attainment in the independent country of the rule of law, the liberty of the individual, justice and progress. He sought to achieve these objectives by not only forming nationalist movements and political parties such as the Youth Conference of the 1930s and the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) of the 1940s, but also through lectures which he gave throughout the length and breadth of the country, newspaper articles, pamphlets and above all through letters

to all and sundry. As William Ofori Atta, popularly known as Paa Willie, pointed out two years ago, if J.B. were alive, he would certainly have sent numerous letters to the Head of State, Mr. P.V. Obeng, the Chairman of the Committee of Secretaries, and especially to Mr. Justice D.F. Annan, the Chairman of the National Commission for Democracy (NCD). Before his tragic death, JB collected together many of these speeches and letters into a book which he entitled *The Ghanaian Establishment*, and I am happy to announce that this book will at long last be published by the Ghana Universities Press in the course of the year.

There are two main tenets of JB to which I would like to draw your attention. These are his concept of self-help and his ideology of Ghanaism. As early as 1943, JB published a pamphlet entitled *Self-help and Expansion* in which he vigorously advocated the principles of self-help. As he stressed, "The Youth Conference believes that if only the people would continue to help themselves, the Almighty will come to their assistance. But, and we must note this, the Almighty will not come to our assistance if we do not help ourselves". I am sure JB is patting himself on the back because of the current emphasis on the principle of self-help, or as it is now more popularly termed, self-reliance.

Even more interesting, and, as will be seen later, more relevant here is the ideology of Ghanaism which he fashioned obviously in opposition to that of Nkrumaism or scientific socialism so current in the 1960s.³ As this ideology is hardly known, permit me to dwell on it here. JB defined his ideology of Ghanaism as "the ideology of individual freedom and personal worth" and he derived it not from Marx or Lenin but rather from three Akan sayings. The first is *Nnipa nyinaa ye Nyame mma, obi nye Asase ba* (All human beings are the offspring of God but none of the earth).

The Second is the aphorism:

*Mefre sika
sika ngye so,
mefre ntama
ntama ngye so,
Onipa ne Asem*

I call gold
gold is mute
I call cloth
cloth is mute
It is man who counts.

In other words, it is human beings, not things which make a nation great. The third is, *Animguase mfata Okaniba* (Disgrace does not befit a true born Akan).

He writes:-

. . . the philosophy of Ghanaism is in the blood of every true born Ghanaian, being in fact, the essence of our nation's humanist and patrician personality, a personality uniquely realized in the unity of Onyankopon (God), Oman (State), Abusua (Family), Odehye (Patrician - a person born of free parents into free families corresponding in every respect to the Roman concept of patrician), and Amansan (Humanity), a five-fold concept activated in the five-fold ideology of (1) Theism, (2) Patriotism, (3) Patriarchy (or fatherhood, rule under the father as head of family), (4) Freedom (of choice) and (5) Humanism. The dominance of these in the Ghanaian personality constitutes the driving or motive force of Ghanaian action and the Ghanaian nature.⁴

In favour of this Ghanaistic ideology, JB rejects the totally "strange and new-fangled marxist type of socialism," which, he contends, "is hardly forty years old," and which "rejects religion and any kind of idealism or humanism from its materialistic interpretation of man's long history. By its creed of 'He who would not work shall not eat', it is clear that socialism takes the self-interest of the individual (his bread or his belly) to be the universal motive force of human nature. It does this without paying any heed to man's permanent motive forces or commitments, the commitment to his God, to his country, to his family and to the dignity of man as man. . ."⁵

In other words, as opposed to Marxist or scientific socialism, the ideology of Ghanaism emphasizes the worth of the individual, individual initiative and individual enterprise; it emphasizes the freedom and dignity of the individual and not sordid materialism, regimentation and state ownership of property. In fact, JB abhorred Marxism which he described as "a German-made thalidomide tranquilizer which may produce disfigured, limbless and malformed societies for us in this pregnant genera-

tion", and he emphasized that "the three great nations which have achieved an industrial marvel after World War II, namely Western Germany, Italy and Japan did so not on socialistic or State capitalist economy, but rather on the basis of individual initiative and free enterprise, guided by the free and intelligent hand of their respective governments."⁶

It was because of the vigorous propagation of these ideas and the fanatical pursuit of his main objectives that JB was detained by Nkrumah in 1962. In one of the numerous petitions which he sent from prison to the Speaker of the National Assembly in January 1962 asking the Assembly to intercede on behalf of himself and the other detainees, he concluded:-

. . . Considering the fact that the members of Ghana's Legislature are great guardians of . . . Right, Freedom and Justice, I feel, indeed, I am confident, that this petition will not fall on ears that are deaf. If it does, then the consequences may be that I, and other similarly placed as I am might be destroyed in the process, but it will be the destruction of martyrs, martyrs of their country's great liberation, liberation from all kinds of imperialism, whether it be from the imperialism of Britain's white-heated frying pan, or from a fall into the hellish black fire of the imperialism or caesarism of what is now referred to daily on our national radio as 'The Party' as if there was only a monolithic party in Ghana and no other party in our land - the land liberated by us all - for all ⁷

These words turned out to be prophetic for JB did die during his second detention by Nkrumah in 1965 as a true martyr of his country. May his soul rest in eternal peace. May I also at this juncture draw attention to a very familiar face I miss in this audience, that of Mrs. Elizabeth Danquah-Quarshie, who departed this life on 14th October, 1987. I was going to see her the other day in conjunction with these lectures when I was told of her death. May she *also* rest in peace.

Well, JB is not here today to help us solve our riddle; we must solve it ourselves. To do so, we must first answer the question why Ghana has become such a riddle. The answer lies in a close study of the history of this country since the establishment of colonialism and its overthrow in general, and the last decade and half, in particular, i.e. from 1972 to 1987. Since I have already discussed the history of Ghana up to 1972 in my book published in 1975,⁸ I have decided to concentrate on the latter period. Indeed, I regard these lectures as a sequel to the book.

LECTURE 1

THE ERA OF THE MEN ON HORSEBACK 1972 - 1979

The first and probably the most important explanation of the enigma of the Ghanaian Sphinx during the period under review is the coup of 13th January 1972 by Colonel Ignatius Kutu Acheampong, then commander of the Fifth Battalion, which brought an end to the government of Dr. Kofi A. Busia. Why then did this coup take place? A number of reasons have already been advanced by several writers. According to Acheampong himself:-

The Ghana Armed Forces believed that the principle of One man, One vote is meaningless unless it is linked up with the principle of One man, One bread. A government which operates on the basis of ten men, one bread for the broad masses of the people is unjust and unjust rulers do not deserve to be sustained by any theoretical conceptions of democracy. As you all know, Dead men have the use for only one type of Box - not the ballot box - coffin?

And let those who judge us by their theoretical misconceptions remember that nothing kills with more devastating effect than hunger. So that when a people are exposed to the dangers of destruction through massive hunger and pain, when a Government deliberately embarks upon a programme of removing the bread from the mouths of the people through arbitrary dismissals and policies aimed at widening the circle of poverty, and when it becomes clear that these dangers can be removed by quick, decisive action, it is, I maintain, unethical to demand that they wait for five years or so before the source of danger is removed.⁹

Anybody who was in the country in 1970 and 1971 would know that nobody ever got to that stage of hunger and desperation that should have necessitated that coup. I really wonder what Acheampong would have done if he were alive in 1983! In any case, Acheampong is generally believed to have stated that he started planning his coup only six months after the accession of Busia to power. The reasons that he gave therefore for his coup should be taken as mere post facto rationalisation of events. Indeed, Acheampong's action was not the outcome of any altruistic or objective analysis of the socio-economic situation but it was rather to satisfy his own lust for power and personal aggrandizement. In my opinion, the event of 13th January 1972 was not even a coup but rather an act of betrayal of a trust reposed in an officer by the then reigning government.

Busia himself described the coup as 'an officer's amenities Coup'. This was to me a very gracious but wrong description based mainly on Acheampong's statement in his very first coup broadcast that one of the reasons for the coup was the fact that the few amenities which the officers enjoyed even under Nkrumah were abolished by Busia.

There is, however, another explanation of the January 1972 coup. According to Kofi Awoonor,¹⁰ the coup should be attributed to what he calls the 'tribal factor', and that the main architects of the coup consisted according to him, of a disgruntled group of army officers 'made up largely of Ewes'. He even goes to the extent of naming them as Kattah, whom he described as 'one of its main architects', Captain Sowu, Lt. Tamakloe, Lt. Latzoo, Captain Von Backustein, Major Quarshie and Cols Tay and Kwaku; he later adds Selormey, Baah and Agbo to the list of the conspirators.¹¹ He writes:-

It must be evident to all Ghanaians by now that for some reasons that were not yet clear, Ewes in the armed forces have achieved the reputation of being notorious coup-makers and plotters against successive governments. This could be ascribed partially to the fact that the Ewes, the second largest ethnic group in the country, see themselves in opposition to all governments, in Ghana which inevitably become Akan (Ashanti) dominated. As it were, the contest for power is reduced in simple terms to a fierce contest between the Akan (Ashanti) and the Ewes. The large Ewe presence in the civil service, the military, and in institutions of learning, is seen as an effective check on Ashanti efforts at hegemony.¹²

If Kofi Awoonor is correct, and being an Ewe and an insider himself he must know, then Heaven save this country. Fortunately, his explanation is not only dangerous and exceedingly unfortunate, but it is simply unconvincing. He seems to be unaware of the fact that the leader of the coup himself who did the first broadcast and who became the head of the ensuing military government was an Akan himself and an Asante too, and Major Kwame Baah, another architect of that coup, is also an Akan. If the coup was simply the outcome of the contest for power between the Akan and the Ewe, how on earth could that original Ewe/Akan cooperation which generated the coup have taken place? I think Awoonor's explanation is either ~~the~~ the product of the persecution psychosis which he must have been suffering

from especially as a result of his arrest and detention in 1976 by Acheampong, or just sheer naivete or warped and misguided judgement. From the available evidence, it seems to me that the coup of January 1972 was the outcome of the personal, inordinate and egoistic ambitions of Acheampong himself, and the idealism of some disgruntled officers irrespective of their ethnic origins, who were enraged by Busia's policies towards the military. Ethnicity or tribalism did certainly become an issue but this was a later development as will be seen below.

Whatever the causes, I still maintain my view publicly expressed three months after that coup that it was unnecessary and unjustifiable. It was unnecessary because the socio-economic problems with which the country was confronted at the time could not be solved by that coup. It was also unjustifiable because on no account whatsoever should the military intervene to overthrow any civilian administration that cannot be shown to have violated the terms of the constitution of the state, especially those terms governing its stated period of office. It is only if that government refuses to hold fresh elections in accordance with the terms of the constitution or flagrantly and brazenly prevents the citizenry from passing judgement on it by registering their vote that the military may intervene – and even then only to enforce but not to overthrow the constitution.

How then did Acheampong and his National Redemption Council (NRC) exercise the power that they seized and with what consequences? The period of Acheampong's administration should be divided into two phases, one from 1972 to 1974, and phase two from 1975 until his overthrow in 1978. This is not just a division of convenience but one that is justifiable on empirical grounds. Acheampong and his NRC got off to a flying start and their activities and achievements during the first phase were on the face of it truly and incredibly remarkable. They first of all abolished some of the harsh but necessary economic measures introduced by Busia which won them considerable support. These included the revaluation of the cedi, the abolition of the development levy and the restoration of the fringe benefits hitherto enjoyed by the military and civil servants. But what particularly won over the majority of Ghanaians, especially the students, were the efforts Acheampong made to correct what he called 'the image of the Beggar Nation' created by Busia, his 'Yentua' speech, his enunciation of the

principle of self-reliance, his launching of Operation Feed Yourself as well as his determination to 'place the commanding heights of the economy' a phrase for which Acheampong will forever be remembered 'in the hands of our people.'

Particularly remarkable were the achievements of the NRC in the field of agriculture. Under the impetus of the Operation Feed Yourself Campaign, Acheampong and his soldiers pumped a great deal of money into agriculture during the period under review through budgetary allocations and lending by banks. The result was that agriculture registered a growth rate of 4.5% in 1972, 6% in 1973 and 7% in 1974. The quantity of rice produced rose from 11,000 tons in 1971 to 61,000 tons in 1973 while that of maize jumped from 53,000 tons in 1971 to more than 430,000 tons in 1973.¹³ To accelerate development in the regions, the Acheampong regime also set up a Regional Development Corporation in each region in 1973 with an initial allocation of ₵800,000.00 for the ensuing three years. These corporations were expected to promote agricultural, industrial and commercial business on sound commercial lines, and most of them did so during the first three years.

On the whole, it can be said that the record of the Acheampong regime during its first phase was truly remarkable. By the end of 1974, Ghana had indeed become a more united country than ever before and national pride and confidence had been restored. Agriculture was in full bloom and the North and Brong Ahafo regions appeared to have been well set on the road to becoming the granaries of the country. Had Acheampong handed over power at the end of that period, he would have gone down in history as the most successful and most popular head of state that the country had ever known.

Unfortunately, he did not, and the second phase of his administration from 1975 to 1978 was nothing but a disaster not only for himself but also for the entire country. Acheampong's record during this period is or should be so well-known to you that I need not go into it. I would only like to state that the whole period was characterised by falling agricultural and industrial productivity, a runaway inflation, shortage of essential inputs and spare parts, a breakdown of the infrastructure, an incredible rise in the cost of living and general moral degeneration. The inflation rate rose from 3% in 1970 to 10.1% in 1972 and to the all-time record of 116.5% in 1977. The main cause of

this fantastic rate of inflation was the increase in the total money supply. According to a Bank of Ghana statement, "between 1976 and 1978 in particular, the expansion of money appeared to be intractable as the level rose by C2008.4 million or 165.7% to C3,220.7 million at the end of 1978" mainly through the printing of more and more currency notes and borrowing from the banking system. But even more striking was the declining agricultural and industrial output during the period. The enthusiasm generated in this by the Operation Feed Yourself (OFY) campaign steadily evaporated from about 1975 onwards. The tonnage of cocoa beans exported dropped from 322,000 tons in 1975 to 258,000 in 1977 and to 213,000 in 1978; gold exports dropped from 15,973 grams in 1975 to 15,208 in 1977 and to 9,747 in 1978. The quantity of timber exported decreased from 615,000 cubic metres in 1975 to 499,000 in 1976 and 39,000 in 1977, and that of diamond from 2,372,000 carats in 1975, to 1,476,000 in 1978 and 1,007,000 in 1979.¹⁴ The Regional Development Corporations (RDCs) which had started so promisingly and raised such high hopes experienced acute financial difficulties and most of their projects became white elephants. The outcome of all this was an acute shortage of imported goods and raw materials of every conceivable kind, soaring prices, low industrial and agricultural productivity and national bankruptcy.

How then can this disastrous economic performance be accounted for? This was the outcome of external and internal factors.¹⁵ The former was the neo-colonialist nature of the international economic order, and the latter, natural disasters, policy failures and what political scientists have termed mismanagement and *kalabuleism*. The astronomical 4 – fold increase in the price of oil from 1974 onwards should be considered as one of the major external causes. Other causes were heavy debt-servicing, crippling loan repayment and the increasing drop in the prices of our exports as compared with those of imports. This led to the country's inability to meet its short-term loan repayment which had fallen into arrears to the tune of C 1190 million by July 1979 as a consequence of which further credit lines were blocked.¹⁶

However, more crucial and decisive were the internal factors. The second half of the 1970s certainly saw long periods of drought and bush fires which drastically affected agricultural

output. But what worsened the situation were undoubtedly policy failures, bureaucratic mismanagement and *kalabuleism*. The sharp and incredible contrast between the performances of the Acheampong regime during its two phases has already been pointed out. The principal explanation of this contrast was that while Acheampong had a definite plan or policy to follow, a plan which he inherited from the ousted regime, he failed to formulate any such policies or plans when those of the first phase ended. There is no doubt that the overwhelming attention which was paid to agriculture was the outcome of the continuation of the agricultural policies formulated by the Busia administration. As the then Minister of Finance, J.H. Mensah, put it in 1970: "We aim to intensify our support to the agricultural sector and generally to the rural population. This policy should aid our search for greater self-sufficiency in food supplies . . .", and definite plans were formulated to achieve this aim. Indeed, in many areas, what Acheampong did was merely to literally reap what the previous administration had sown. Lack of any clear-cut policies and plans as a sequel to those he inherited led to ad hoc, contradictory, mis-guided and ill-considered moves.

We have noted above the sharp decline in cocoa exports which were responsible for as much as 60% of our foreign exchange earnings. The main reasons for this decline were the refusal of Acheampong and his military clique to pay adequate prices to the cocoa farmer in spite of the incredibly high world cocoa prices in the mid-seventies, inadequate labour supply, and lack of inputs such as insecticides and cutlasses. It was in protest against this that cocoa farmers either abandoned their farms or cut down their cocoa trees and replaced them with food crops and oil palm, or resorted to smuggling their cocoa across the borders to Togo and La Cote D'Ivoire. Lack of machinery and spare parts and the deteriorating infrastructure also account for the decline of the other exports, and this was again the outcome of policy failures on the part of Acheampong and his Supreme Military Council (SMC). And while wrong and misguided policies were being pursued, such inputs and resources that became available were woefully mismanaged. Budget deficits were rampant attaining the high figure of C781 million in 1977 while unplanned government expenditure became common.

The fundamental cause of all this mismanagement during Acheampong's regime was first and foremost the utter ignorance,

greed, corruption and immorality of Acheampong himself. Surely if Acheampong were aware of the impact of the excess liquidity on the economy and believe it or not he was the Commissioner of Finance for some time – he could not have printed so much money. But either he was not aware or, he simply and supinely refused to listen to the advice of his financial experts. The second main reason was his heavy reliance on the military for the administration and management of the country. Because of his belief that “Officers and men of the armed forces have been trained for the task of administering with competence the affairs of the nation than (Sic) politicians”, Acheampong, unlike the NLC, relied heavily on the military for the administration of the country. Thus, not only were all members of the NRC except one and of the SMC I military, but officers were appointed to all sorts of posts – as heads of the ministries, as managing directors or co-ordinators of state enterprises and as Chairmen of the City Councils. An officer was even appointed as the managing director of such a huge organisation as the Ghana National Trading Company (GNTC). The very poor and disastrous performance of the economy during the period under review should have convinced Acheampong of the speciousness of his convictions. He should have known that administration and economic management are the responsibility of expert bureaucrats and technocrats and not just anybody who can wield a gun. It was not until his last two years that he introduced more civilians into his cabinet and appointed some as his special advisers. Unfortunately not only were most of the latter non-professional but they were also of dubious character and competence, and their presence merely compounded the rot that had already set in.

The third cause of the disaster was the active interference of Acheampong himself and the officers in general in the work of the civil servants and other officials of the state especially with respect to the award of contracts, the issue of import licences and the distribution and sale of certain commodities. This became particularly glaring with the introduction of the import licence system when with his usual green ink, Acheampong peremptorily ordered principal secretaries of the ministries of Trade and Finance in particular to issue import licences to people, usually young girl friends, mistresses and shady businessmen.

A typical one reads:-

His Excellency the Head of State and Commissioner for Finance recommends that Import Licence worth ₵ 152,000 for the importation of one (1) Ford Cortina Estate Car and six (6) Model 3022T Forest-mil portable sawmills be issued to Madam Alice Aday Garbrah of Post Office Box 86, Tapa, Ashante, for the establishment of a rural industry at Tapa.¹⁷

Similarly, heads of corporations and even private firms were often ordered to supply goods, particularly cement and flour, to the favourites of Acheampong and his officers. Never in the history of this country have we seen so many businesswomen and women contractors whose usual qualifications were simply their attractive figures. Given the contempt with which Acheampong and his officers treated expert advice, and the haphazard and crazy issue of orders, chits and imports licences, is it surprising that the economy performed so dismally?

The fourth explanation of the disastrous economic performance of the second era of Acheampong was the operation of the notorious system of corruption, hoarding, blackmarketing, profiteering and smuggling which was termed *Kalabule*, a system which was promoted directly and indirectly and officially and unofficially by Acheampong, members of SMC I and II and their military administrators. *Kalabuleism* is too well-known to Ghanaians to be discussed here. In any case, Mike Ocquaye in his book *Politics in Ghana 1972 – 1975*, and Naomi Chazan in her book *An Anatomy of Ghanaian Politics 1969 – 1982*, have described this unique Acheampongonomics in very vivid, detailed and graphic terms and I would like to refer you to them for the necessary details, especially to one of Ocquaye's chapters entitled 'The Emergence of Kalabule'. The main consequence of the system was that while a relatively few men and women became rich overnight – some of them including even some young women became cedi millionaires – the economy of the country was steadily ruined, inflation assumed dizzy proportions and the standard of living of the average Ghanaian sadly deteriorated, while immorality, favouritism and nepotism became rampant.

But, surely, there must be a final reason for Acheampong's poor performance which is no less crucial, and this was the failure of the bureaucrats and technocrats and other experts to stand up to Acheampong and his gang of predators by simply

refusing to implement some of their crazy and disastrous orders. Could not the Principal Secretary of Finance politely but firmly tell the Head of State that his order was against certain financial regulations and could therefore not be implemented? Could not the Governor of the Bank simply refuse to print more money or grant loans to the government for reasons which were obvious? It may be wondered whether this could have been done! I am glad to point out that at least one official did just that. When the Supreme Military Council wrote to the then Electoral Commissioner in March 1978 that "there should be no counting of votes at the polling stations during the forthcoming referendum", and that "all Ballot Boxes should be sent to the Regional Counting Centres under guard for count," he replied in a long letter in which, after quoting the relevant referendum regulation, stated:-

It is therefore clear from the above that the decision of the Supreme Military Council as contained in your letter under reference is contrary to provisions of the law which they themselves caused to be enacted. You may admit that the said decision of the Supreme Military Council is just an administrative decision or directive which cannot override statutory provisions. In fact it cannot have any legal effect whatsoever. You (the Secretary to the Cabinet) may therefore respectfully convey to His Excellency, the Head of State, that the said decision cannot be implemented in view of the legal impediments as explained above.¹⁸

As Folson has commented, this letter 'deserves to be carved in gold on the national coat of arms'.¹⁹

It is certainly true that any official who takes such a line stands a great risk of being dismissed and even detained – in the case in question he was not, but would not such personal sacrifice be better than the ruining of the economy of the whole country? Such blind acceptance of orders which are palpably stupid, wrong or dangerous smacks of sycophancy, opportunism and lack of moral or professional courage and should in my opinion be condemned.

It should be emphasised that Acheampong's mismanagement was not confined to the economic and social fields but was extended to the political arena as well. In the first place, as has been pointed out already, the 13th January coup was the outcome of the cooperation between Akan, Ewe and other officers, and it was expected that the collective leadership would continue during the ensuing administration. However, it became

steadily obvious that Acheampong wanted to run the show alone and this trend culminated in 1975 in the abolition of the NRC altogether on which the original coup makers were adequately represented, and the arrest or dismissal or forced retirement of most of the original makers of the coup. The NRC was replaced by the Supreme Military Council (SMC) made up of the heads of the various sections of the Armed Forces – the Army, Navy, Air Force and Border Guards as well as the Chief of Defence Staff and the Head of the Police. Following the dissolution of the NRC and the subsequent promotion of Akan officers at the expense of the Ewe ones, the Akan/Ewe solidarity broke down and tension came to exist between the two groups which greatly weakened the Army and endangered the stability of Acheampong's regime.

However, Acheampong's greatest blunder in the political field was his attempt to foist on the country a new political system for the country, the system of Union Government (UNIGOV) which he announced in October 1976. This was a system which was to be devoid of political parties and was to be based on a partnership among the military, the police and the civilians. The nature and the pros and cons of this system need not detain us here. What is relevant here is the extent to which Acheampong went to impose the system on us including the holding of a referendum on the subject in March 1978. Not only did he deploy the press, the radio and television but he also formed a whole host of movements such as The Friends, the Organisers Council, the Ghana Patriotic Movement and the Ghana Youngsters Club to sell the idea. And he placed all the finances and resources of the state at the disposal of these movements and allowed them to campaign openly. The few courageous groups which dared to challenge Acheampong such as the People's Movement for Freedom and Justice (PMFJ), the Association of Recognised Professional Bodies (ARPB) and the National Union of Ghana Students (NUGS) were met with violence, thuggery and harassment which alienated whole sections of the population.

The Referendum took place and at least three results were published, two official which gave victory to the government, and one un-official which declared the opposition the winners. Though many scholars have accepted these results and have inferred from them all sorts of conclusions, I am asserting positively that all these results were false; the first two were fabricated by Acheampong and his then Acting Electoral Commissioner and the other was concocted on the basis of the official figures

by a small group of politicians and professionals in the office of a barrister who should remain nameless. Nobody will therefore ever know the true results of that referendum. But even accepting the official figures for the sake of argument, first it is evident that less than 50% of the registered voters did cast their votes; so many people refused to vote, it is important to emphasize, as an expression of their disgust with and opposition to the government. Secondly, only 56.5% of those who voted are alleged to have voted in favour of UNIGOV. This means only less than a quarter or 22.6% of the registered voters were allegedly in favour of UNIGOV, a figure which could not be interpreted as indicating national approval of Acheampong's UNIGOV proposals.²⁰ Even the very moves of Acheampong immediately after the declaration of the results further confirmed the fictitious nature of the official results. He not only banned all those movements that had campaigned against UNIGOV but all the prominent leaders of the opposition were rounded up and detained in April or May 1978. These included veterans such as Paa Willie, K.A. Gbedema and Victor Owusu, and younger ones such as E.D. Kom, Sam Okudzeto and Adu Boahen the present lecturer. This was Acheampong's crowning folly which outraged all and sundry, and as will be seen presently, contributed to his overthrow four months later.

How then did Ghanaians react to this corrupt and inept Government, and how and why was it toppled in the end? The first obvious reaction was the now notorious one of counter-coups: four of them were attempted or were alleged to have been attempted between 1972-1976. The first occurred only six months after the accession of the NRC to office. It was supposed to have been master-minded by members of Busia's Progress Party (PP) and hence termed the 'The Busia Coup'. The second attempt was made in October 1973, allegedly this time by some ex-Convention People's Party (CPP) politicians. A third plot was uncovered in October 1975 which led to the arrest and trial of J.H. Mensah. In December 1975 another plot was unearthed, supposed to have been masterminded by those young Ewe officers who had been among the architects of the 13th January coup. This led to the arrest and trial of five Ewe officers and two civilians including Captain Kojo Tsikata and Dr. Kofi Awoonor. According to Kofi Awoonor, no such plot ever existed and that it was hatched by Acheampong himself and certain elements of the security agencies purposely to 'remove the Ewe menace to the regime once and for all.'²¹ In all cases the plotters or alleged plotters were given public trial and it must be

stated in favour of Acheampong that in virtually all cases, he commuted the death sentence to life imprisonment.

From 1976 onwards civilians, led first by the professionals, then the students and then the religious establishments took over the opposition from the military. The opposition of the professionals and other civilians culminating in the strike by the Association of Recognised Professional Bodies on 1st July 1977 which brought Accra in particular and the whole country to a complete standstill is still fresh in our minds and need not be discussed here. What should be looked at briefly is why the pen failed to prove that it was indeed mightier than the sword? There are two answers to this question. The first was the refusal of the workers to join the strike. Had the TUC joined the Professionals, in other words, if the hoe had joined the pen, Acheampong's government would have been overthrown. The Association realised this and opened a dialogue with the workers. However, very suspicious of politicians and professionals ever since the Busia regime, and bribed with increased wages by the SMC, the workers refused to budge.

The second answer was the deception, or if you like, the outwitting of the ARPB by Acheampong and his gang. Had the ARPB held out longer, Acheampong's regime could have been knocked out. The deteriorating conditions in the hospitals and in the supply of electricity and water would in the end have compelled the government to capitulate. However, through the intervention of the late Justice Nii Amaa Ollennu, a dialogue was begun between the ARPB and the government represented by Dr. G. Koranteng-Addow, then Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice and Dr. Robert Gardiner, then Commissioner for Economic Planning. This dialogue resulted in a compromise in which the SMC agreed among others to return the country to civilian rule in a year instead of two years and on the basis of that agreement the ARPB called off its strike on the 1st July 1977.²² Had this agreement been implemented, the course of Ghanaian history would have been different. It would have shown that the pen was indeed mightier than the sword, which would probably have put an end finally to military interventions in politics. But only four days after the resumption of work by the professionals, the SMC repudiated the agreement and stated that the two year time table for the return to civilian rule was not negotiable.

It was after this flagrant deception against the Professionals that a number of politicians, professionals and students, at the instigation of Lt. Gen A.A. Afrifa, decided to broaden the base

of the opposition to Acheampong and the SMC by forming a mass movement, the People's Movement for Freedom and Justice (PMFJ) which was launched on 27th January 1978. Under the inspired leadership of Afrifa, Paa Willie, Gbedema, G. W. Amartefio and a few other professionals and intellectuals, this movement spread like wild fire throughout the country despite all the thuggery and intimidation with which it was confronted by the SMC. Other movements that were formed to resist Acheampong were The Third Force by Dr. Bilson and the Front for the Prevention of Dictatorship by Dr. Safo-Adu.

There was yet another way in which Ghanaians reacted to Acheampong's regime and that was the strategy of escape, or as one American political scientist has put it 'voting with the leg'. Disgusted with the deteriorating economic conditions, lack of employment and of job satisfaction, two groups of Ghanaians began to leave the country to seek their fortunes elsewhere. The first group consisted mostly of highly trained and highly skilled professionals – doctors, engineers, architects, surveyors, university lecturers and secondary school teachers, bureaucrats and technocrats. By the late seventies, most secondary schools in the country had lost more than half of their staff while many departments in all the three universities of the country were woefully understaffed.

The second group consisted of unemployed standard seven and secondary school leavers and workers who migrated mainly to the neighbouring countries, especially Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire. Many of them unfortunately were young girls and women, both literate and illiterate, from the urban as well as rural areas, who in desperation accepted all sorts of menial and humiliating jobs including prostitution, and most of whom lived under very trying and inhuman conditions. Under Acheampong, Ghana became not only an impoverished but also a humiliated country, whose citizens were subjected to all sorts of undignified and undignifying treatment.

The last reaction was of course join-the-system strategy. Some Ghanaians out of sheer opportunism or personal greed welcomed Acheampong and became his spokesmen, aids, couriers, organisers, officers and supporters. It is important to note that this group consisted of all classes – lecturers, professors, lawyers, doctors, contractors, men and women, educated and uneducated, professional and non-professional and christian and non-christian. It was these people who constituted the leaders

and storm-troopers of such organisations as the Ghana Peace and Solidarity Council, National Redemption Charter Committees, etc, and it was partly because of the support of these associations that Acheampong's inept, corrupt and weak regime could last so long.

How then did this regime come to an end? By April 1978, as a result of the state of the economy, the blatant way in which Acheampong had rigged the referendum and the arrest and detention of some of the leading professionals, intellectuals and politicians in the country, it had become obvious, even to his opportunist and unprincipled supporters, that Acheampong was simply incapable of solving the problems whilst he committed one blunder after the other which were subsequently listed. Moreover, the other members of the SMC had become alienated by Acheampong's own excesses as well as by his dictatorial tendencies and refusal to consult them on essential issues before taking decisions. It was as a result of the combination of these two factors that the other members of the SMC II staged a bloodless palace coup and deposed Acheampong in July 1978.

His was the worst reign — one of disaster, deprivation, degeneration and stagnation, if not retrogression — that this country has ever known. But there is at least one extenuating circumstance which has to be mentioned. He was a very kind, sympathetic and humane person who valued human life and so hated bloodshed. This is borne out not only by the fact that he assisted so many people in so many diverse ways but even more so by the fact that he never sanctioned the execution of those who plotted or attempted coups against or opposed him. But for that some of us, including the present speaker and some of the leading rulers of the country today, would not be alive now. It is one of those ironies of history that the man who saved so many people from the gallows and the firing squad died by being gunned to death by a firing squad.

Acheampong was succeeded by Lt-Gen F.W.K. Akuffo. His reign lasted from 5th July 1978 to 4th June, 1979, that is, barely a year.

How come? How come indeed, and the answer to that question provides the second explanation of the Ghanaian Sphinx. As one would expect, the ousting of Acheampong was hailed throughout the country and among all classes of the society. The Bar Association, the ARPB, NUGS, and even some

traditional rulers sent in memos not only welcoming the move but suggesting the measures that ought to be taken. The Bar Association, for instance, asked the SMC II to declare the results of the referendum null and void, abandon the whole Union Government Programme, dissolve the Constitutional Drafting Commission appointed after the referendum and establish a Constituent Assembly to draft a new constitution, restore the Professional Bodies Registration Decree 1973, defreeze the assets of the professional bodies, and free the press of Ghana from governmental interference. The ARPB also submitted a very long memo dated 19th July, 1978, reiterating most of the Bar Association's demands and calling for the setting up of "an appropriate machinery to go into wide-spread allegation of corruption and mismanagement of the economy and demonstrate its determination to instil discipline into public life by holding responsible all those who are found to be corrupt and to have contributed to the economic chaos in the country."

Had Akuffo and the reconstituted SMC heeded these suggestions and implemented them immediately, his regime would most probably have lasted. But they did not. They did not only refuse to try Acheampong and his roughtish associates but they also failed to check the corruption, economic mismanagement, daylight looting of the state's coffers, the ostentatious living and *kalabule* that were going on: nor did they deal with the indiscipline and corruption in the army. SMC II in fact turned out to be, as some one put it, 'the same thing different' as SMC I.

The question then is why Akuffo and his SMC II failed to implement the sound measures that were urged on them. The answer is quite simple and could be found in the old English saying that those who live in glass houses do not throw stones. As it became obvious subsequently, Akuffo and his new SMC members were part of the whole system of *kalabule*, corruption, smuggling, profiteering and indiscipline that was rampant and evidently any attempt to investigate or try Acheampong and his hench-men would have exposed all of them. Thus, instead of cleaning up the mess left by Acheampong, Akuffo and his SMC II spent their time not only amassing more wealth and enriching their wives and girl friends, but above all ensuring that they returned the country to civilian rule under a constitution which would guarantee their future safety, security and immunity and enable them to enjoy their accumulated wealth in retirement in

peace. They were able to achieve the latter objective by having included in the new constitution a clause which indemnified the SMC, the NLC and the NRC, i.e. all the three previous military governments, against any acts that they had committed.²³ But they were overtaken by events.

In the early hours of June 4, 1979, a successful coup was staged after an attempt on 15th May had failed, the SMC was replaced by the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) under the chairmanship of a young Air Force officer, Flt. Lt. J.J. Rawlings. The AFRC was made up of the following:

Flt. Lt. J.J. Rawlings	-	Chairman
Captain Boakye Gyan	-	Official Spokesman
Major Mensah-Poku		
Major Mensah Gbedemah		
Warrant Officer Class II Obeng		
Private Owusu Adu		
Corporal Owusu Boateng		
Staff Sergeant Alex Adjei		
Leading Aircraftsman Gatsiko		
Lance-Corporal Peter Tasiri		
Lance-Corporal Ansah-Atiemo		
Lance-Corporal Sarkodee-Addo		
Corporal Sheikh Tetteh		

It is extremely significant that there was not a single officer beyond the rank of major on the Council. What then motivated these young officers and other ranks to stage this coup, or rather 'spontaneous insurrection' against their senior officers?

The answer to this question was given in clear terms by Flt. Lt. Rawlings in his broadcast to the nation on 17th June and again on 30th June 1979. As he put it in the former broadcast:

I wish to avail myself of the opportunity to emphasise once again our resolve not to entrench ourselves in office; we are professional soldiers, and we want to return to the line. It was for the resuscitation and the preservation of the traditions of our profession, and the correction of injustices in the Society to which we all belong (that led us) to overthrow the Supreme Military Council. We are in for house-cleaning, and not for the government of this country. . .²⁴

Again in his broadcast on 30th June 1979, he repeated that the June 4th action represented 'a revolt' of the ordinary Ghanaian

against injustice, against economic hardship and against the cancer of corruption that had eaten deep into the fabric of our society'. He continued:

Seven years in office, the Army was going back to barracks without any steps having been taken to punish those who had tarnished the name of the Armed Forces. This situation posed a threat to the continued existence of the Armed Forces and the stability of the country, hence the spontaneous action of June 4th to pre-empt a coup immediately after handover to a civilian administration.²⁵

In other words, the main motives of June 4th were to punish the corrupt and the guilty, to ensure social justice and restore the tarnished reputation of the Armed Forces. From their subsequent actions and pronouncements, it was obvious that the AFRC saw the rehabilitation of the image of the Armed Forces even more urgent than the house-cleaning exercise involving civilians and ensuring social justice.

Any Ghanaian who lived through the era of the Men on Horseback since 1972 would not deny the validity of these grounds for June 4th. It is equally obvious that the young officers had no political ambitions. The fact that they declared this right from the beginning of the revolution, that the AFRC met the leaders of the political parties three days after the coup to assure them that the elections would take place as scheduled and even turned down a suggestion from one of them that they should be postponed, and finally that they announced on 17th June that Monday 1st October 1979 should be the date for the return of the country to civilian rule – in fact they even handed over a week earlier, on 24th September, 1979 – should leave no one in doubt of the non-political and limited nature of their objectives. In other words, the June 4th action was conceived of not as a real revolution, that is a fundamental change of the structure of society, but merely as a reform movement devoid of any ideological connotations. If it was a revolution, as indeed its leaders later came to dub it, then it was a moral rather than a political revolution, or as Rawlings himself put it before some Muslims, a Jihad or moral crusade 'against cheating, selling above the control price, hoarding, black marketing, currency-trafficking and other forms of social injustices,' and also to end the 'slave-master relationships between the haves and have-nots'.²⁶

The activities of the AFRC during its 112 days of rule are too well-known to be discussed here – indeed, I do not have the time to do so. What I would like to look at briefly is their impact on the society.

The effects of these activities of the AFRC were truly profound. First, the nature and extent of corruption and the decadence into which the country had been plunged were clearly exposed. For the first time, the lessons were driven home that it does not pay to use one's office to amass wealth, that no one would for ever get away with his crimes and that a life of probity, accountability and honesty was to be encouraged. The down-trodden masses, the workers and the other ranks were also encouraged to stand up for their rights and to be part of the house-cleaning exercise by exposing all misdeeds and hidden skeletons. Another effect was the enrichment of the state. As much as ₵23,954,536.00 was deposited in the account opened at the Burma Camp Branch of Ghana Commercial Bank into which the fines of those guilty people were deposited, not to mention the numerous houses, motor vehicles, factories, farms and company shares that were confiscated to the state.

Finally, the activities of the AFRC began the process of introducing a new moral order into the society.

However, what worried some of us at the time were the discipline that was introduced into the body politic and above all the methods that were adopted by the AFRC for its house-cleaning exercise. By allowing the ranks to try and punish and even humiliate their officers, and by encouraging workers to lock up and dismiss their managers, June 4th did introduce indiscipline and insubordination into the system which have not been entirely eliminated. But even more disturbing were the methods applied. In the first place, some of them were too crude, humiliating, inhuman and arbitrary. The public caning of women in a state of nudity was simply too barbaric. The execution of Lt-Gen. Afrifa in the company of those notoriously corrupt senior officers of the SMC regimes was singularly unfair and unjust, especially as he had been thoroughly probed and cleared by a committee presided over by no other person than the present Chief Justice. But what worried others even more was whether those methods, revolutionary as they were, were enough to achieve the objectives in view – the ending of Kalabule, and the establishment of probity, accountability and

social justice. As one writer pointed out at the time:

Can the gun in fact really teach anybody anything that will be lasting? Have people become convinced that kalabuleism is a bad thing *per se* and that it should never be indulged in or are they saying so now out of fear, anger and bitterness? Will razing down Makola and Kantamanto and for that matter all the markets in this country really put an end to kalabuleism? Will shooting people in cold blood after some sort of trial really save this country from corruption, abuse of office, kalabuleism etc? This writer does not think so.

All that such methods do is to generate fear or bitterness in people and a person who acts out of fear or bitterness but not out of conviction is not a person likely to continue in that course of action for too long. The impact of these crude and tragic methods is bound to be short. It will disappear not long after the day that the guns now pointed at the heads of Ghanaians are removed, and I shudder to think what the subsequent reaction of the Ghanaian is going to be! I think that what the AFRC should have done is not merely to have exposed and punished all those involved in kalabuleism and in corrupt deals, but, above all, to have diagnosed the root causes of these phenomena and to have uprooted them.²⁷

The writer just quoted was of course subjected to a great deal of abuse and criticism.²⁸ However, in the light of what happened subsequently and indeed is still happening – witness the recent exposures in the educational service and in the Ghana Commercial Bank – has not that writer been proved right?

Sticking to its promise, the AFRC did allow the programme for the return of civilian rule drawn up by the SMC II to continue. Before June 4th the ban on party politics had already been lifted in January 1979, and by March 1979, as many as 19 parties had emerged. However, by the time of the elections only six had won the Electoral Commissioners' seal of approval. These were the Peoples' National Party (PNP), Popular Front Party (PFP), United National Convention (UNC), Action Congress Party (ACP), Third Force (TF), and the Social Democratic Front (SDF) under the leadership of H. Limann, Victor Owusu, William Ofori Atta (Paa Willie), Col. F. Bernasko, J. Bilson and Ibrahim Mahama respectively. Besides the leaders of these parties, four other candidates – R.P. Baffour, Imoru Ayarna, Kwame Nyanteh and Diamond Mark Addy – contested the post of president.

While the AFRC carried on its moral revolution and house-cleaning exercise, these parties, one independent parliamentary

candidate and four independent presidential candidates campaigned throughout the country. The elections did take place as scheduled on 18th June 1979 and the relevant issues to be discussed here are what the outcome of the elections was and what its explanation and significance could be. The results of the parliamentary elections were quite interesting. Of the 140 seats, PNP won 71, PFP 42, UNC 13, ACP 10, SDF 3 and one independent candidate!²⁹ The first presidential elections proved inconclusive with Limann polling 630,034 votes, Victor Owusu 526,249 and Paa Willie 309,756; a second ballot was ordered which proved decisive. Limann of the PNP won with 1,118,305 votes as against Owusu's 686,097.³⁰

The regional breakdown of these results is rather interesting and significant. Of the parliamentary elections, only the PNP won seats in all the nine regions; PFP, the runner-up, won seats in 7 of the regions but none in Central and Volta regions. The UNC, the third party, won seats in 4 regions. ACP, the fourth successful party, won seats in only the Central and Western regions where its leader came from. SDF won three seats all in the Northern region from where its leader hails; TF won no seat whatsoever and an independent candidate won one seat in Brong-Ahafo, his home area. It is quite evident from the regional breakdown of the results that only two of the parties were really national parties, with the PNP gaining a slight edge over the PFP. Another significant issue is the regionalist factor. The fact that each of the main parties did extremely well in the region from which its leader came demonstrates that regional consciousness or solidarity is stronger and more pervading than that of ethnicity or tribalism. If the latter was the case, the PFP should have won in all the Akan areas, that is in five out of the nine regions of the country. This further indicates that Ghana is still not a real nation-state but an agglomeration of regions. It does not appear that this position has changed that radically since the elections. After thirty years of independence, this is a sad reflection on our attempts at building a nation-state.

But a more immediate and interesting issue is why the PNP won both the parliamentary and presidential elections? Various answers have been given to this question by both local and foreign experts.³¹ According to most of the them, PNP won because it was a better organised party, it had a more effective and grass-roots propaganda machinery, and being the succes-

✓ sor of the CPP i.e. Nkrumah's party, it gained from the enviable legacy which that party left behind. As Ocquaye has put it categorically, 'its victory in 1979 was a victory for Nkrumah's sake'.³² Another reason that has been advanced was that the PNP was greatly assisted by those organisations which were formed by Acheampong such as the Friends, the Patriots etc., as well as the products of the Young Pioneer's Movement and the Ideological Institute all of whom had attained the age of between 21-25 years by the time of the elections. Finally, it has been argued that though based on the CPP, it was able to put up many new and young faces as both presidential and parliamentary candidates which gave it a new and therefore a very appealing image.³³ Others have also emphasized the fact that the PFP was over-confident and arrogant, that its leader was very unpopular and that it failed to make any 'serious attempt to improve its public relations, to project itself as a more responsive, less high handed party which learned from its predecessors mistakes,' and finally the split between the PFP and the UNC.

While there is no time to support or disprove any of the above reasons, let me observe first that the superior advantages which PNP enjoyed merely explain why it polled the votes that it did and not why it won the elections. To me the main reasons for the victory of the PNP and the failure of the PFP were first the overconfidence and the complacency of the PFP which prevented it from putting into the campaign as much drive and energy as it ^{should} could have done. It was this same over-confidence that led the PFP to contemptuously reject the moves for a merger with the UNC as will be seen presently. Secondly, for whatever reason the leader of the PFP was not acceptable to a large majority of the Ghanaian voters at that particular time. This is again evident from the results of the two presidential elections. In the first, in at least as many as 4 constituencies – Ashiedu Keteke, Adansi, Amenfi and Jirapa-Lambussie – where the PFP candidates won, the presidential candidate did not, meaning that not all those who voted for the PFP's candidates voted for its leader. His unattractiveness became even more evident from the fact that whereas he polled 526,249 and Limann 630,034 votes in the first round, he polled 686,097 as against 1,118,424 votes cast for Limann in the second round. The latter figures prove quite convincingly that nearly all the other parties as well as a majority of UNC voters including all

those from the Volta Region voted for Limann rather than Victor Owusu.

But the most crucial factor in the outcome of the elections was the PFP/UNC split. The UNC and the PFP were basically both offsprings of the former PP in the same way that the PNP was in linear relationship with the CPP, and had there been no break, Paa Willie would definitely have become the party leader and the presidential candidate. We need not go into the circumstances that led to the split of the UNC/PFP front nor into the unsuccessful attempts made to heal it. What is particularly relevant here are the consequences of this split.

The failure of these two sister parties to merge was truly regrettable and highly reprehensible. In the first place, instead of joining forces against their common opponent, the PNP, they spent their campaign attacking each other which must have prevented each of them from really gaining new ground while those dedicated members of the UP tradition felt so disillusioned that many of them simply abstained from voting. This was particularly true during the second presidential balloting. Secondly, it split the votes of the PP supporters, which enabled the PNP to win many seats especially in the Eastern and Upper Regions. In as many as 20 constituencies, the combined votes of PFP and UNC were more than those of any other party. Let me cite a few glaring examples. In Okaikwei in the Greater Accra Region, the total vote of PFP/UNC was 18,369 while that of PNP was 12,138; in Koforidua the total was 10,446 while that of PNP was 6,468; in Akropong, the total was 6,572 as against 4,739 for the PNP; in Oda, the figures were 6,158 and 3,998; in Gonja West, the figures were 5,744 and 4,840 and in Gonja Central, 5,157 and 4,856; in Wa, the figures were 6,265 and 3,558. Assuming that all those votes would have gone to the merged party and this is a very valid assumption especially if Paa Willie had been the leader, the total number of seats that the merged party could have won would have been at least 75 if not more out of 140 seats! Moreover, it was because of that split that the first round of the presidential elections proved so inconclusive. Here again, the total votes polled by both Victor and Paa Willie were 836,005 as against 630,043 cast for Limann, which again would have given victory to the merged party.

It should be obvious from the above that while the greater efficiency and purposiveness as well as the new image that the PNP was able to project cannot and should not be ignored, the basic and fundamental reason for its success was the failure of the PFP/UNC forces to unite. In other words, it was not the PNP that won the elections but rather the PFP/UNC forces which lost them.

Whatever the outcome of the elections, Flt. Lt. Rawlings and his AFRC remained more than true to their word. For even instead of 1st October, they handed over power to the newly elected civilian government on 24th September, 1979, and thus Ghanaians were given a third chance to try their hands at parliamentary and constitutional rule.

Finally, in the light of the above, was June 4th necessary and what lessons do we derive from this incredible, calamitous but epoch-making era, the era of the Men on Horseback, which came to an end in September 1979 with the speed and devastation of a Caribbean hurricane? Not only was June 4th absolutely necessary and justifiable but it was also most opportune. It was necessary and opportune because the society especially the upper crust in general and the Armed Forces in particular urgently required that house-cleaning exercise prior to the return to civilian rule. It is obvious that if the pent-up fury of the other ranks had not been given vent even more bloody and chaotic conditions would have immediately followed the return to civilian rule. In this respect, June 4th was indeed 'a vital pre-requisite for a successful return to civilian rule'. Secondly, the coup did not in any way alter the arrangements that had been made for the return to civilian rule. If anything, it rather accelerated the process by shortening the programme by seven good days. And it was justifiable because it was not against a civilian but another military regime that did not have the mandate of the people to be there in the first place. Nor did it infringe or abrogate any constitution that was in existence. Above all, it did set itself very limited objectives, pursued them with military and revolutionary zeal and handed over. Indeed June 4th did set a precedent which it was hoped would be followed subsequently.

What then are the lessons that are to be derived from the events of the era of the Men on Horseback? The first and obvious lesson is that members of the Armed Forces, especially

the officer class, are after all just ordinary human beings who are as susceptible to corruption, immorality, abuse of office and inefficiency as any civilian and they should therefore never use the occurrence of these ills as excuse for overthrowing a popularly elected civilian administration. Secondly, contrary to what Acheampong contended and what unfortunately some of them still believe, soldiers cannot simply hold any office or do anything that civilians can do simply by virtue of their military training. They should therefore confine themselves to what they have, in fact, been trained to do, military work, and leave the day-to-day running of a country to politicians, technocrats and bureaucrats. In other words, they should above all pay particular attention to what Lt. Gen Ocran once advised:

I believe that soldiers should leave politics alone. When they try to run a country, in spite of their enthusiasm, they run it badly because they are, right from the beginning, expected to assume the role of policy-makers in a job for which they had no previous training. . . They should never purport to govern; they cannot, because they generally lack the political education, the mentality and, above all the flexibility of mind and approach to governmental problems.³⁴

He adds quite perceptively:

The officer who tries to serve two masters by combining politics and military duties becomes at once a bad soldier and a bad politician. . . military supremacy over civil authorities ruins both the nation and the military.

What fantastic words of wisdom, common sense and experience! If then soldiers ever feel constrained or find it absolutely necessary to step in, first they should never attempt to administer the country themselves as Acheampong and the SMC I in particular tried to do but should rely on those qualified by their training to do so, and as a corollary to this, their regimes should be sharp, rough and firm but of the shortest possible duration.

The last point is all the more valid because of the third lesson taught by the military era, and that is, that military interventions breed political instability and create serious and constant security problems because of the counter-coups, insurrections, 'spontaneous uprisings' and subversive activities that they always generate. How can any single country have three different heads of state in one single year, and what would be the fate of such a country? But this is precisely what this country experienced between January and October 1979! And how many

counter-coups were not attempted during the period, and can one imagine how much time and worse still the state's limited financial resources were devoted to ensuring the security of those regimes? —

The fourth lesson is that whatever the nature of a government, corrupt or incorrupt, efficient or inefficient, it will always have ready collaborators among all classes of the Ghanaian society and that such collaborators are usually among the most corrupt, shady, opportunistic, unprincipled and sycophantic people of the country. —

And yet another lesson is surely that military rule is resistible giving the right atmosphere of freedom of association and the press, and that the pen can indeed be mightier than the sword. If the professionals had not been tricked by Acheampong, his regime would have been brought down, and this could have been achieved even more readily had, as has been pointed out, the hoe been added to the pen. From this follows another lesson, that such resistance is usually an urban phenomenon and is usually sponsored by such groups as the professionals and students, with the traditional rulers, the judiciary and the bureaucracy very conspicuous by their absence.

Finally, from the elections, three main lessons clearly emerge. The first is that there are only two real political groups or parties, or to use the more trendy term, political cultures in this country — the CPP/PNP culture and the PP/PFP/UNC culture. Secondly, the dismal performance of SDF, which was supposed to be the party of labour, (or rather the party in labour) of the TUC and of the proponents of socialism indicates how insignificant the following of that ideology was in this country. The third important lesson is that this country is far from achieving a nation-state status and is basically a confederation of various regions with ethnicity or tribalism and ethnocentrism still very active, pervasive and decisive forces.

But were all these lessons really learned and what did we do with our third chance of practising civilian rule and parliamentary democracy? This we will attempt to answer in the second lecture under the title 'The era of the Culture of Silence: Ghana since the 31st December Revolution'.

1. See pp. 52, 54-56, 67-68.
2. Policy Guidelines of the Provisional National Defence Council, Accra, May 1982, pp. 1-2.
3. J.B. Danquah, *The Ghanaian Establishment*, forthcoming pp. 146-148.
4. Ibid. pp. 146-7.
5. Ibid. pp. 147.
6. On Ghanaism, See also Lecture III, pp. 68-9.
7. J.B. Danquah, op. cit., p. 127.
8. A Adu Boahen, *Ghana: Evolution and Change in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, Longman, London 1975.
9. *Two Years in Office of Colonel Ignatius Kutu Acheampong*, 13th January 1972-12th January 1974, Accra, pp. 9-10.
10. Kofi Awoonor, *The Ghanaian Revolution*, Oases Publishers, New York, 1984, p. 57.
11. Ibid. pp. 41-42, 55, 99-100.
12. Ibid. p. 57.
13. D. Rothchild, "Military Regimes Performance, An appraisal of the Ghana Experience, 1972-1978," *Comparative Politics*, pp. 459-479, 1980.
14. J. Ravenhill (Ed), *Africa in Economic Crisis*, Macmillan, London, 1986 pp. 260-262.
15. In these lectures, because of lack of time and because I consider the internal factors more crucial and more relevant than the external factors, I have deliberately concentrated on the former almost to the exclusion of the latter.
16. Ravenhill, op. cit., p. 259.
17. Quoted by M. Oquaye, *Politics in Ghana, 1972-1979*, Tornado Publications, Accra, 1980, p. 33.
18. Quoted by M. Oquaye, op. cit., pp. 101-103.
19. Ibid. p. XIV.
20. N. Chazan and V. Le Vine, "Politics in a Non-Political System: the March 30, 1978 Referendum in Ghana", *African Studies Review* XXII; 1979, pp. 177-208.
21. Kofi Awonoor, op. cit., p. 58.
22. The joint communique by the SMC and the ARPB, 17th July 1977, ARPB *News Bulletin*, Vol. No. 9, 28th July, 1977.

23. Barbara E. Okeke, *4th June: A Revolution Betrayed*, Iken-ga Publishers, Enugu, 1982, p. 24.
24. Radio Broadcast: 17th June 1979: B. Okeke, op. cit., pp. 135-138.
25. B. Okeke, op. cit., 30th June, 1979 *Ibid*, pp. 138-142.
26. B. Okeke, op. cit., pp. 151-152.
27. A. Adu Boahen, '110 days of the AFRC', *The Daily Graphic*, 19th September, 1979.
28. *The Daily Graphic*, 21st September, 1979.
29. *The Legon Observer*, 13th July, 1979.
30. N. Chazan, *An Anatomy of Ghanaian Politics*, Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, 1983, p. 294.
31. See for example R. Jeffries, 'The Ghanaian Elections of 1979', *African Affairs*, LXXIX, 316, 1980, pp. 397-414. M. Ocquaye, op. cit., pp. 164-176.
32. M. Ocquaye, op. cit., p. 171.
33. *Ibid*. p. 176.
34. Quoted by M. Ocquaye, op. cit., p. 80.

LECTURE II

THE ERA OF THE CULTURE OF SILENCE: GHANA SINCE THE 31ST DECEMBER REVOLUTION, 1979 – 1987

I attended the meeting in the Parliament House on 24th September 1979, at which the formal handing over ceremony took place and the Third Republic was inaugurated. I shaved off my rather thick and modestly beautiful beard that morning before attending that historic meeting. I did this in fulfilment of the resolution I took on the day I went into hiding, 5th April 1978, to escape arrest and detention – a rather unsuccessful move since I was grabbed only about a fortnight later – that I would not shave until Ghana had been returned to civilian rule. I must therefore have looked quite smart in my old light-coloured suit. So did the President Dr Hilla Limann, and Flt. Lt. Rawlings. Dressed in a rich Kente material which was neatly sown in a northern style, Limann looked a real political and cultural embodiment of the nation-state, however frail it was, of Ghana. It was a very impressive, solemn and moving ceremony. The hall was packed to the full and even larger was the crowd that waited outside while millions watched it on the television or listened to it on the radio. The President accurately articulated the mood of the nation when he stated in his inaugural address:

Never before since independence, have the demands of government been greater, the tasks heavier and the fears, hopes and expectations higher than now.

Abysmal economic chaos, awesome challenges and monumental responsibilities confront us in the face of measureless hope and ever-rising expectations. Founded out of a deep concern for the welfare of the people, my Government of the Peoples' National Party shall not shirk its responsibilities to them. We cannot afford the luxury of failure.¹

They did. Exactly 28 months later, on 31st December 1981, Limann's government was overthrown and our attempt at civilian and constitutional rule collapsed. The purpose of this lecture is to diagnose the causes of this failure and to analyse what has happened since then.

Contrary to what many Ghanaians and outside observers think, it is simply untrue that Limann neither had a firm grasp

of the economic problems facing the country nor formulated any plans for their solution. A glance through his speeches or even a perusal of the short official publication, *Two Years of Rehabilitation and Redirection, 24th September 1979 - 24th September 1981* shows that he did have that grasp, and had the right priorities. In his first sessional address delivered to Parliament on November 30 1979, he rightly chose agriculture as his first priority and he selected certain food crops which were to be given attention and support. These included plantain, cocoyam, cassava, yam, maize, rice, guinea corn and millet, groundnuts, tomatoes, onions and shallots. Irrigation facilities were also to be expanded and put to maximum use. Inputs would be supplied to canoe fishermen to increase their yields and spare parts provided for fishing vessels. The cocoa industry was to be rehabilitated and expanded and the necessary facilities provided. To provide credit, rural banks were to be established in the rural areas.

Equally interesting and realistic were his industrial policies which were to achieve the rehabilitation of existing industries 'so as to fully utilise installed capacity', encourage industries using local raw materials, reactivate abandoned but economically worthwhile industrial projects whose inputs were available locally and promote small-scale rural industries based mainly on locally-made raw materials. What is more interesting, the budgetary allocations were in fact made for the implementation of these plans. It was to attract foreign investment into the field of mining, agriculture and industry that the government launched a very favourable and attractive Investment Code. To boost the gold mining industry in particular, the Government also organized an International Seminar on Ghana's Gold Endowment and other minerals in Accra in January 1981.²

It was in the practical implementation of these plans and the use of the budgetary allocations that the government proved incompetent. For instance, fertilizers were ordered but at the wrong time, and on their arrival could not even be conveyed from the harbour to the places where they were needed. Road contracts were awarded to unqualified contractors, usually party boys. The necessary spare parts and machinery could not be obtained because of the unavailability or inappropriate use, of foreign exchange, etc. The distribution and price control

systems which were formulated were not effectively implemented and the result was the revitalisation of *kalabuleism* in which vigilantes, party financiers, local activists and organizers played a leading role. Thus by the end of 1981, the economic situation had gone from bad to worse on all the economic fronts. The decline in the production of the principal exports such as cocoa, gold, diamonds and timber noticeable in the era of the Men on Horseback continued. For instance, cocoa export dropped to 258,000 metric tons in 1980 which was the lowest figure since the 1950's; what was worse, even the little cocoa being produced could not be moved from the rural areas to the ports. The rate of inflation also rose from 54% in 1979 to 88% in 1980 and 121% in 1981³: This was caused partly by huge budget deficits, wage and salary increases and the printing of more currency. Thus, by December 1981, only midway of the financial year, a deficit of ₦4,500 million had been piled up compelling the government to print more money (53%) to finance such deficit.⁴ This escalating inflation of course brought in its trail high cost of consumer goods including local ones, acute shortage of essential goods leading to longer and longer queues, profiteering and the usual *Kalabuleism*. Nor had the industrial picture improved by December 1981, what with the acute shortage of raw materials and spare parts and the deteriorating infrastructure.

The principal reasons for this dismal economic performance were the Limann regime's mismanagement, corruption and even its inability to use the loans and grants that it was given. The most important reason, however, was Limann's flat refusal to pluck the nettle of devaluation in spite of the fact that all the economic indicators pointed to that measure. This refusal deprived Limann of access to all the foreign financial resources not to mention the expertise he could otherwise have obtained from the IMF, the World Bank and other sources with which we are all too familiar today. Limann failed to take this bold and absolutely necessary step of devaluation because of his morbid fear that it would inevitably lead to a coup.

From the above, it is obvious that by December 1981 the economy of the country was in shambles because of mismanagement, corruption and *Kalabuleism*, and the country was on the brink of bankruptcy. Moreover, the Limann government had by that time proved itself totally incapable of coping with the

situation, lacking the courage and confidence to take the necessary steps. As a crowning and provocative folly, Limann and his regime prepared a very elaborate and extravagant celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of independence for the following year and had already spent millions on a so-called Hall of Fame being constructed for the celebration.

Equally pathetic was the situation on the political front by December 1981. In the first place, the PNP that won the elections of 1979 was made up of two groups, the 'Old Guards' and the 'New Guards'. The former was even subdivided into three wings: the Imoru Egala wing, the Okutwer Bekoe and Kofi Batsa wing, and the socialist wing which formed the Kwame Nkrumah Revolutionary Guard under the leadership of Johnny Hansen. Soon on the assumption of office, an increasingly bitter fight for power and access to state patronage and contracts ensued among these wings. These internecine struggles worsened when accusations of corruption and embezzlement of public funds were made against many of the party leaders. One of them involved a bribe of C5.2 million said to have been collected from a currency printing firm in London. Quite clearly, by December 1981 the PNP was on the verge of disintegration while Limann looked on helplessly, much to the disgust of his own supporters, the joy of his opponents and the dismay of the hungry workers, farmers, students and public servants.

Nor did the opposition members in parliament help the situation. They as well as those of the PNP voted for themselves a salary scale which was totally out of proportion to the prevailing ones in the country. They compounded this blunder by taking loans to purchase private cars for themselves while the public transport system had broken down. It was in reaction to the former that the workers, in a state of anger, shock and disillusionment, demanded increased wages which the government could not but concede with a three fold increase from C4.00 to C12.00 per day (while a loaf of bread was by then costing between C10 and C12). This concession in turn resulted in a huge budget deficit.

There is yet another area in which Limann and his government blundered and invited nemesis upon themselves, that was in the treatment of the Armed Forces in general and Flt. Lt. Rawlings and Capt. Kojo Tsikata in particular. Instead of taking

measures to win the confidence, support and approval of the Armed Forces, he did not. Rather, haunted by the ghost of another coup – and he himself did confess that he went to bed every night in 1980 expecting a coup – Limann embarked on measures which rather further alienated and provoked all sections of the Armed Forces. His first blunder was the offer of scholarships he made to the ex-AFRC leaders to go abroad instead of winning their confidence and using them to continue the task of introducing discipline into the system.

The second even greater blunder was the unceremonious retirement from the army of six top officers including Brig. Nunoo Mensah, the Chief of Defence Staff, Brigadier Arnold Quainoo, the Army Chief and Flt. Lt. Rawlings within a month of his assumption of office. But what enraged even the ordinary people about this was the reason that the government gave for the retirement of the two senior officers, namely, that they were quarrelling with each other, a reason which was readily refuted by both officers. Particularly incensed was Flt. Lt. Rawlings, not so much by his retirement as by the perfidious manner in which it was done.⁵

Moreover, throughout 1980 and 1981, the government harassed soldiers – officers, other ranks – who were in any way associated with the AFRC. Many of them were arrested and detained for months without trial while some were dismissed. Limann also took certain actions which gave the impression to both the military and the people that he was reversing the gains of June 4th.

But even more inept, clumsy, and infuriating was the treatment that the government gave to Rawlings, Kojo Tsikata and their associates throughout 1980 and 1981. They were followed and harassed wherever they went by the security agencies, and they were associated with every coup attempt. Capt. Kojo Tsikata felt so harassed and insecure that he even took the government to court in 1980. According to Kofi Awoonor, some crude attempts were made to have them assassinated both inside and outside the country without success. All this alienated many of their numerous admirers and supporters both inside and outside the Armed Forces. In all these ways, as Chazan has concluded, “by the end of 1981, the PNP regime had succeeded in alienating every branch of the armed services”.⁶

What was the reaction of Ghanaians to all this? The students were the first to react to the Limann regime and staged a series of demonstrations and strikes which were brutally repressed with the killing of one student and the closure of the universities in April 1980. Workers and the Trade Union also joined. For instance, workers of GIHOC went on strike in June 1980 and under the leadership of Amartey Kwei occupied the Parliament House. The TUC itself declared a strike in the spring of 1981. Other bodies such as the June 4th Movement founded late 1979 by Rawlings, and the New Democratic Movement (NDM) founded on May Day 1980 by some radical university lecturers and students also joined. Some of the political parties also publicly criticised the regime and called for Limann's resignation. Others also advocated the formation of a coalition government to tackle the stupendous economic problems since it was unanimously agreed that Limann's regime could not solve them. As early as February 1980, in a public lecture, I personally called for the immediate establishment of a national coalition government composed of all the leading political parties in the country. In an article in the *Free Press* of 2nd April 1981, an elderly and highly respected statesman, Dr K.G. Konuah also canvassed the formation of a coalition government?

It should be obvious then that by December 1981, the country was on the verge of bankruptcy while the people were angry, hungry, humiliated and disillusioned. However, Limann's regime like Acheampong's would have soldiered on but for the military intervention. In the early hours of 31st December, 1981, Ghanaians heard the following on the radio:

Fellow citizens of Ghana, as you would have noticed we're not playing the National Anthem. In other words this is not a coup; I ask for nothing less than a revolution. Something that would transform the social and economic order of this country. . .

Today, we've initiated a Holy War. . . There is no justice in this society and so long as there is no justice, I would dare say LET THERE BE NO PEACE.

This was followed with the abrogation of the constitution, the dissolution of parliament and the Limann government, and the appointment of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) to take over. In spite of the announcement, this was indeed another military coup staged, as we were told in the

same broadcast by, 'the Recce, 5BN, Air Force and most of the soldiers who have even volunteered from other units', and the one who made the announcement was no other than Flt. Lt. J.J. Rawlings who became the head of that new regime.

Why then did Rawlings and his associates act a second time? It is quite clear from the first and subsequent broadcasts that the main reasons for this 'second coming of J.J.' as it came to be popularly termed, were to save the country from the ineffective and corrupt Limann regime, to halt the planned extravagant independence celebration, to 'transform the social and economic order of the country' by involving the people in the decision-making process, to ensure social justice in the society, and to end the harassment and persecution of some individuals, including Rawlings and Capt. Kojo Tsikata. As one political scientist, Donald I. Ray, has put it "Metaphorically speaking, Limann reached for his gun first but Rawlings was the better shot. Fear for their own safety, therefore, played a significant role in the revolutionaries' decision to initiate the revolution itself".⁸

Was this second coming equally necessary and justifiable? Though the reasons that Rawlings and his associates gave for staging the coup as well as its timing sound plausible, the 31st December coup was first and foremost unnecessary for three main reasons. Admitting that by December 1981, Limann and his government had proved beyond all reasonable doubt that they were simply incapable of solving the socio-economic problems and were rather compounding them and that something had to be done, there were many options open to the people of Ghana and in fact many of them were being canvassed. These options included forcing Limann to resign, impeaching him – and Article 56 of the Constitution laid down procedures for this – or what so many people were advocating at the time, the formation of a coalition government. Since all these peaceful, civilian and constitutional alternatives had not been exhausted, a coup was unnecessary. Secondly, as I pointed out in my first lecture, military coups are no solutions *ipso facto* to economic mismanagement or corruption. Indeed, from the performance of both SMC I and II, they can even worsen the situation. Thirdly, the fundamental reason for the disastrous economic record of Limann's government was his refusal to accept the terms of IMF for its assistance which included devaluation, and there is

no doubt whatsoever that whether he liked it or not, Limann would have been compelled by the sheer pressure and reality of the economic situation to go to the IMF sooner rather than later and swallow the bitter pill of devaluation in exactly the same way that Rawlings and his PNDC themselves had to do after two years of dilly-dallying. As a move to solve the economic problems facing the country, therefore, the 31st December coup was most unnecessary. Indeed, on the very day that the PNDC launched its Economic Recovery Programme with the support, approval and blessing of the IMF and the World Bank, Rawlings should have admitted his failure, recalled Limann or ordered fresh elections and penitently and graciously withdrawn from the scene.

The only way in which the coup could be deemed to have been necessary was if, as Ray has pointed out, it was meant to save the lives of Rawlings and Kojo Tsikata in particular; in other words, only if it was a pre-emptive move. However, Ray's metaphor of Limann reaching for his gun first but Rawlings being the better shot is inappropriate and in fact misleading. I honestly do not think that Limann was that bloody-minded and wanted to eliminate Rawlings and Tsikata. I think what he meant to do was, as another political scientist has recently concluded, "through calculated press and MI (Military Intelligence) campaigns, lies, and harassment to sharply diminish the public support for the image of Rawlings"⁹ In any case, even if it were true that Limann was after the blood of Rawlings and Tsikata surely a coup was not the only option open to the latter two. To save their necks by overthrowing the whole Constitution of a country is like killing the bats which from time to time make their home in the trees around the Military Hospital, Accra, with a machine gun! No, the fear for their lives as well as the need to stop the impending frivolous but expensive Silver Jubilee anniversary celebrations were mere precipitants but not the real causes of the 31st December action. In the light of the above then, that action was really unnecessary.

Nor was it justifiable for two main reasons. First, as I argued in my first lecture, under no other circumstances besides a flagrant abuse of the constitution should a civilian regime that has not run its full term of office be overthrown through military action. If such an action should be taken, it should be not for the overthrow but rather for the defence of the constitu-

tion. Secondly, such military action denies the people their God-given right of passing judgement on their own government at the right time. In other words, coups deny the electorate their primordial right to participate in the decision to end or renew the mandate of a government. This surely is inconsistent with the principle of people's participation in the decision-making process, which, after all, is what we are told the 31st December Revolution is all about.

Besides the above, the 31st December coup was also premature not only from the constitutional point of view, but even from that of the revolutionaries and coup makers themselves. As has been pointed out above, Limann and his regime had been mandated by the Constitution to rule for 4 years or 48 months and they had been there for only 28 months. But what is worse still, to have really effectively implemented their programme, the Revolutionaries should have first established a unified, well-organised and well disciplined vanguard party. Jerry and his supporters were nowhere near creating such a party even though they had agreed on the outlines of a programme by December 1981.¹⁰ It was the lack of such a party which accounts for the utter confusion and bloodshed of the first two years of the revolution. To embark on such a gigantic structural transformation without such a vanguard party is like a child trying to run before learning to walk, and nothing can be more premature, and usually more disastrous than that.

Finally, not only was the 31st December coup unnecessary, unjustifiable and premature but it was to me an exceedingly unfortunate move. Ghana has been able to produce only three charismatic personalities in this century, namely, Kwame Nkrumah, Akwasi Amankwah Afrifa and thirdly J.J. Rawlings, and just as Nkrumah, Afrifa and even Bernasko each formed a political movement or party to achieve his own political objectives, J.J. Rawlings could and should have done the same thing. And he had all the time in the world to do this, that is from the time he handed over to the next period of elections. This time was most ideal for the formation of a truly mass populist party on the lines of the original CPP of Nkrumah in view of J.J.'s immense popularity and charisma on the one hand, and of the euphoria and consciousness or rather the conscientization that he had generated among the poor, the hungry and the oppressed masses because of his June 4th action on the other. But

forming a party and getting power through the ballot box are much more arduous, painstaking and difficult though humane, peaceful, legal and constitutional methods than getting power through the barrel of the gun. Most regrettably, Rawlings rather chose the relatively easier but more violent and bloody option of the barrel of the gun. Had he got to power by the ballot box, he would have helped to reintroduce the proper political culture into this country, and ushered Ghana into a new political era of constitutional and civilian rule which is the hallmark of all advanced, industrialized and civilized countries. By that failure he has done this country a great disservice and returned us to where we started from on 24th February 1966. There is, however, still one consolation. Rawlings has not squandered all his popularity, appeal and charisma yet and can still do what his idol Nkrumah did in the 1940s. I will return to this theme in my final lecture.¹¹

Whether necessary or unnecessary, justifiable or unjustifiable, opportune or inopportune and fortunate or not, Rawlings and his associates fought their way to power. What then have they made of their rule? The history of the PNDC so far has fallen, as was the case of the Acheampong regime, into two clear phases. The first lasted from 31st December 1981 to about July 1983, and the second since then marked by the introduction of the first drastic devaluation of the cedi and the launching of the Economic Recovery Programme. The first phase was the radical phase dominated by Marxist or neo-Marxist advisors.

Probably drawing from previous experience, Rawlings did not rely on the military alone for the administration of the country but even more on civilians. This is evident from both the composition of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) established on 2nd January 1982 which consisted of four soldiers and three civilians. Those who were appointed as Secretaries (formerly Ministers) for the various ministries were also mostly civilian. Of the first eight Secretaries, only one was a soldier.

Besides the PNDC and the Secretaries or Ministers, there were other organisations which assisted the PNDC during the period under review, all of which were progressive left wing organisations. They were the June Fourth Movement (JFM), the People's Revolutionary League of Ghana (PRLG), the New Democratic Movement (NDM), the African Youth Command (AYC), the Movement for Peace and Democracy (MOPAD), and the

Kwame Nkrumah Revolutionary Guards (KNRG). The June 4th Movement (JFM) was formed in late 1979 after the handing over to the PNP administration under the leadership of Rawlings, Chris Atim (a graduate of the University of Science and Technology and a former First Vice-President of NUGS) and Stg. Alolga Akata-Pore then an Economics student of Cape Coast University. It attracted young University graduates, University student leaders and activists. Its economic policies were socialist and anti-colonial while its political aim was to develop into a Bolshevik-style party or "an authentic working-class political party to wrestle political power for the realization of the interest of the working people."¹² The second was the People's Revolutionary League of Ghana (League) founded by T. Kodwo-Nubuor, a young graduate from Legon. It was, like the JFM, Marxist in policy, ideology and orientation. Its membership which consisted mainly of students and workers was very small and was confined mainly to the Mamprobi area of Accra. The third was the New Democratic Movement (NDM) founded on May Day 1980. The membership was restricted mainly to the Accra area and consisted of professors and lecturers of the University of Ghana, professionals and civil servants among whom were Dr. Hutchful and Dr. Kwesi Botchwey and it was led by Kojo Tsikata, described as a Marxist activist. Though the JFM and NDM are both Marxist-Leninist, Nkrumahist and anticolonial, they differ in approach and strategies.

It was these left wing organisations that guarded and guided the PNDC during its first year of existence and they dictated those radical approaches that typified the first phase of the PNDC rule. Unfortunately, these groups failed to unite into a single Marxist-Leninist or a radical vanguard party. On the contrary, they competed among themselves for positions of influence and power and were divided on ideological issues and strategies with consequences to be discussed later.

Others who rallied immediately behind the PNDC were University students, the rank and file of the Armed Forces, the Workers and the Trade Union, the rural wage labourers and the urban unemployed, and radical intellectuals especially of the Universities of Ghana and Cape Coast. The urban elite, the bourgeoisie, the professional elite, the technocrats and the traditional rulers on the whole stood aloof.

What institutions and structures did the PNDC set up for the implementation of its policies? The first of these structures were the Defence Committees. They were of two types: the Workers' Defence Committees (WDCs) and the People's Defence Committees (PDCs). The WDCs were formed by workers at their work places and were to be part of the decision-making process, while the PDCs were organised by communities in the urban as well as the rural areas. They were envisaged as the institutions of radical change or as "instruments for popular participation, political education, channels of communication to and from the leadership, and political control," and they were regarded as the basis for the future revolutionary party that was to be formed. In the early months of the Revolution, the defence committees were dominated by the JFM. The other structures were the public tribunals, the National Investigation Committee (NIC), the Citizens Vetting Committee (CVC), the National Youth Organising Commission, the Student Task Forces, and finally the 31st December Women's Movement formed in May 1982.

What then did the PNDC and these new structures do during the period under review. The activities of the PNDC and its revolutionary organs and structures — especially the house-cleaning exercise continued by the NIC, CVC and the tribunals; the mobilisation and communal labours of the WDCs and PDCs, the work of the Student Task Force which resulted in the evacuation of thousands of tons of cocoa from the interior — and their effects, which included the escape from the country of thousands of businessmen and politicians and the recovery of millions of cedis through fines, tax payments and confiscation of assets, are all too fresh in our minds to be discussed here.

Four other events occurred during the period under review which merit some attention. They are the role of the military, the murder of the three judges and one retired army officer, the repatriation of nearly a million Ghanaians from Nigeria and, to crown them all, the drought and bush fires that ravaged the country in 1983. In their anxiety to continue the house-cleaning exercise and ensure the success of the revolution, some of the soldiers maltreated and harassed civilians, confiscated goods on allegations of hoarding, and impounded travellers' goods at the airport and harbours. Many of them seized private cars, and entered peoples' homes, especially those of Syrians and Lebanese, to extort money from them. Their atrocities culminated in

Kumasi in February 1982 with the killing and the public burning of a priest and the shooting of a female police member of his church.

But nothing outraged all classes of the society in general and the professionals in particular more than the kidnapping and brutal murder of three High Court Judges – Mrs. Cecilia Koranteng-Addo, Agyepong and Sarkodee – and a retired Major and Group Personnel Manager of GIHOC, Sam Acquah, and the burning of their bodies on 30th June 1982. Such was the outrage and condemnation that the PNDC was compelled to set up a Special Investigation Board (SIB) under the chairmanship of a former Chief Justice, Samuel Azu Crabbe, which reported that two members of the PNDC and six soldiers were responsible for that murder. Though one PNDC Member Amartey Kwei and the six soldiers were then tried and executed, public anger and disgust remained unassuaged and the atmosphere of fear, alarm and insecurity was greatly intensified by this tragic and brutal episode for a long time.

However, just when the country was recovering from this and other traumas, it was hit in 1983 by two catastrophies, one artificial and the other natural. The first was the expulsion of over one million Ghanaians from Nigeria and their return home in January 1983, which worsened the economic situation in the country. As if that was not enough, that year also witnessed the worst natural disasters that this country has ever known in the form of prolonged drought and bushfires. The latter ravaged and destroyed cocoa and food farms and further aggravated the food situation in the country. It looked as if the very elements and gods were enraged against us. The outcome of these two calamities in particular was the scarcity and escalating cost of basic foodstuffs especially in the urban centres, widespread unemployment, sheer hunger depicted by the famous 'chains'¹³ which most people came to acquire, and with these all sorts of social evils such as stealing, armed robbery, confiscation of people's cars in broad daylight, and the resort to various devices, fair and foul, just to keep body and soul together. It was a most excruciating and traumatic experience and anybody who lived through and survived must be awarded the Order of the Volta.

What were the reactions of the people to the activities of the PNDC during the period under review? As the revolution

was initially envisaged as more or less a class war, between the haves and have-nots, the workers and the managers, the military rank and file and the officers, the opposition was expected to come only from the bourgeoisie. But in actual fact, it did not. During the period under review the opposition did not only assume a class war but also interestingly and significantly enough an ideological one among the Left, the Centre and the Right, a feature which has still not been really recognized and which needs therefore to be highlighted and emphasized here.

As one would expect, the first opposition came from the Ghana Bar Association, that is, from the Right. Barely a month after the 31st December coup, the Ghana Bar Association advised the PNDC to establish a more broadly-based government and restore the country to civilian rule by September 1983. The murder of the judges intensified opposition to the PNDC among the professionals. The Ghana Bar Association, the Churches and the Association of Recognised Professional Bodies condemned not only the murders, but also what they called the 'campaign of hate' against the rich, the failure of the PNDC to improve the living conditions of the people, the lack of military discipline, military brutality, the curfew then in operation and the loss of press freedom and they repeated the earlier demand for the return to civilian rule by September 1983. The Ghana Bar Association followed this up with a boycott of all courts, commissions of enquiry and tribunals during the two-week period of mourning and later boycotted the public tribunals. The supporters of PNDC and the Press replied with a similar condemnation of the GBA and the ARPB while some of the activists later invaded and raided various masonic temples and clubs of the professionals and exposed and destroyed regalia, books and symbols.

In April-May 1983, in answer to the harsh economic measures introduced by the Budget which included increased petrol prices, lawyers, University teachers and some workers went on strike, demanded the abrogation of the budget and called for the publication of the report of the Special Investigation Board (SIB). Interestingly enough, they were joined by the students who had by June 1982 broken with the PNDC over the latter's decision to extend the mandatory National Service Scheme from one to two years together with a six-month military training programme. All these bodies demanded an end to

PNDC rule and the formation of a broadly-based coalition to organise the restoration to civilian rule.¹⁴ The PNDC was not affected by these protests.

But it was not the professionals and the students alone who opposed Rawlings and the PNDC but the military and other civilians too, mainly through plots and attempted coups, and during the period under review, as many as seven of them were unearthed or occurred – in March 1982, July 1982, 29th October 1982, 23rd November 1982, 27th February and 16th June 1983 and 19th June 1983. Though these coups were usually said to have been planned and financed by the Ghanaians who had escaped abroad with the assistance of the US Government or were seen as the outcome of the conflict between the Northern and the Ewe officers in the Army, they were in fact much more complicated than that. From the available evidence, it would appear that three of them were instigated purely by civilians, those of March 1982, July 1982 and 16th June 1983. The rest appear to have been basically military affairs arising out of the ideological conflicts within the PNDC and their supporters among the rank and file of the Army. Soon after its formation, the PNDC would appear to have become divided into three ideological camps, the extreme Left who were members of the JFM led by Chris Atim and Sgt. Akata-Pore, the extreme Right represented by Brigadier Nunoo-Mensah, and the moderate Left or Left of centre who belonged to the NDM led by Kojo Tsikata and Kwesi Botchwey. The difference between the two left groups centred on the strategy to be adopted. While the extreme Left advocated the immediate establishment of full-fledged socialism and the immediate implementation of the programme published in the Workers Banner with the financial assistance from the socialist countries and Libya without any ties whatsoever with the IMF, the World Bank and the West, the moderate Left advocated the adoption of Mao's theory of the New Democracy and Lenin's New Economic Policy of the 1920s both of which welcomed the participation of capitalists and imperialist institutions and agencies in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism.¹⁵ The Right led by Brigadier Nunoo-Mensah were for the old capitalist system and for very close ties with the West.

In the early stages of the 31st December Revolution, the JFM with the backing of the People's Revolutionary League of

Ghana (PRLG) dominated the PNDC and was the closest of the radical groups to Rawlings. All the first structures, institutions and strategies would therefore appear to have been dictated by its leaders Chris Atim and Sgt. Akata-Pore with the support of Rawlings. However, it would appear that when Chris Atim's tour of the socialist countries – USSR, Czechoslovakia, the GDR, Bulgaria, Hungary and Cuba – in March 1982 as well as negotiations with Libya failed to produce the massive capital needed for the reconstruction of the shattered economy of the country, Botchwey and Tsikata and now with the support of Rawlings began to negotiate secretly with the IMF and the World Bank in about April 1982 and this was officially announced in September 1982. It was mainly to stop what they considered to be a sell-out to the imperialist and neo-colonial forces and establish a purely socialist state that the Accra and Tema WDCs and the leaders of the JFM and the PRLG came together to announce on 29th October, 1982, that Akata-Pore had taken over from Rawlings as Chairman of the PNDC! However, this coup which has been described by Ray as the 'the only example of a coup by press conference'¹⁶ soon fizzled out.

On 23rd November, occurred another coup attempt when gun shots were heard in a part of Gondar Barracks in Burma Camp. This, however, was over after about an hour, which resulted in the immediate arrest of two Majors, three Lieutenants, one Warrant-officer and three Lance-Corporals and later 26 other soldiers and two civilians one of whom was the economist Kwame Pianim and one police man. This coup attempt has been described as 'a more straight-forward right-wing coup attempt'. The resignation of the Chief of Defence Staff, Brigadier Nunoo-Mensah from the PNDC only a day before the coup attempt would seem to lend some credence to that interpretation. The PNDC followed this counter-coup with several arrests which included many of the left wing members of the PNDC, the JFM and the PRLG, including Sgt. Akata-Pore and Corpl. Gyiwah. These arrests led to the resignation of many young revolutionaries as well as Chris Atim who fled the country.

Thus by December 1982 only two of the original members of PNDC were remaining, Rawlings and Agyei Boadi, and what is more both the extreme Left and the Right wings had been eliminated from the PNDC, leaving the way for Rawlings and the NDM under the leadership of Kojo Tsikata and Dr. Botch-

wey. But the Left and Right wings did not give up, and made a last determined effort on June 19th 1983 to topple the PNDC. This 19th June coup was easily the most serious and daring of the coups against the PNDC and the only one that came within an ace of succeeding. With its failure, the PNDC became firmly entrenched and has not been really seriously challenged ever since.

What then was the outcome of the first phase of the administration of Rawlings and his PNDC? There is no doubt that the regime succeeded as in the June 4th era in exposing many corrupt deals and practices and in punishing numerous culprits by fines, imprisonment, confiscation of assets or execution. The coffers of the state were certainly greatly enriched. But in terms of the political and economic revival and development of the country, the record of the administration was negative. Indeed, productivity had come to a standstill or even deteriorated by the end of the period under review. The quantity of cocoa produced dropped from 246,500 tons in 1981 to 168, 110 in 1983; that of cereals from 725,000 tons to 308,000; rice from 97,000 tons to 40,000 and timber exports from 219,000 cubic metres to 115,000.¹⁷ By the end of the period the cost of living had escalated and the scarcity of food, essential commodities and raw materials was worse than before. Never in the history of the country have such long queues been seen in this country for every conceivable item, including even kenkey, and especially for petroleum products, as in the period under review; and never have Ghanaians felt so hungry, so humiliated, so impoverished, subjected to such traumatic experiences, and so disillusioned as they were by July 1983. And the basic reason for this disastrous performance was the lack of political stability, lack of clear-cut plans, lack of a sense of direction and lack of discipline.

In the event, the PNDC weathered all these storms with which it was beset and entered the second phase of its administration, which has been going on ever since. What then has been its track record so far?

Compared with its record during the first phase, the performance of the PNDC apart from its impact on the people themselves, has been quite remarkable. Since we are all aware of this success story of the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP), thanks to our mass media, the IMF, the World Bank and espe-

cially our foreign visitors and experts, I need not dwell on it here. Let me simply quote one of the best comments on the economic performance of the PNDC since 1983 by the *South Magazine*:

Ghana has come a long way since 1983, the year of hunger, when people queued to buy kenkey (maize dough) and rationed petrol. Protruding collar bones, known as Rawlings chains, have been replaced by protruding stomachs, now known as Rawlings coats.¹⁸

Actually, I myself have not heard about the coats but it is an interesting comment all the same. What I would like to do is first and foremost to try and account briefly for this success story which has not been told.

The success of the ERP since 1983 has been due to a number of factors. These have been the formulation of a concrete plan of action – the ERP, the availability of the two crucial inputs of finance and experts, the resolute implementation of all the necessary strategies however harsh or inhuman and the courage of the PNDC to contain all opposition to these strategies. The harshest but boldest of these strategies were the steepest series of devaluations ever known in history which lowered the value of the cedis from ₵2.75 to a dollar in April 1983 to ₵30.00 in October 1983, ₵50.00 in December 1984, ₵60.00 in October 1985, ₵90.00 in January 1986 and now to ₵179.00. The second was the abolition of the PDCs and the WDCs and their replacement by the Committees for the Defence of the Revolution (CDRs) and more interestingly and more courageously still, the substitution of Interim Management Committees with Standing Joint Consultative Committees which are merely to advise management and not to take part in the decision-making process. The third was the admission of foreign IMF and World Bank experts into certain key sectors and corporations such as the Bank of Ghana, COCOBOD, Electricity Corporation and the Ghana Water and Sewerage Corporation. Surely only a military government could have implemented such bold and harsh measures and got away with it!

Is everything then going as smoothly as Dr. Kwesi Botchwey, the local media, the IMF, the World Bank and visiting delegations and businessmen have been telling us? The answer is certainly not positive. In the first place, the social costs of these measures are simply too high and too harsh, and most of us are

wondering whether the PNDC is out to please the IMF, the World Bank and our creditors rather than promote the welfare of the people of this country. Who in this audience can say that his income in whatever form it comes is commensurate with the astronomical increase in the cost of living caused by this repeated and ever escalating doses of devaluation and the abolition of virtually all subsidies? It is true that not only the shops but even the streets are full of goods of all sorts, but how many of us can afford them? It is also true that the 'chains' have disappeared, but how many of us have three square meals, or even two, a day today? How many of us can really bear the burden of secondary school fees, hospital charges, transport charges etc? Is the laying off of people, which is misleadingly being termed redeployment, socially justifiable in a country with no unemployment benefits? In his recent criticism of the structural adjustment programme currently going on in Nigeria, General Olusegun Obasanjo, the former Head of State, stated: "Adjustment is part of the process of existence of any human being or human institution. It is part of our daily experience. But adjustment must have a human face, human heart and milk of human kindness and **must not** ignore what I call human survival and dignity, issues of employment, food, shelter, education and health."¹⁹ I must state that this observation is very applicable to the economic policies being at present pursued by the PNDC. These policies do not have a human face, and they must.

I must be fair to Rawlings and point out that he is indeed aware of the hardships confronting the people of this country. When asked about this in an interview in 1984 he stated:

The people have faced and continue to face hardship. Naturally, people will grumble. But the fact that Ghanaians have been able to put up with shortages, transport difficulties, low salaries, and other problems without any major protest, is an indication of their confidence in our integrity, the integrity and good intentions of the PNDC government. Visitors from other countries have commented that in their countries there would be riots if conditions were similar to those here. But the people know that they are not suffering to make a corrupt government rich at all, we are suffering in order to concentrate all our resources in the building of a just and prosperous society.²⁰

I am afraid that I do not agree with Rawlings' explanation of the passivity of Ghanaians. We have not protested or staged

riots not because we trust the PNDC but because we fear the PNDC! We are afraid of being detained, liquidated or dragged before the CVC or NIC or being subjected to all sorts of molestation. And in any case, have Ghanaians not been protesting at all as the Head of State thinks? They have been but in a very subtle and quiet way – hence the culture of silence to be discussed below!

My second major criticism of the PNDC is its relative neglect of agriculture and the rural areas. The economic salvation of this country does not lie in the production of more toilet rolls, soap, flour and cement or the availability of more imported consumer goods and spare parts, or the prompt servicing of foreign debts and interests but in agriculture, rural development and the availability of more locally produced food. But what has the PNDC done in these crucial and obvious areas? What real solid measures has the PNDC taken since its six years' term of office to boost the production of rice, yams, cassava, maize and above all cocoa? Is it not amazing that loans for agriculture attract the same interest rate as those for manufacturing? What concrete measures has the government taken towards alleviating the acute problems of labour and credit facing farmers in the country? Is agriculture not very heavily subsidized in the very countries of IMF, the World Bank and EEC, and is this not what the American PL 480 is all about? Why then are all agricultural subsidies being abolished?

In its recent National Programme for Economic Development, the government has congratulated itself on the great things it has done for cocoa farmers. It has stated, and I quote:

In May 1987, a new producer price of C140,000 per metric ton as against the previous season was announced even though cocoa prices on the world market were declining. The spectacular rise in producer price from C12,000 in 1983 to the current level has thus corrected the injustice of the past in which the nation virtually lived off the cocoa farmer but failed to pay him a fair remuneration.²¹

But has the country really stopped living off the cocoa farmer and is the present remuneration really fair? Is the government aware of the fact that this remuneration constitutes only 35% of the world price of cocoa! What happens to the remaining 65%? And is the government aware of the fact that the cost of insecticides was increased from C150.00 per litre to C600.00 and that of a spraying machine from about C5,000.00 to about

a whacking Q23,000.00 each at about the same time as the latest price increase? Why should the recent retention of 35% of the earning in foreign exchange go to the exporter and not to the producers of those products themselves too?

Mr. Chairman, I have been spending most of my time since the last three years among these farmers in the rural areas and I know that the quality of the food they eat, the water they drink, the clothes they wear, the houses or huts they live in and the beds they sleep on is simply appalling and something has to be done about it. Are not farmers in Europe and America among the wealthiest people in these countries? Why should not that be the case in Africa in general and in Ghana in particular?

My third major criticism of Rawlings and his PNDC is that wittingly or unwittingly, consciously or unconsciously, they have been fanning ethnicity, or as it is more popularly though wrongly termed, tribalism. Is it not strange and rather unfortunate that the Head of State, the Head of National Security, the Head of the Police Service, the Head of the Army, the acting Governor of the Bank of Ghana and the head of the National Investment Bank, and I am sure there are others – all happen to belong to a single ethnic group, or, are at least from a single region of the country? Please note that I am not attacking the personalities themselves. I have nothing against them as persons, some of whom I know personally and some of whom are friends of mine. But whether Rawlings is aware of this or not, this situation is giving the unfortunate impression that the country is being dominated and ruled by that single ethnic group, and this impression is causing such anger and irritation that in the interest of national reconciliation and peace, measures should be taken to rectify the situation. What is happening at the Bank of Ghana is particularly provoking and should be corrected as soon as possible.

The other criticism I have against the PNDC is the rather questionable way in which it is setting about educational and political reforms. While there is no doubt that educational reforms are needed, and while the JSS idea which, incidentally, is not the original idea of the PNDC but an inheritance from the Busia and Acheampong governments, is indeed welcome, necessary and long overdue, to begin the new educational structure with the JSS system rather than with the primary

system is like starting to build a new house from the middle or the super-structure instead of from the foundation. What is worse still, neither the teachers, the classrooms, the textbooks nor the machinery are available, especially in the rural areas. In the same way, we are told that the district assemblies are the foundations of the future political structure that we are going to erect. But how can we determine the foundation of a structure whose features we do not know? In any case, at which meeting of the people was the decision to hold district assembly elections and on a non-party basis taken? In both cases, in which a great deal of time and money is being wasted, there appears to be no clearly thoughtout and integrated programme of action and both should therefore be reconsidered. If we cannot do so ourselves, surely we can learn from our neighbours, the Nigerians, who published a carefully worked-out political programme covering the period 1987 to 1992 before taking the first step of local elections.

My last and final concern about the PNDC is the culture of silence which it has given birth to or rather revived to which the Head of State himself drew the attention of the nation in his speech in Sunyani in April 1987, and which has since then attracted the attention of the mass media. Just as Acheampong is going to be immortalised by his phrase 'seizing the commanding heights of the economy', so is our Ft. Lt. going to be remembered by the phrase 'the Culture of Silence', which has since then been extended to include the culture of rumours, the culture of democracy or according to one of the locals, the 'Vulture of Silence'. But the interesting questions are: Is there in fact a culture of silence in this country, and if there is, what is its real nature and, above all, who is to be blamed for it?

It is generally agreed that a culture of silence does exist in this country and is even growing in intensity daily. As E.A. Haizel, the Executive Secretary of the National Commission for Democracy admitted: "The Culture of Silence has so trapped the people that there is now a lot of murmuring and passivism around instead of a positive declaration of opinion", and he even went to the extent of assuring the nation that "the Commission will soon launch a programme on public education to break the culture of silence which has trapped majority of Ghanaians";²² and nearly all the editorials of the newspapers of the time came to the same conclusion. But is the culture of

silence prevailing because people have not in fact been talking at all, or is it because they have been talking but that what is said that is critical of the government or in opposition to the views of the government is not reported? Though most people are of the opinion that the latter is the case, in my opinion it is due to both. Most of you may recall the confrontation between the NUGS and the government in April and May, 1987 resulting in the closure of the universities and the dismissal of the executive of NUGS. The interesting thing is that none of the papers of the day ever reported what really led to the dismissal of those student leaders at the time. It was only after those dismissals that the People's Daily Graphic decided in its issue of Monday, May 11 1987 that "in view of current developments we now feel it our duty to publish extracts from our reporters' notebooks on various campus meetings over the past few weeks." The question is why did they not publish these extracts at the material time?

Again, anybody who attended the New Year School of the Institute of Adult Education, University of Ghana, from 28th December 1987 to 4th January 1988 and heard the speeches and discussions could not but be amazed by the heavily biased and selective nature of the coverage of those events in the mass media. While all the speeches in favour of the PNDC were given great prominence and some of them were repeatedly telecast, most of those speeches critical of the PNDC such as those by Johnny Hansen, Mike Ocquaye, Kakraba Quashie and Rev. Dr. Antwi were either completely ignored or mentioned just in passing. There is no doubt then that this culture of silence is to a considerable extent the outcome of the way in which our mass media handle what people say. And I am sure that the mass media are behaving in this way because they either do not feel free or are afraid to publish or broadcast what they would like to. The situation is worsened by the lack of virile independent newspapers, a situation which again has been caused entirely by the PNDC government. The treatment it gave to the journalists of the Free Press and the Catholic Standard and the closing down of both papers finally removed the only other sources that were giving some publicity to objective and critical views. With the lack of press freedom being experienced by the official mass media and with the strangulation of the independent press, how can the culture of silence not be revived or

deepened?

The Akan have a proverb which even recognises the effect of such a culture of silence. It runs, 'Se wokum obrekuo na wokum akoko nini a, ebe ye den na woate se ade akye' (If you kill the cuckoo and kill the cock, how can you know that it is dawn?). The classical scholars have expressed the same sentiment thus: *Vigiles ales evocat auroram* (It is the wakeful bird that proclaims the dawn), which incidentally is the motto of the University of Ghana. And if the dawn is not proclaimed, we all stand in danger of becoming RIP VAN WINKLES!

But there is another aspect of the culture of silence which seems to be ignored by many people. There is another group of people, in my opinion numerically greater probably than the first group, who are using the culture of silence as a means of protest against the PNDC government. This takes the form of not just silence but also apathy, indifference, refusal to accept appointments from the PNDC or take part in communal activities and official celebrations, premature retirement from the Public Service, and refusal to register and/or vote. In a recent article in West Africa, the writer Nana Fredua-Agyeman attributed the apathy to the recent registration exercise to lack of education,²³ and this explanation was also given in official circles. This is a very naive and simplistic explanation. That reaction was to me a typical example of an aspect of the culture of silence — the culture of silence as a means of protest! This form of silence protest is being adopted now because for obvious reasons, nobody dare embark on any open and organised protest, not even the workers' TUC. And in any case, is this not what the prophet Amos advised the children of Israel to do when he stated: "Therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time, for it is an evil Time".²⁴ What should be done about this will be discussed in my final lecture.

In this and in the first lecture, I have attempted to demonstrate that there is indeed a Ghanaian Riddle which has been growing in complexity with the years and that attempts have been and are still being made for its solution. From our analysis of the main features of the riddle and its causes, what other measures then do we propose towards its solution? I will attempt to answer this question in my last lecture entitled *Towards a Solution of the Ghanaian Sphinx Riddle*.

1. *Two years of rehabilitation and redirection, 24th September 1979-24th September 1981*, Ministry of Information, Accra, 1981, p. 9.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
3. J. Kraus, 'Rawlings' Second Coming', *Africa Report*, March/April 1982 p. 59-66.
4. D. Pellow and N. Chazan, *Ghana: Coping with Uncertainty*, Westview Press Boulder, 1986 p.63.
5. K. Yankah, *The Trial of J.J. Rawlings*, Ghana Publishing Corporation, Accra, 1986, p. 54-55; B.E. Okeke, *Op. cit.*, p. 113.
6. N. Chazan, *An Anatomy of Ghanaian Politics*, Westview Press, Boulder, 1983 p. 318.
7. *Free Press*, 2nd April 1981.
8. D.I. Ray, *Ghana: Politics, Economics and Society*, Frances Pinter, London, 1986, p. 25.
9. J. Kraus, *op. cit.*
10. This was published under the title 'Which way forward' in the first issue of *The Workers Banner*, The Organ of the June 4th Movement, in October, 1981.
11. See Lecture III
12. Ray, *op. cit.*, p. 40-47.
13. This was the term coined to describe the exposed collar bones of hungry and emaciated people.
14. J. Kraus, "Ghana's Radical Populist Regime," *Current History*, April, 1985, p. 165.
15. For details of this conflict, see Ray *op. cit.*, pp. 58-63.
16. Ray, *op. cit.*, p. 104.
17. K. Ewusi, *Structural Adjustment and Stabilization Policies in Developing Countries*, Accra, 1987, pp. 22-23.
18. *South Magazine*, December, 1987, p. 41.
19. *West Africa*, 7 December 1978, p. 2390.
20. This interview is published in *Africa Report*, March-April, 1984.
21. National Programme for Economic Development, 1st July, 1987.
22. *The Daily Graphic*, 23rd April, 1987.
23. *West Africa*, 30th November, 1984.
24. Amos, Chapter 5 verse 13.

LECTURE III TOWARDS A SOLUTION OF THE GHANAIAN SPHINX RIDDLE

As it was pointed out in the first lecture, the ancient Greek Sphinx riddle was solved in the end, and there is no reason why ours too should defy solution especially if we all put our minds to it. In this concluding lecture, I should like to share with you my thoughts on some of the measures that may be adopted towards the solution of our riddle. But first, from our analysis, what is really wrong with us, or to sustain our metaphor, what are the significant features of our Ghanaian Sphinx?

It should be clear from our analysis that Ghana's present ailments or the main features of the Ghanaian sphinx are varied and complex. The first is lack of political stability which has manifested itself in numerous coups, counter-coups and subversive activities. The second is lack of moral principles, probity and accountability exemplified in such social diseases in the body politic as rampant corruption, bribery, smuggling, *kalabuleism*, ostentatious living, tax evasion and other financial malpractices, opportunism, careerism and, above all, sycophancy. The third is lack of social justice and equity evident from the yawning gap between the have and the have-nots, the urban-rural dichotomy, the uneven and partial administration of justice and the distribution system usually in favour of the rich, the well-educated and the bourgeoisie and against the workers and the masses. The fourth is lack of patriotism, national unity, commitment and dedication openly displayed in ethnicity or tribalism, selfishness, favouritism, nepotism and lack of self-reliance. The fifth is the prevalence of the culture of silence evidenced in the prevailing state of anomie, apathy and alienation, and in the absence of freedom of association and of the press. The sixth is lack of a common national ideology or consensus demonstrated by the class and ideological battles which have been raging ever since independence on both intra-party and intra-group and inter-party and inter-group basis and of national priorities and emphasis.

The real solution to the riddle, then, lies surely in the elimination of the above features or cancerous growths within the body politic. In my opinion, the greatest of these ailments, the most cancerous, and what is more alarming still, one which is in danger of becoming endemic and chronic, is of course the

lack of political stability. Do you know the number of governments and heads of state we had between 1978 and 1982? There were as many as five: SMC I under Acheampong, SMC II under Akuffo, AFRC under Rawlings, PNP under Limann and finally PNDC under Rawlings. This works out at an average of one administration per year. Even if we take the whole period from independence to this day, i.e. from 1957 to 1988, there have been 9 – CPP under Kwame Nkrumah, NLC under Ankrah, NLC under Afrifa and PP under Busia, in addition to those already listed, making an average of only about three and a half years per administration. And it is significant that of the nine administrations, only three have been civilian, and since 1972 only one. How can any country progress or develop in this atmosphere of political musical chairs?

From this analysis as well as from the last two lectures, then, it is obvious that the principal cause of this political instability has been the intervention of the military in politics or, as I put it in the lecture on Union Government which I was to deliver on 12th October 1977 but which was broken up by the hired thugs of Acheampong:

The political instability that has characterised African political life since independence has been caused not by the party political system as such, but partly by deeply seated socio-economic factors, partly by the way in which the party political game has been played so far, but even more important still, by the fact that sections of the army have arrogated to themselves the responsibility of policing popularly elected governments while some officers (and even some of the rank and file) have seen themselves as chosen by God to be redeemers. As long as these erroneous beliefs and self-deception continue to prevail among members of the Armed Forces and the Police, political instability will be the constant feature of life in Africa whatever the form of government that will be devised – union or disunion, one party or multiparty, socialist or bourgeois, communist or capitalist.

What then do we do about this particular cancerous growth of military intervention? The easiest and most simple solution is of course the abolition of the entire Armed Forces and a reversion to our old traditional system in which there was no standing army as such, and in which every able-bodied person was a soldier as well as a civilian. At least one country today, Switzerland, has no standing army. But this is more easily said than done. In other words, the abolition or dissolution option is not realistic given our circumstances. In the first place, as one

sage from my home town put it, "Ye se Krotwiamansa anintonnui ye nson, nanso ehe na worekogyina akan", that is, it is alleged that the leopard has only seven eye lashes in its eyebrow, but who can get close enough to verify this? In other words, where is one going to stand and announce to a band of armed, highly politicized and ambitious professional soldiers that it has been dissolved or disbanded? Secondly, given the geo-political realities facing most independent African countries, especially inter-boundary or even inter-ethnic disputes, the Armed Forces do have a definite and necessary role to play. Internally, their role should be to ensure the territorial integrity and security of the nation-state as well as the defence of the constitution of the land, and externally to check any possible external aggression.

The only practical solution then is to educate the soldiers themselves that from our own experience, military intervention in politics is neither good for themselves nor for the nation. We should ask them how many coup leaders in this country are alive today or have died a natural death. We should direct their attention to the fate of Afrifa which clearly shows that even when such a leader peacefully hands over power, he is not guaranteed against facing the firing squad. How many of the makers of June 4th and 31st December are here in the country or are alive today? It is said that revolutions have a habit of devouring their makers. Nasser also declared in 1952 that 'a revolution born of blood will die of blood'! What we have seen in this country has fully justified both contentions.

We should tell the Military that for the nation, coups cause too much bloodshed, insecurity, disunity and instability and should therefore be avoided or resorted to only as the very very last option. We should urge it on them that even if they feel compelled to intervene or are even invited to do so, their aim should not be to try and establish the Garden of Eden here, which they obviously cannot do, but rather to defend and never overthrow the constitution, which is the embodiment of the collective wisdom of the people and should therefore never be torn up with such brazen impunity and demagogic recklessness. We should tell our soldiers that if they feel any messianic call to be redeemers or build new structures be they economic, social and political on the lines of Mao or Lenin or Quathafi or Castro or even Thatcher, they should honourably put down

their uniforms and their guns and compete with all others on the same and equal basis for political power through the ballot box. Finally, we should particularly impress on them the sane advice of one of their own former kith and kin, Major-General Ocran, which I quoted in the very first lecture that the military was not created to and cannot administer a country. It is clearly in their own interest and in that of the nation that civilians are left to carry on the political game.

However, the ending of military interventions per se cannot ensure political stability unless it is replaced by two other factors, first a viable or rather an appropriate political system, and secondly the behaviour of our civilians and future politicians in such a way as to give the army no excuse let alone reason or motivation and occasion to intervene. To take the first factor first, the question is what should this political system be? Should it be praetorianism, stratocracy, Bonapartism, unigovism, a non-party parliamentary system, a one party parliamentary system or a multi-party system? The first four systems are those in which soldiers either in military or civilian uniforms exercise the ruling power. All these issues have been debated at length in this country since the coup of 1966, and, more especially, during UNIGOV days and we need not go over these arguments again. What I would like to assert with such authority and conviction as I can muster is that this country has rejected once and for all any military-cum-civilian type of regime, any non-party system and any one party system, and any attempt on the part of anybody or government to impose any of these systems on us will be most inadvisable. Secondly, I would like to assure the PNDC that we firmly believe that contrary to their declarations, the forthcoming district assembly elections are not going to be fought on a non-party basis but rather on a one-party basis, that one party being made up of the very progressive and revolutionary organs— the CDRs, Mobisquads, Militias, June Fourth Movement, etc. etc. with the full backing of the various district organisers of these organs, and, above all, of the District and Regional Secretaries. Nobody is being deceived at all about what is going on! In other words, the PNDC itself has opted for the party system.

The choice of this country is not the one party but the multi-party parliamentary system. Some people have been arguing that this system has failed this country and should there-

fore be abandoned. In their speeches at the 39th New Year School of the Institute of Adult Education (28th December 1987-4th January 1988) University of Ghana, both Capt. Kojo Tsikata and Lt. Col. Assasie argued that the party political system has proved unworkable and that the various national constitutions have not provided 'viable solutions because they do not stem from our own history, our own experience.' Do the PDCs, WDCs, CDRs, the very Armed Forces, the judicial system etc. stem from our own history and from our own experience? If therefore we should abolish the western type parliamentary system, then should we also abolish the Armed Forces and the present judicial system, the western clothes that we wear and the motor vehicles that we use too?

Surely all those who have been contending this way know or should know that civilians have not been given any chance whatsoever, thanks to these very military interventions, to operate any of those admittedly western-type constitutions since the downfall of Nkrumah. The 28 months of Busia's administration (October 1969 - January 1972) and the 28 months of Limann (September 1979 - December 1981) are all the time that civilians have been given ever since 1969 to try the parliamentary and constitutional system and as both Tsikata and Assasie, and others of their school of thought, should concede from the very performance of their own regime between 1981 and 1983, two years is too short a time for any constitutional experiment to be properly assessed. I shudder to think what judgment History would have passed on Rawlings and the PNDC if they had been toppled in June 1983! Would it have been fair to say that their failure was the failure of the principles of power to the people or of mass participation in the decision-making process, or of the PDCs, WDCs, NDCs and CDRs? There is no empirical or scientific basis whatsoever for the conclusion that the multi-party parliamentary system is not suitable for this country for the simple reason that, to repeat, we have not been given the chance since 1969 to really have a go at it, and to amend our constitution in the light of our practical experience in the exercise. We demand and we must be given this chance, and soon.

However, in the light of such limited experience as we have acquired in the working of the multi-party parliamentary system, some amendments are called for. In the first place, the

number of parties should be restricted to no more than three for two main reasons. The first is that we people of this country are particularly fortunate to have a tradition of two political parties or two political cultures, the CPP tradition and the UGCC/UP tradition. It is important and indeed interesting that this bipolarisation of our political culture dates from a much earlier era than that of the CPP and UGCC. It dates from that of the Mambii Party and the Ratepayers' Association of the 1920s.¹ Indeed one can trace a direct linear progression from Kojo Thompson and the Mambii Party and from Nanka-Bruce and the Ratepayers' Association to Kwame Nkrumah/CPP and Danquah/UGCC groups respectively. All the political parties that have been formed in this country down to the last elections in 1979 have been either direct descendants of these two political traditions or breakaway groups from both, usually and rather regrettably from the UGCC/UP group. As it was pointed out in the first lecture, the PNP and the PFP and UNC are direct offsprings of the CPP and UGCC.

However, a great deal has happened just before and since the elections of June 1979 which cannot and should not be ignored. These new phenomena are the June 4th and the 31st December revolutions, which have both not only called for a new moral order but have inaugurated a third political culture in this country, the culture symbolised by the slogan 'Power to the People'. The June 4th/31st December culture should therefore provide the third party. It is on the basis of such a three-party system that an appropriate political system can be fashioned for this country.

There are few other amendments I would like to suggest which are by no means original. The first is the abolition of the huge deposits demanded from parliamentary candidates. The second is that the country foots all electioneering and electoral expenses. The reasons for these two suggestions are simply to enable all classes of people to participate in the election and more especially to save future MPs from the clutches of local and foreign party financiers. A third suggestion is the abolition of the qualification of literacy in English as a condition for standing election and its replacement with one in English or any of the local languages used by the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC). Surely, a system of simultaneous translation can be introduced into parliament to enable

all MPs to follow and participate in debates. Another important change should be a clause that should make MPs more responsible to and removable by their constituencies on grounds of inefficiency or negligence of the constituency. I would also personally like to see a unicameral rather than a bi-cameral legislature, and a priministerial rather than an executive presidential system. Finally, in view of the recent emphasis on decentralisation and of grass-roots participation and more especially of the strength of ethnic and regionalist feelings pointed out in the first lecture, is it not time to look again at the question of a unitary or federal system of government for this country?

Quite apart from educating, or even if you like, indoctrinating the military about the dangers and irrelevance in most cases of military intervention and ensuring an effective and appropriate political system, the other way of solving this military feature of our riddle is, as has been pointed out already, for our civilians and politicians to behave and act in such a way as not to give the army the excuse let alone the reason, motivation and occasion to intervene. Fortunately, the solution here lies precisely in the treatment of the five other features or cancerous growths already listed. The first of these features is the lack of probity, accountability and moral principles, and with its consequences of rampant corruption, bribery, smuggling, kalabuleism, opportunism, careerism and sycophancy. Until and unless this feature is removed, all the best political systems, and all the realistic economic plans which we may devise, will be of no avail.

The first solution here which was so ably demonstrated by the June 4th and the 31st December revolutions is the continuation and intensification of the house-cleaning exercise. The second is to impress on all of us that it does not pay to indulge in these evil deeds nor can one always get away with it, and that sooner or later, nemesis will catch up with one. The third is to bring home to the average Ghanaian that it does pay in the long run to be honest, incorruptible and principled. Here our teachers and professors, our reverend ministers and mallams, our traditional diviners and priests, our local leaders and traditional rulers, our writers (especially novelists and poets) and musicians as well as our various ethnic, cultural, political and other clubs and societies have a definite role to play.

It is in this respect that I would like to draw attention once more to one of the underlying principles of JB's ideology of Ghanaism, namely, the epithet *Aninguase mfata okaniba* or *Ghananiba*, and to urge you all to impress this on our people. It should be emphasized that in the traditional set-up, that disgrace was not attached to the individual who committed that offence alone but to the entire extended family. It was therefore the responsibility of every member of the extended family to see that each person behaved himself and did not bring disgrace upon the rest of the family. This is a responsibility that I would like every Ghanaian to assume now. I would also like to urge that sycophancy, careerism, and opportunism which are particularly rampant among technocrats, bureaucrats and the educated elite should be stamped out since our leaders are often turned into ostriches and cut off from the realities of the situation because of such attitudes on the part of their close friends, advisers and hangers-on.

There is, however, a fourth and to me the most effective method of dealing with these social diseases of corruption, bribery etc. This is not just exposing and punishing their victims but what is even more important enabling people not only to resist but also to expose these vices. As the present lecturer put it in his assessment of the 110 days' rule of the AFRC:

The simple socio-economic facts are that a majority of Ghanaians cannot simply obtain employment, and secondly that it is virtually impossible for the few Ghanaians lucky enough to obtain employment to lead a decent and honest life on their earnings and salaries. This is true not only of the messenger and the daily-rated worker but also of the university professor, the top-most senior civil servant, the bank manager and the managers of the trading firms. It is the former that has given rise to the portfolio-bearing and roving businessmen and the hand-bag swinging business-women, and it is the latter that makes it virtually impossible for those employed to resist cutting sharp corners, accepting dubious presents or indulging in shady deals. Indeed, corruption is a socio-economic disease and it is curing that disease, exposing and removing its root causes rather than merely exposing and punishing or intimidating its victims, however, brutal or refined the methods used, that will provide a more *lasting* solution.²

In drawing up their budgets and formulating new economic programmes, therefore, the authorities should always bear in mind that one of the most effective ways of eliminating or re-

ducing these socio-economic evils of corruption and kalabuleism is to make it possible for people to live reasonably well on their legally earned incomes and salaries; the other is to assist the unemployed to earn their living in a more honourable way. It should always be emphasized, as Werlin has done, that 'poverty impels men not only to tolerate corruption but also to take advantage of it.'³ Everything should be done, then, to abolish poverty. Until this is done, no amount of fines, confiscation of assets, long prison sentences or even firing squads will eradicate these social diseases.

Another solution to our sphinx riddle is to ensure equity and social justice in the country. The yawning gap between the haves and have-nots, between the military rank and file and officers, between the workers and managers, between the urban and the rural inhabitants, between the inhabitants of Nima and those of the Airport residential area must be bridged. But the strategy to be adopted here is not one which should aim at bringing or pulling down those who are up as the PNDC originally seemed bent on achieving but rather of bringing those who were down up; not to turn the airport residential area into Nima but rather the other way round. The former strategy smacks of vengeance, vindictiveness and envy and it is negative, destructive and punitive and must be avoided. Particularly crucial is the ending of the urban-rural contrast, and here not only for the sake of equity and social justice but also in the interest of our economy and more on this later.

The other strategy is to ensure not only a fair and equitable sharing of the national cake among all classes but above all to see to the even and impartial administration of justice. Public offices must be distributed equally and equitably among the various ethnic groups in the country. All of us in this audience must also be honest and admit that there has hitherto been too much favouritism and bias in favour of the privileged, wealthy and educated group in the administration of justice and it was obviously with a view to rectifying this that the system of public tribunals was created. In my opinion, the procedures of these tribunals should be reformed at least in such a way as to ensure the participation of the Bar Association in their proceedings and activities. A dialogue between this Association and the government on this issue is strongly and urgently recommended.

The inculcation of a sense of patriotism and national unity

as well as a sense of dedication and commitment to the country is another clue to our riddle. A real patriot will surely never rob and exploit his own state, look down upon its own products and manufactures, favour one citizen of the country over another, allow himself to be used by foreigners and the multi-nationals to exploit his own country, condone smuggling across the borders, or in any way betray his country or compromise on her independence and sovereignty.

How this can be achieved in practice is difficult to prescribe. But at least it can be done by ensuring equality of opportunity, equitable distribution of posts and the nation's resources, success in international competitions such as boxing, football and athletics, an effective educational system especially at the primary and JSS levels biased in favour of the inculcation of patriotism and national consciousness as well as promoting understanding and appreciation of the language and culture of each of the component regions of the country. It can also be achieved by the elimination of all sources of inter-ethnic and inter-regional conflicts, animosities and rivalries, and, finally by the promotion of what J.B. Danquah preached forty years ago, namely, the spirit of self-help, or in today's parlance, self-reliance.

This brings us to another crucial solution, that of ending the culture of silence. It is my firm belief that no appropriate and effective development of any country can take place, nor can any government be properly kept on its toes or made aware of what is really going on until and unless there is free flow of information of all sorts, free and public discussion of national issues and free and frank exchange of views at all levels of society, in other words unless this culture of silence is broken, and the easiest and most obvious way of doing this is to ensure first freedom of the mass media, then freedom of expression and finally freedom of association. Was not the *Workers' Banner* being published under Limann? Was not the *Spokesman* operating under Busia? Why has the PNDC banned the *Catholic Standard* and virtually compelled the *Free Press* to close down having first arrested and detained its proprietor and some of the members of its staff. If the PNDC is really serious about breaking the culture of silence, then it must release all journalists in detention, declare and ensure press freedom, lift the ban on the *Catholic Standard* and even go out of its way to encourage

papers like *The Free Press*, *The Worker's Banner* and the *Legon Observer* to resume business. As provided for in the last constitution, all the mass media, official and private, should then be placed under an independent Press Commission.

We would also like to advise the PNDC to ensure a truly free and independent Trade Union Congress and thereby avoid one of the greatest blunders of the Busia regime, namely, the dissolution of the TUC; the PNDC should also encourage the operation of the various professional bodies and the ARPB of course along-side the existing progressive and allegedly non-political organs such as the June 4th Movement, the NDM, the 31st December Women's Movement etc. In short, we want as a solution to the riddle of the culture of silence, the repetition and immediate implementation by the PNDC of what Mao once proclaimed: 'Let a thousand flowers bloom!'

The last feature of our sphinx riddle to be tackled is the lack of a national consensus first on an ideology and secondly on priorities. Personally, I do not believe in becoming enslaved to any particular ideology. I believe in pragmatism, that is changing and adapting one's approach and strategies to the changing circumstances and problems of the day. However, there are several other people, including as we have seen, Dr J.B. Danquah and also Dr Kwamena Bentsi-Enchill, late Fellows of the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences, who have advocated a definite national ideology.⁴ Such an ideology should, in the words of the late Bentsi-Enchill, provide "the working set of beliefs, the social goal by which our voyage of self-determination is to be guided, or dictate our goals of endeavour." It is interesting that both of them rejected capitalism, socialism and communism as inappropriate and both rather interestingly argue that "We should reach into our own culture, if at all possible, for a framework of ideas and guiding principles that can be set to work in the modern context, rather than chase after the nuances of complex foreign ideologies like Marxist-Leninism, Socialism and the rest."⁵ On that premise Bentsi-Enchill suggested the concept or ideology of *Abusuabo* and as he explains:

The focus of *Abusuabo* is man: its accent, brotherhood and mutual assistance: its scope, elastic. It is a relationship that allows room for individual initiative and enterprise, recognizing as it must that every individual is the potential founder of a family, and rejoicing in individual excellence and achievement as an aid to the survival of the

group. At the same time it reminds the individual of his dependence on society and his obligation to serve it.⁶

The goal of this concept according to its proponent is that of "achieving a brotherhood of all Ghanaians and the maximum development of each Ghanaian for the benefit of all. In itself, it could supply a wealth of a clear guiding principle of action." He adds: "We should have no difficulty in embracing within it the four principles or objectives which, in the Preamble to the Constitution (ie. 1969 Akuffo-Addo Constitution), we have expressed ourselves as determined to guarantee, namely *Freedom* of thought, expression and religion; *Justice* – social, economic and political; *Respect* for the dignity of the individual; and *Equality* of opportunity."⁷ Those of you who listened to my first lecture would recall the essential tenets and principles of J.B. Danquah's ideology of Ghanaism and would readily admit that Bentsi-Enchill's philosophy of *Abusuabo* is in all its essentials virtually identical with that of Danquah's *Ghanaism* – with the latter's emphasis on the individual, his liberty and freedom and his responsibility to the other members of his extended family, and his emphasis on probity and accountability subsumed in the two sayings, *Onipa na Ehia and Animuguase mfata okaniba*. I am sure that if Bentsi-Enchill had previously come across JB's ideology of Ghanaism, he would have readily adopted it. So, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, if we must have an ideology, then I recommend to you JB's home-brewed one of Ghanaism. After all, he gave us the name of Ghana, and it is only natural and logical that he should provide us with the ideology that should inform, inspire and guide that name.

Finally, if we are to solve our sphinx riddle, we must get our priorities right. My dear friends, the trouble with us in Ghana and indeed in the whole of our benighted continent, is not lack of ideas, plans and programmes for the solution of our problems. There are innumerable such plans in this country beginning with the excellent and practicable one drawn up for us by Prof. Arthur Lewis as far back as 1953 but which is as relevant today as it was then as will be pointed out presently. What has been lacking are, as far as Ghana is concerned, not effective machinery and the appropriate manpower and expertise for their implementation, but the resolve and integrity to implement them and above all the priorities to be accorded. As John

W. Forje has contended in a recent article, "The ordinary citizens in most African countries live brief lives in a squalor not appreciably improved over that of their fore-fathers. . . To begin with, the priorities of most developing societies are wrong or inconsistent with the broad perspective of bringing basic human needs to the largest segment of society."⁸ Gideon Were, Professor of History at the University of Nairobi, has also arrived at the same conclusion that 'Africa's poverty and backwardness are the direct result of wrong priorities and policies by African governments and leaders.'⁹ And it is a pity that even this our radical and populist government is guilty of the same mistaken priorities.

Surely, given the fact that about seventy percent of our population live in the rural areas, that we cannot still feed ourselves, that we do not have adequate foreign exchange to import raw materials to feed our factories, that 80% of our exports are or can be obtained from the rural areas and that the rural-urban migration and contrast have been assuming alarming proportions, our priorities should be on agricultural and agro-based and cottage industries and not on import substitution industries, on increased agricultural productivity and not on industrial productivity, on rural electrification and feeder roads and not on urban housing and four-lane streets, on reducing illiteracy especially in the rural areas and not on JSS, on an appropriate technology for rural farmers and peasants and not on armoured vehicles, on credit and incentives and subsidies to cocoa, cash-crop and foodcrop farmers and not on the reduction of income tax, on better pricing for food and cash crops and not on the free importation of all vehicles below 1600cc, and so on. But surely this skewed priority is what one sees in all the budgets and statements of all our previous governments except Busia's and more especially of this our present government. The 1988 Budget Statement indeed reads like a budget drawn up for a predominantly industrialized and urban-based community or country and not for a predominantly agricultural and rural based one. For a government with all its populist and mass rhetoric dedicated to improving the lot of the workers, the masses, peasants, farmers and the down-trodden and whose slogan is 'Power to the People' about 80% of whom live in the rural areas and are involved in agriculture, this is simply incom-

prehensible.

This relative neglect of agriculture and the rural sector is all the more surprising since as early as 1953, Prof. Arthur Lewis singled out both as the priority areas. In his *Report on Industrialization and the Gold Coast*, which should be made compulsory reading for every Ghanaian bureaucrat, politician and member of every government, civilian as well as military, populist or bourgeoisie, he concluded:

Measures to increase the manufacture of commodities for the home market deserve support, but are not of number one priority. A small programme is justified, but a major programme in this sphere should wait until the country is better prepared to carry it. The main obstacle is the fact that agricultural productivity per man is stagnant. This has three effects. First, the market for manufactures is small, and is not expanding year by year, except to the extent of population growth; consequently it would take large subsidies to make possible the employment of a large number of people in manufacturing. Secondly it is not possible to get ever larger savings out of the farmers, year by year, to finance industrialization, without at the same time reducing their standard of living; hence industrialization has to depend on foreign capital, and large amounts of capital for this purpose could be attracted only on unfavourable terms. And thirdly, agriculture, because it is stagnant, does not release labour year by year, there is a shortage of labour in the Gold Coast which rapid industrialization would aggravate.

Number one priority is therefore a concentrated attack on the system of growing food in the Gold Coast, so as to set in motion an ever increasing productivity. This is the way to provide the market, the capital, and the labour for industrialization . . .

Priority number two is to improve the public services. To do this will reduce the cost of manufacturing in the Gold Coast, and will thus automatically attract new industries, without the government having to offer special favours.

Very many years will have elapsed before it becomes economical for the government to transfer any large part of its resources towards industrialization and away from the more urgent priorities of agricultural productivity and the public services. . .¹⁰

Surely, had we adopted this very sensible and highly practicable advice, we would not now be saddled with all these millions and millions of dollars of foreign debt, while as Prof. Adedeji, the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), emphasized on the GBC in January 1988, we

would have been producing what we need and eat instead of producing for export to obtain the foreign exchange to import what we need. Unfortunately, Nkrumah and his CPP government completely ignored this sane advice and gave priority to industrialization financed from loans borrowed from abroad at incredible rates of interest, and as stated above, with the sole exception of the Busia administration, all governments including even this peoples' government have followed Nkrumah rather than Arthur Lewis hence the economic mess in which we find ourselves.

My solution to this aspect of our sphinx riddle is to advise, first that we go straight back to Arthur Lewis and give priority attention to agriculture and make it so much more lucrative than the selling of dog chains, hair creams and imported goods; secondly the standard of living in the rural areas should be raised in such a way that people will be attracted back there from the urban areas. Herein lies the economic salvation not only of this country but indeed of the whole of Africa as well as the possibility of ending what Timothy Shaw has called the 'continuing dependence and underdevelopment.'¹¹

And may I be permitted at this juncture to caution this and all African and Third World governments that if we do not put an end to this reckless accumulation of foreign debts, we stand a great risk of being recolonised by the industrialized countries and their agencies in the near future. It should never be forgotten that one of the reasons for the scramble for and the partition of Africa was the need felt by the imperial countries to safeguard their investments and loans. It was definitely this consideration that led to the British occupation of Egypt in 1882 which touched off the scramble in that region. Already Liberia has now been virtually recolonised or put into receivership by the United States. And how many IMF and World Bank experts do we have in both advisory and managerial positions in this country at this very moment? We are warned!

Where do we go from here, then? I answer this question and then I am done. I have only two answers to give. First, just as the PNDC has drawn up an Economic Recovery Programme, we should also draw up a Social Recovery Programme (SRP) as well as a Political Recovery Programme (PRP). We cannot and should not abandon the ERP. But as I have pointed out already

the ERP needs some revision in terms of its priorities as well as its impact on all of us, and more especially on the workers, the farmers and the down-trodden; that is, it should be given a human face and the milk of human kindness. I am glad to state that the PNDC itself has, from its very recent pronouncements, at long last become aware of this and has promised in the 1988 budget statement a Programme of Action to mitigate the social cost of Adjustment and Development this year. We are all looking forward to receiving details of this programme. All we can pray for at this stage is that this should be announced and implemented as soon as possible. The proposed social and political recovery programme should be based among others on the solutions to the enigmatic Ghanaian sphinx riddle proposed in these lectures. The former should embody a new moral code or a new code of conduct while the latter should among others define the nature of the ideology and political system to be adopted.

My second answer and admittedly a very controversial one on which I will crave your indulgence to dwell for a while is the establishment, as a matter of urgency but not later than a year from now, an interim *national or coalition* government to see to the drawing up of the programmes mentioned already and also prepare and work out the modalities for a return to civilian constitutional rule within three years from now. The composition of such a national government should be as all-inclusive as possible. For instance, it should include the present Head of State and some members of the PNDC, representatives of all the political parties which participated in the 1979 elections, representatives of the progressive and revolutionary organs, representatives of the component associations of the Association of Recognised Professional Bodies, representatives of the Christian Council, the Catholic Bishops' Conference, the Muslim Council, the National House of Chiefs, the TUC, the Ghana Women's Federation, the 31st December Women's Movement, the Armed Forces and finally the Police.

What is the justification for or the rationale behind this by no means novel or revolutionary suggestion? First, it has become clear that the PNDC and its associated organs are sharply divided over ideology and strategies and are broken up apparently into independent groups and cliques. A united and coherent authority should then be created before it is too late. Secondly, the

present ethnic tension is assuming such dimensions that it should be diffused before it is too late and only an interim all-inclusive regime can effectively undertake this safety-valve exercise. Thirdly, the stampede, pandemonium and anarchy that occurred in Accra on Wednesday 20th January caused by that electricity failure clearly demonstrated the widespread nature of the feeling of insecurity in the country and the limited nature of the people's confidence in the stability of the PNDC regime.

Fourthly, only an uncommitted and all-inclusive regime can effectively break the culture of silence along the lines suggested already. Fifthly, it would appear that many qualified people have refused to accept offers of appointment or join in the national recovery exercise, and a new body which is free from all the blemishes and limitations of the PNDC may be able to attract all such people into the major business of developing the country. Sixthly, since in spite of the repeated offers of amnesty, most of the Ghanaians who fled the country have refused to come back obviously because they are very distrustful of the PNDC, a new regime should be brought in. All political detainees should also be released while those Ghanaians who have been deported from their own native land should be given the option to return home and if anything face trial here. A new regime of the nature outlined above can be trusted by such people to implement these suggestions. Such a development will also contribute in no small measure towards national reconciliation, integration and stability. Seventhly, only such an uncommitted regime can effectively and objectively prepare the modalities for and supervise the handing over to civilian rule.

The final, and to me the most important reason is that only such a neutral regime will give all the political groups in the country equal opportunity to organise and campaign for political power. Let me repeat what I have said that whether it will admit or not, the PNDC is using all sorts of means and tactics to form a political party and thereby legalise and perpetuate itself. But the PNDC should be reminded that Ghanaians are too well-educated and politically too sophisticated to tolerate what has been done in countries such as Zaire or Ethiopia or Libya or Burkina Faso or the Congo. Nor will they easily accept the

transfer to socialism a la Mao or Lenin as the NDM and some of our leaders are contemplating. Under no circumstances, therefore, should the PNDC be permanently foisted on us through one ruse or device or the other. As has been pointed out already, Rawlings and his group have certainly emerged as a new political force and if they claim that they are all that popular, they and all the other political forces or traditions in the country should be given the same opportunity to present themselves to the people of Ghana for their verdict. This business of wives of PNDC members gallivanting and forming movements and of numerous organizers establishing CDRs, militias, mobisquads etc. at public expense is palpably deceitful and unfair and should be stopped. The projected district assemblies with the curious regulations of the nomination of one-third of their membership by the PNDC — a People's democracy indeed — should be seen for what it is, an attempt to impose the PNDC on the districts and should also be suspended in the interest of fair play, genuine grass-roots democracy and the future political stability of this country. Surely, only an uncommitted and all-inclusive body such as the one proposed above can guarantee such equality of opportunity and fair play in any future elections.

In a public lecture that I gave in February 1980, I appealed to Limann and his Vice-President as I am doing now, for the formation of a similar transitory coalition government and I told my audience:

If they refuse to do this, they do so not only at their own risk but also at the risk of our experiment at civilian rule and parliamentary democracy, at the peril of political stability and therefore of another risk at military intervention.

They refused and the military intervention did occur.

And so I am done. To end as I began, our country is one of the best endowed countries in Africa in terms of both human and material resources, and there is therefore no real reason why we should be confronted with such a sphinx riddle. But I hope the features of that riddle have been accurately delineated and some of the measures towards its solution have been proposed. It is up to you and me, to all of us, and in particular to the PNDC, to add to these solutions and above all to see that they are implemented. If we do not, to borrow the phrase of the late James Baldwin, it may be fire next time! THANK YOU

NOTES

1. Adu Boahen, *Ghana: Evolution and change in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries*, Longman, London, 1975, p. 145; D. Kimble, *A Political History of Ghana*, Clarendon Press Oxford, 1963, pp. 451-455.
2. Adu Boahen, '110 days of AFRC', op. cit.
3. H. Werlin, "The Roots of Corruption - The Ghanaian Enquiry", *Journal of Modern African Studies*, X, 2, 1972, pp. 247-266.
4. See also M. Assimeng, *Social Structure of Ghana*, Ghana Publishing Corporation, Tema, p. 172.
5. K. Bentsi-Enchill, *Institutional Challenges of our time*. The J.B. Danquah Memorial Lectures, fourth series, Accra. 1971, p. 15.
6. Ibid. p. 15.
7. Ibid. p. 16.
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