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**THE RELEVANCE OF  
University Academic  
and Research Programmes to  
Development**



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by

**K. TWUM-BARIMA**  
*University of Ghana, Legon*

*An Inaugural Lecture delivered at the University of Ghana, Legon on  
Tuesday, 2nd March, 1976*

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TO DEVELOPMENT**

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**K. TWUM-BARIMA**

*Director of the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic  
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**M**R. CHAIRMAN, Ladies and Gentlemen. At this rather late stage in my academic life, right in the evening of my career in the University it sounds a little strange that I am now to give an inaugural address. I should have done this long ago. So mine may more appropriately be regarded as a valedictory address. Speaking perhaps with the wisdom of hind sight, I propose to list out problems and recount my experiences and leave you with questions to consider and discuss for your work in the future.

My subject, Mr. Chairman, is "The Relevance of University Academic and Research Programmes to Development." Let me begin, Sir, with an account of the historical development of the idea of universities in our African setting.

*Historical Development of an Idea.*—It was around the middle of the last century that ideas were given expression on the type and philosophy of what might be an appropriate university in West Africa. Those in the forefront of this eloquent advocacy were prominent African personalities or persons of African descent who had themselves had the benefit of university education abroad. They saw in education and, in particular, university education, a singular facility for the development of national consciousness, for the acquisition of the necessary knowledge and skills for the administration of the body politic and for general development and modernization. Two of the most prominent advocates were Dr. James Africanus Beale Horton, a national of Sierra Leone and Edward Wilmot Blyden of West Indian descent.

It would be well to remind ourselves that Dr. James Africanus Beale Horton was an alumnus of Fourah Bay College class of 1855 who had subsequently received his medical education under the sponsorship of the British War Office in England. He came back to serve in the Sierra Leone Army after he had obtained his M.D. and M.R.C.S. qualifications. Edward Wilmot Blyden was a scholar in the humanities and had worked in the field of education in Liberia before serving in Freetown as an educationalist. You

will see, Mr. Chairman, that I have been reading my Eric Ashby, 1966, pages 142-178.<sup>1</sup>

Two years after Dr. Horton's return to Freetown he launched his proposals for a West African University. A scientist himself, he emphasized the sciences and the vocations as the sure means for laying the foundations for the orderly development of the countries of West Africa. He saw university research and education in such science subjects as Botany, Zoology, Geology and Chemistry a means of understanding the West African environment and enabling its resources development by the people for their ultimate enjoyment. All these should facilitate the development of its agriculture and mineral resources and endow its recipients with the capacity to participate fully in national development and the administration of their government.

On the other hand, Blyden conceived a West African University as providing the means and opportunities to, "foster the full development of African race instincts." His university was not merely meant to provide advanced training advocated for by Horton in those essential subjects which should give him the facility for the physical development of his environment and industry. But its purpose was "to release the whole educational system from the grip of the despotic Europeanizing influences which had warped and crushed the negro mind." It was to point the way to a new liberal system of training properly adapted to the peculiarities of the African race. It was to be the means of "counteracting the degeneracy of the negro, restoring his self-respect and developing in him the qualities he would need for self government."

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, this needs very careful consideration. The question which immediately springs to mind is how does our African university with its programmes help us counteract our degeneracy as negroes, restore our self-respect and develop in us the qualities we require for self-government. Again have we asked ourselves, ever, what those qualities are, precisely. Is it by learning the whiteman's subjects as they are treated in his university and perhaps beating him to it that our self-respect is restored, our degeneracy counteracted and those qualities required for self-government developed? Each one of us, Mr. Chairman, may wish to ponder on these questions very deeply and formulate his own answers. But Blyden gives us some indication of what might help us answer these questions when he points out that

“ although the African must advance along a different road from the anglo-Saxon he must seek inspiration from the same source, . . . draw on the experience of the earlier epochs of Western Civilization and study in particular Greek and Latin languages and literature. “ The Classics.” he said, “ would give him nourishment without race poison (and perhaps one may even add “ social poison ”) and teach him all he needs to know to build the moral, political and religious character of his country.”

The African University has therefore three important purposes to serve. I reiterate them here. Firstly, it was to cure the ills in our educational system which in the grips of the despotic Europeanizing influences had caused a warping of our minds as a people. Secondly, the African University was to point the way to a new liberal system of education adapted to the peculiarities of the African race, and Mr. Chairman, if I may say so, a new system of technological education suited to our African environment of underdevelopment. Thirdly, it was to counteract the degeneracy of the negro, restore his self-respect and develop in him the qualities he would need for self-government.

Governor Roger of the Gold Coast in 1909 emphasized the same need when he said “ The objective to be kept in mind is that African boys and girls should be trained not merely to read and write (and if I may add, speak with an affected accent) the English language, but to develop the best in African custom and character for the enrichment of a definite African culture.”

Blyden's ideas were carried further and crystallized by Joseph Ephraim Casely-Hayford. In his book “ Ethiopia Unbound ” published in 1911, he described his concept of an African University which like Blyden's was to be free from Europeanizing influences which had gripped the lives and thinking of the communities along the littoral. He would therefore find it a site in a pleasant suburb of Kumasi, away from those European influences rampant along the coast. It was to emphasize the teaching of history bringing to the fore the contribution of Africa to world civilization and systems and underscoring the thesis that Africa has been the cradel of the great civilizations and philosophies. It was indeed from the Nile Valley that western world civilization began and proceeded after hundreds of centuries to the Middle East and through Greece to Rome and on to Western Europe. The experience of Ireland and Denmark had convinced him that great stress was to be placed on the develop-

ment and teaching of the native languages as a means to developing national consciousness. The establishment of Chairs of Fanti, Yoruba, Arabic and Hausa would be given earliest consideration. Casely-Hayford's University would aim at excellence and the attainment of universal standards through associations with the best universities of Japan, Germany, England and America. But surely this would not mean that they would be exact copies of those institutions.

It is interesting to note, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen that nine years after the publication of this Book "Ethiopia Unbound," the West African Congress which he worked to found and convene in the Gold Coast in 1920 passed a resolution a clause of which asked for the establishment of a West African University along the lines of his thinking.

Such were the ideas of the early pioneers of African education on an African University up to the end of the First World War when British Colonial policies on educational development became more definite and a decided emphasis and priority were given not to university development but to the development of secondary school education as a forerunner to university education and its development in Africa. Thus Budo and Makerere were developed in Uganda, Gordon College in Khartoum, King's College in Lagos and Achimota College in the Gold Coast. These were essentially the English Grammar School type of school leading up to the entry requirements of universities in England and particularly of Oxford, Cambridge and London.

Achimota, however, due fortunately to the extremely forceful character of its first principal, the Rev. Alastair Garden Fraser, was distinctive in its character in that it had a large measure of African cultural element in its philosophy and programme. It gave a decided emphasis to the vocations and crafts though not, in anyway, a vocational or technical school. Its founder, Sir Frederic Gordon Guggisberg, conceived it as an institution which was eventually to develop into a university. Thus, in 1929, already, Achimota had begun to lay plans for the institution of courses in engineering which having been approved by the University of London, produced its first graduate in 1935 — a B.Sc. Engineering of the University of London. By this time, in the regular programmes of the school, the Intermediate degree courses of the University of London in the Arts and Sciences and, in Medicine, the First University Examinations were available at Achimota for pupils with the requisite qualifications

accepted for Matriculation in the University of London. These post matriculation courses drew pupils from the other secondary schools in the Gold Coast, from Nigeria and, as far afield, as Uganda.

Thus by 1930 English speaking African secondary and pre-university programmes of education had developed a truly English character with courses designed or approved by the Cambridge School Certificate Syndicate for English pupils and leading up to qualifications for entry to British universities. Courses in the local languages and in Agriculture designed by the staff had to have the approval of the Cambridge School Certificate Syndicate at Mill Lane in Cambridge.

From this time on to the end of the Second World War, the African original thinkers in educational philosophy having passed away, West Africa was left with a type of intellectual community completely enamoured of everything English and acutely suspicious of anything which sought to make any programme relevant to the African situation. Such was taken, it would appear, as a deliberate attempt at dilution or lowering of recognized British standards. And as the Intermediate Degree Examinations gave way in Britain to Higher School Certificate and, later, the General Certificate of Education at Advanced Level, British Africa had to follow suit in their preparation of entrants to their own universities.

Then the Second World War intervened, after which there was a considerable intensification of national struggles for self-determination. The full implications of this wave of nationalism, at a time when the necessary infrastructure for a smooth take-over and running of administrations in the countries demanding self-government was but poorly developed, were fully appreciated by the Colonial Office of His Britannic Majesty's government. The most pressing need was identified as the lack of adequately trained personnel to replace expatriate staff and to man the expanding services which would result from post independence developments. The Colonial Secretary acted. Professor Ofose-Appiah quotes the following excerpt from Colonel Oliver Stanley's confidential letter addressed to the Vice-Chancellors of British Universities. " His Majesty's Government is deeply committed to quickening the progress of Colonial peoples towards a higher level of social well-being and towards the ultimate goal of self-government. It is essential to the success of this policy that the supply of leaders from the indigenous people themselves should be rapidly increased. There is, therefore, an urgent and

fundamental need to enlarge our facilities for higher education without which these leaders cannot be created." Stanley suggested the appointment of a commission continued Professor Ofosu-Appiah "to consider the principles which should guide the promotion of higher education, learning and research and the development of universities in the Colonies; and to explore means whereby universities and other appropriate bodies in the United Kingdom may be able to co-operate with institutions of higher education in the Colonies in order to give effect to these principles."<sup>2</sup>

The Vice-Chancellors rose up to the occasion and with selfless and sustained endeavours assisted the development in every way. And the University of London made a singular contribution to the success of university programme development in the British colonies. To this work it brought decades of accumulated experience in the handling of external degree programmes and examinations all the world over. Thus what constituted the national need had been identified and what was thought relevant to it was the production of university graduates. In this, we the African scholars of the time, readily acquiesced. The magic word was the degree, the undisputed "open sesame" to the senior service, particularly if the degree was recognized by the University of London as being of an acceptable standard.

*The Form Crystallises.*—With secondary education in British Africa cast in the mould of the British Grammar School, the university institutions that were developed as a logical consequence of the educational evolutionary process were in every way patterned after British university institutions. The University of London evolved its Special Relationship arrangements which admitted these external institutions into internal relationships with itself to enable them develop more rapidly along their path to full academic maturity. Staff qualifications were decided by the University of London and recruitments to the academic staff were done in London by a council set up to discharge this function and to concern itself with the other aspects of the development of the colonial universities.

The rigid compartmentalization of faculties and departments as obtained in Britain was introduced thus making it difficult at the inception of the University for the very essential multidisciplinary approach to student training and problem solving to be developed. Compartmentalization of this type breeds petty jealousies between

faculty and faculty and department and department. Thus collaboration and effective pursuit of our peculiar problems of development became half-hearted, and very often, sterile.

Again, the same departments as are found in the Universities of Britain were repeated in our colonial universities and courses were constructed to reflect those in vogue at their universities in Britain. For long periods during the histories of these colonial universities the senior administrators and practically all the teachers were British or persons brought up in the British academic traditions. You will perhaps remember, Mr. Chairman that when the speaker was appointed to the staff of this institution he was the seventh African on the teaching staff. He and one other of the seven remain on the staff today to indulge in occasional reminiscences of the good or bad old days.

The residential system was patterned after the collegiate system of Cambridge and Oxford with the only difference that while those two great institutions had independent colleges as their constituent parts ours had halls of residence receiving their subventions from the Central Administration and enjoying some measure or semblance of autonomy.

Thus before and after Independence in Africa, the University institutions which were founded in the British possessions were cast in the Oxbridge mould, with London courses moderated by London professors and teachers, taught by enthusiastic British professors and teachers and jointly examined with London University examiners. It is true, we must admit, that there were some modifications and adaptations made in the courses and syllabuses to reflect some local needs but the structure remained essentially London. And as in the case of the syllabuses of the Agricultural courses at Legon we were strongly advised to adopt the programmes which London had already approved for Khartoum and Makerere. And this was what we taught. But Mr. Chairman, in that suitable suburb of Kumasi away from the influences at the coast and London I had the privilege to devise my own course structures and diploma, later degree syllabuses based on the state of Agriculture in the country and to formulate policies for husbandry investigations. Accounts of these have been fully described in a book which will shortly, I believe, be available to the reading public. But Mr. Chairman in the nature and structure of university that evolved in our situation, if there was anything in what Blyden identified and feared almost a hundred

years earlier, then it is difficult not to suppose that the crushing and warping of the negro mind was accomplished with firmness. And Mr. Chairman, if I may be allowed on this very solemn occasion to tell a short and very serious story. I once gave a public lecture in which I described what I thought was a suitable structure for university development in a developing country. At question time one of the academics in the audience asked whether such a structure was known to exist anywhere in the world. My answer was "Yes, in the mind of the lecturer." At which point the questioner condemned the idea, saying to my horror, that if it were good it would have been developed in some European country already! This man, still an academic, had been educated locally and he held a doctorate degree of a celebrated overseas university! What better example of a crushed and warped mind can one expect? To Casely-Hayford who, in his anxiety to insulate his African University from the "grip of the despotic Europeanizing influences," would site his university in some suitable suburb of Kumasi, away from the coast, the ultimate development of our university institutions would surely be a betrayal of trust. And this was done with the enthusiastic support of the African of the post First World War era and, more particularly, of the intellectuals of the post Independence epoch.

Unlike the British Colonial Office our forbears of half a century to a century ago appear to have been aware of these problems which they saw in all their essential aspects. They, like some of us, were products of the same British institutions which they attended in metropolitan Europe, but they were able to reach out beyond mere numbers of university graduates to the real needs of the community in the African environment and saw that what was relevant was not merely the type and form of education they themselves had received but the type of education described by Blyden and Casely-Hayford and Governor Roger as being especially contrived to foster the development of African race instincts and give him intellectual nourishment without race poison, counteract his degeneracy, restore his self-respect and develop in him those qualities—not the mere skills—which he would need for self-government. This type of education must enable him to possess all he needs to know to build the moral, political and religious character of his country. This, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, must be the moral and ethical

*Raison d'être* of our institution, a mission given to us by those who pioneered the thoughts on our African Universities. How far we have succeeded or failed in carrying out this mission will need an inter-disciplinary research exercise of a magnitude we never have had the opportunity to formulate and prosecute, to determine.

It would seem to me, Sir, that our early educational pioneers had their roots firmly in the African soil. They lived and formed part of the environment which nourished them. They were thus able, in their acceptance of foreign education and foreign ways of life, to be selective in their choice of those aspects that really mattered. And even when they had to seek inspiration from where the Anglo-Saxon derived his inspiration, they were conscious of the fact that they " must advance along a different path ". They were concerned with their colonial status and therefore they actively sought for ways in which they might restore to the colonial peoples their dignity and self-respect and found those in education and institutions of a type which would be something definitely more than mere copies of those in metropolitan Europe. Their vision of an African university was one with a distinctive African character which would not struggle for recognition in the world academic community through the avenue of perfect emulation but by the value and excellence of its distinctive and peculiar contribution which should derive from its moral, political, religious and intellectual environment. They realized that black Europeans, the products of a certain type of education which was already surfacing along the coast as a result of what they called the " despotic Europeanizing influences " of their educational system could never be expected to make any worthwhile contribution to learning, or indeed, to their own development and the development of their country and peoples. It is unfortunate that when the time came for higher institutions of learning to be established the leadership in thinking on the forms, structure and philosophy of such establishments passed on to Europeans who in their desire to give us of their best, gave us their own. But our Legon was not a gift from the Colonial Office and we could have been a little more critical and original.

*The Form and the Environment.*—We will now turn to observe the local environment in which we developed this Oxbridge pattern

of university institutions. In doing so, I would like to plead with you, Mr. Chairman, to call to mind the conditions in Britain at that period after the Second World War, and, in particular, their educational, social and economic development and their moral intellectual and religious environment which were serviced by their universities which were, themselves, in turn, the products of their own peculiar environment.

The peoples of Black Africa were largely illiterate. They lived in small communities, each speaking its own language or dialect. This was the period before urban development gained impetus in most of the region. Twenty years of university development and considerable expansion in educational facilities and services have succeeded to bring the national percentage of literacy to 74 per cent for under 25s and 54 per cent for over 25s in a country like Ghana, which at Independence in 1957 was supposed to be among the most advanced of the countries of the region. In Ghana the early Basel Missionaries had set the pace for language development, and by the close of the first decade of the present century considerable work in the major languages of Ghana had been done and a respectable literature was already emerging to provide the base for more serious and sustained enquiry and development. French, English and Portuguese were the main official languages in this region and they were spoken by the very small minorities who had had the benefit of formal Western Education. Thus language and communications constituted then, even as they do now, a serious problem both to national as well as regional co-operation and development. And here we see ample justification for, and wisdom and foresight in Casely-Hayford's Chairs of Fanti, Hausa, Arabic and the other West African languages. Our Oxbridge institutions were very quick to establish Departments of English and French but no department of African languages when the University of London itself had, at the time, an Institute of Oriental and African Languages in which African scholars taught!

The establishment of English and French departments was indeed an admirable attempt to improve communications and bridge the language gap between the French and English speaking peoples of Africa. We hope that this will enable us achieve unity as the danger of separation into two groups based on the English and French languages is real. Thus "anglophone" and "francophone" are words which may spell disaster to African Unity if they are not carefully watched. In Ghana itself there arose a strange wave of nationalism

which was antagonistic to the use and further development of the local languages in our educational system after Independence. It would be interesting to speculate what would have happened had our young university institutions pursued with vigour and enthusiasm the studies which the early Basel Mission scholars and their African students had persistently promoted, with dedication for a century, and the fire of which had been caught by London itself. It is interesting to recall that in 1972, at the 17th Session of the UNESCO General Conference, long hours were spent on discussing the merits and demerits of a Resolution introduced by France and sponsored by some French speaking African countries. This Resolution called for bilingualism in African schools! By bilingualism was meant the teaching of a local language with French or English or Portuguese, as the case may be.

The economic conditions of West Africa at the time were characterised by a strong traditional feature in which agrarian pursuits dominated, and low productivity agriculture based on small, hardly economic holdings was the main economic activity of its people. Urban centres were few and the population was mainly rural, living in conditions of real under-development, most of it in abject poverty, without the simple health-giving necessities of life such as good drinking water, balanced diets and decent housing. The position has still not changed. Agriculture, the main occupation of the people, appeared rather late on the schedules of our West African universities, and some there are, which even now, have not found it necessary to introduce the subject into their programme. When, at last, agriculture was given its due place it took on the form and the structure of the British courses—only tropicalised for our conditions.

On the political field, Mr. Chairman, the African environment was charged with political struggles for self-government. The various countries were made up of usually several individual ethnic groups with their own local traditions and traditional administrative arrangements over which was super-imposed a central colonial administration. The traditional units under their chiefs enjoyed complete autonomy, one from the other, and their traditional systems differed in some of their aspects, one from the other. The problem here, it would seem to me, was how to integrate the traditional system into a single, uniform and viable local government system and the integration of this with the central government system. We still have with us in Ghana a multiple system of administration in which the

traditional co-exists with a variant of the English Local Government system which was introduced on the eve of Independence. And superimposed on this is the Central Administration. The strains and stresses that must result from this strange arrangement are still in evidence. No wonder the need for University Departments of Political Science. But the political situation after nearly twenty years of Independence and a quarter of a century of university development continues to bristle with problems.

Our legal system is still, as it was then, based on the English Common Law. This, in its original home, evolved in a social framework in which the freedom of the individual is supreme and where a man is presumed innocent, and treated as such, until he is proved guilty! And where the very onus of proof is on the administration and not on the prisoner. In this connection, it is interesting that the responsibility of the state extends into providing, where necessary, legal aid to the prisoner to defend himself against the Administration's attempts to prove him guilty. There is a society in which a vigilant and an articulate public opinion from an educated and usually well informed community holds a watching brief over the activities of the state and criticism—constructive or destructive—is freely expressed on public platforms as well as in a free and independent press. And it was the Common Law evolved in such a society that was being introduced into our traditional society in which arbitrariness had yet to develop effective institutional sanctions and where no effective and articulate public opinion existed. The conditions were certainly ripe for some vigorous research in this vital area, particularly, as in the countries around British Africa new experiences were being gained with the introduction of different systems of law in not too dissimilar situations.

These problems are still with us, and they represent the characteristics of the environment into which the Oxbridge pattern of university institution was planted, twenty five years ago, dedicated to the solution of the problems peculiar to our situation and, in these efforts, endeavour to attain the highest degree of academic excellence and high universal standards of scholarship.

*In search of relevance and excellence.*—The conditions we have discussed would seem to give us pointers to the meaning and importance of "relevancy" as regards our university and its programmes of instruction and research. Having established our national

**needs**, our main concern should then be the building up of the vital **university structures** and giving them the peculiar form and flexibility to make it cope effectively with our identified problems and any major problems which may arise in our still fluid conditions of **educational, social, economic and perhaps even moral and religious transformation.**

It could not have been for nothing, Mr. Chairman, that the United States of America still possessing their copies of European university institutions took the bold decision, after a devastating Civil War to invent a new type of university institution so structured that it could have the desired impact on their greatest national needs of economic, industrial and, perhaps, even moral and social rehabilitation. I refer to the Land-Grant Colleges conceived with relevancy in mind and which have maintained from their inception their high adaptability to urgent national problems.

And may I, to illustrate relevancy and adaptability, tell you of an incident which occurred here not quite two years ago. A lady graduate of our university having risen quite high in the administration of this country developed an interest in Rural Development and turned up with a request to pursue a course leading to the Master of Science degree in this strange area of Rural Development with us at Legon. Strangely enough, we advised her to apply to the Michigan State University, itself a Land-Grant institution in the United States. She did. A reply came within two months. And, lo and behold, although Michigan State University had no regular courses in this field, they readily appreciated its importance for African development and got down to plan an interdisciplinary programme leading to the Master's degree for her. And all this was accomplished within the space of some three months. The lady is in her second year of this programme. And she is based in their Department of Communications where her course is co-ordinated. In discussing the lady's request with a professor of this university he asked, smiling, "how can one teach Rural Development?" Michigan State seems to have found the answer. When the lady comes back, I do hope that we will have the modesty to learn from her how Michigan State did it, and in so short a time!

And if I may recall, Mr. Chairman, for historical purposes only another incident which occurred to me in my young days as a lecturer in Agricultural Economics in this university in 1953. We will be able after this to judge for ourselves how we have improved in our efforts

at interdepartmental and interfaculty co-operation in the rigid compartmentalisation of subjects and departments which we helped to create for ourselves. We will also see how this state of affairs promotes or hinders the pursuit of relevancy. Then we can decide for ourselves whether or not it is only lip-service which we pay to relevancy in our Oxbridge institutions. You would know, Mr. Chairman, that I was the first ever lecturer in Agricultural Economics to be appointed to the staff of this university in the Michaelmas term of 1951. At the time, we had had a Department of Economics for some years in this institution and I tried to seek advice from it on a research project I had prepared on the economics of cocoa production in this country. I sent my research proposals to the Professor asking for his comments and advice. After several weeks I recovered it from him with the simple and curt verbal comment "very interesting." And this was the Head of the Department of Economics of a university which owed its very development and existence to the generosity of the cocoa farmers. What I found interesting was that when I presented the same project to Peter Bauer, at the time, of the University of Cambridge, he had more than two hours discussion on it with me and told me that although, as a rule, he did not like supervising Ph.D. students he would love to be my supervisor in that project. And Sturrock, my old teacher in Farm Accounts in my undergraduate days, gave me most valuable comments. He was then the Director of the Farm Economics Branch of the Cambridge School of Agriculture. An early call to the Headship of the small Department of Agriculture at the College of Art, Technology and Science at Kumasi made me abandon the project because of the demands of administration on my time. I thus lost for ever, my chance of becoming a Doctor of Philosophy and continued as a student of agriculture and its education.

We have, no doubt, proceeded quite a considerable distance on our path to relevancy in our twenty five years of life. But we are still plagued by the structures we erected in our institutions. These structures conform to those existing in institutions from which we derived the pattern for our own. To name only two: and I have already made mention of the first, the rigid compartmentalization of subjects into departments and faculties; the other is our interminable committee meetings and excessive use of committees. It seems to me,

Sir, that such reliance on committees serves as a device to delay action which might turn out to be precipitate in already settled communities with well tried systems. In our conditions of exceeding ferment, for ever demanding action programmes of extreme urgency in our state of development, these structures can be inhibitive of urgent action. We must fit our university into our tempo of life as an active agent of change. Old structures designed mainly to conserve and protect the sanctity of learning and scholarship must be made to give way to those types of structures which, in our condition, will permit constant foraging for relevancy and enable us to give the leadership in every sector of our advancement. A new development is in evidence today in India where the new foundation of Pandit Jawarharlal Nehru University of New Delhi has gone off from the traditional European departmental and faculty structures and has organized herself for intersectoral and interdisciplinary approaches to instruction and research. By this kind of structure we avoid the dangers of the erection of citadels within a citadel but rather we construct and maintain essential communication lines between our university and the various sectors of our national development. This way, Mr. Chairman, to relevancy.

It would certainly be worth our while to consider an evaluation of the real impact which the training we have offered during the past quarter century has had on our development. We have, indeed, sent out hundreds of graduates and post-graduates from our universities to serve in our various administrations and in the private sector of our economy. This truly satisfies the need as identified before the inception of university education in Africa. The question we ask is how has this influenced our development in the cultural, religious and moral spheres ? Yes, their participation in administration and policy meetings cannot have been without an effect in these areas. But it may be necessary for us as a result of this evaluation to re-assess our own criteria for training and answer, unequivocally, in every area of our educational endeavours what we train for, and how we may re-adjust our programmes to make us even more effective.

Excellence and standards, we must always remember, were forever in the minds of our earlier educationalists. These are no new inventions or concepts of the post-Second World War era. Casely—

Hayford's African University would, in pursuance of excellence and universal standards, seek association with the best universities in Japan, Germany, England and America. But wherein lies excellence, you might ask. Excellence in what context? And who determines it and by what and whose criteria? Is it in the nature and content of the university course or the confidence which the training reposes in its beneficiary enabling him to use his knowledge to serve the theoretical and practical needs of his community? Excellence and standards are to us relative terms and meaningless in the absolute. Mr. Chairman.

Consider, for instance, a degree programme in agriculture which is now rapidly becoming an obsolete concept in the world of education. In the West African setting, would a programme with a high content of rural sociology, management, field experimentation and perhaps, psychology leading its graduate to the innermost recesses of the mind and thought of the small farmer not be what should be preferred to a science laden course leading to pure technical competence in our trainees? Excellence may here be judged in relation to the peculiar environment and the extent of the impact of the trained and educated personnel on the development of the community. And how much technical competence can one impart in agricultural programmes in a university in a period of three or even four years? If we succeed during this training period to arouse the students curiosity in matters concerning agriculture and to assist them develop the skill in the use of tools to search and find solutions to problems, our efforts would have been worthwhile. Or consider the impact which our tele-communications engineer has had on the telephone system of this country, a system knocked out of gear by the slightest shower of rain! Or again, consider the planning of our cities and their lack of social and sanitary amenities. Or look at the gaping gutters in our cities with their rubbish and stench. We are told that the torrential rainfalls make open drains necessary in our country. But visit Abidjan with a rainfall regime several times higher than that of Accra, and wonder at the absence of open drains!

Where, Mr. Chairman, do we find the relevancy of our courses of exceeding excellence and high standards pronounced on us each year by external assessors and overseas institutions and scholars? And if it is real relevancy we want may the time not be considered ripe, now, for us to look at the recent trends of developments in the study of economics in our institutions situated in regions of under-

development. In our search for excellence and standards and international recognition we have had to follow the trends developed in highly industrialised and sophisticated economies. Have we stopped to ask how far these developments in European and American institutions have themselves been influenced by their own economic environments and problems, and how much the tools fashioned for the solution of their peculiar problems of extreme sophistication can be applied effectively to ours of underdevelopment. Their over concentration on mathematical models and formulae would seem to me, Mr. Chairman, to aim at producing economic technicians, adept in the use of certain tools for the solution of certain problems. "*Na se yɛanhwe yiye a, na yɛde hwenepɔ aduru rekɔsa ananta.*" as the Akan ancients have said.<sup>3</sup> What our institution should aim at is the production of economists and not economic technicians. The kind of education in economics which enables one to take a particular situation in hand, think on it from first principles, diagnose it, and prescribe appropriately for it. It is only in this way that we make a contribution to learning and not in the skilful application of known models to situations or problems.

If we were not so obsessed with the feverish anxiety to gain international recognition measured by the yardstick of degree equivalence sponsored by UNESCO, then we could settle down to prepare to produce our John Maynard Keyneses. Keynes, although a Cambridge First in Mathematics, brought his mathematical thinking to bear on the problems of the Great Depression and developed a theory of economics which was a product of the situation. You will remember that this came to bear his name. Mathematical models and formulae were strangely enough, conspicuous by their absence in his thesis! In any case, they were not employed to the same extent as we see them used in economic writings of now-a-days. So my advice to African young academics is that they may learn to apply themselves assiduously to seeking ways and means of producing our Keyneses so that by their work the world intellectual community might, for a change, feel forced to learn *our* language so they can understand. So, for those of you, my colleagues, who have your future before you, take the advice of one about to depart and break through the facade of mathematics in economics. You may find behind it far less economics than you feared. And who knows, you, not even being an economist, may find yourself a J. M. Keynes on our peculiar situation of under-

development. Remember that it is only by a return to first principles that the body of knowledge called Economics or indeed, any other body of knowledge, can grow. In this growth process, African nourishment is woefully lacking even when we come to the field of the so-called Development Economics. Our education has failed to make us more creative, we who created our native institutions and built up our distinctive African art and culture and enshrined our philosophy in proverbs.

And to conclude this section of our address may we turn for a very brief moment to the field of Political Science—a field which we should fear to tread. To make our political science really relevant in Africa today, we cannot afford not to consider the role which the military is now playing all over the continent. Does this new role of the armed forces in the government and development of Africa not call for a serious consideration of introducing a measure of Military Studies into our courses in Political Science? We must remember that active participation in the education of our masters must be the just concern of our highest institutions of learning. It would seem to me that Africa needs, today, a new political philosophy which she alone can help to formulate and develop as its peculiar contribution. What will it profit Africa if we continue to teach and research in political philosophies which govern and guide European and American administrations while that which concerns us most is not found a place in the centre of our thoughts and work?

RESEARCH: May we turn now to research and its effects on development. As a nation proceeds in development from a traditional economy into a complex industrial society so must social, economic and technological research proceed in sophistication to cope with their requirements. Thus in a large part of the Third World today the type of research which may sometimes make a decided impact on a community and its process of modernization is often not the sophisticated type of research developed in highly industrialized economies such as the United States or Europe. It is very often the simplest type of investigation which is productive of the most relevant results. The ideal is to have all the sophistication possible and yet be able, with the same level of finesse to tackle the simple research projects which often may influence the nature and pace of our development and revolutionize the country-side transforming

the level of living in the traditional society. Sophisticated research, expensive of time and resources, may yield excellent publications whose value may be extolled in academic circles but which may have little significance and meaning to our traditional societies and the development work in them. We have to be conscious of the fact that those research projects which often generate results which have relevance to, and meaning for our development efforts may often not yield reports which are acceptable for publication in internationally recognized scientific journals. They may not normally be considered sufficiently academic by external assessors during the promotion exercises on the scholars who produce them.

Thus relevance is likely to be sacrificed on the altar of academic excellence for it would appear that what Harvard, Iowa State, Cambridge or Sorbonne says of our efforts is more satisfying to our scholars, for more reasons than one, than any obvious and demonstrable improvement in the life of our communities resulting from our simple researches.

We are therefore overburdened in our social science sectors with models and mathematical formulae most of which attempt to quantify the unquantifiable as a means of appearing erudite and scientific. These models, now current in social science literature, are often the result of global studies by academics with the means to indulge in such studies. These means are normally outside the reach of Third World scholars who are usually used to provide for their First World colleagues the bricks and mortar to construct such models. Seriously applied to any specific situation the models, carefully constructed, fall apart for there are often too many variables in the human sciences which fail to behave in predetermined ways.

What some of us would like to see Mr. Chairman, is our statistical experts designing from first principles fresh research tools dictated entirely by our peculiar conditions and circumstances which will enable us to tackle our peculiar problems better and help us construct models which have direct application to our situations. If we should continue as we are doing now, then, I am afraid, the centre of gravity of our research and scientific endeavours will continue to be located, outside, in Europe or America which provide us with

the readership we now seek for our publications. We have already noted that our publications are vital to our academic life and progression in the present order of things. Our efforts should be centripetal rather than seek to operate on the periphery of American or European research programmes to offer their scholars the bricks and mortar for the construction of their world-view of problems.

In my long discussions of this problem of relevance with my colleagues I have come to the conclusion that the main reason for the marked tendency to seek for audience and readership abroad rather than relevance at home is in part due to the reward structure in our universities. The problem-solving research projects which may be of direct benefit to the national planners are not, as we have observed earlier, taken much account of in university promotion exercises and may not bring the researcher to the notice of the international academic community. He who pursues it serves on national committees which win him no pecuniary rewards in these days of spiralling inflation. He fails to catch the eye of his international colleagues and the United Nations agencies and therefore does not receive research contracts or invitations to conferences and seminars abroad to earn, in subsistence allowances, a little foreign exchange to buy the supplies he deems necessary and which are in short supply at home or are completely unavailable. And, finally, when he gets frustrated and wishes to have a spell outside with some United Nations agency or a foreign institution his chances of being appointed to such outside positions are lost in the very process of his delivery of essential services to his nation and its development efforts.

The university must surely find a way of recognizing and remunerating such service rendered to the development of the country to which it owes its very existence and continued sustenance. By so doing, we attract our academics to the research arena where total involvement in problem identification and problem solving in vital areas of national development, will certainly help us bring specific examples from the real world—our world—to our teaching and thus give an edge to our work with our students. Mr. Chairman, I believe with ISSER that simple practical and applied research provided it is well conceived and formulated and an appropriate methodology devised for it can be productive of suitably publishable material while being of practical value to the government's planning agencies.

Mr. Chairman, we will now consider for a brief moment the management of research programmes. Normally, programmes of research may be drawn up and executed by academic institutions within their institutional framework. Government research centres to deal with specific specialized or general programmes may be established to draw up their own programmes, and have them executed. And industrial research centres exist to explore the problems of industry which organize and financially support them. We will limit ourselves in this address to university research. Here we must remember that the purposes are mainly two: research for the development of our various subjects. This type is usually fundamental in nature and will proceed if the necessary funds and facilities are provided. The second is applied research mainly in the technological and social science area. The orientation of this is definitely towards problem solving. Whereas basic research, alluded to earlier, is normally based in the academic departments, the latter is usually located in special institutes set-up for the purpose. In the social science sector the following may be found in the various university centres in some Central and West African Universities: The Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER) based at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, Institut Recherches Economique et sociale (IRES) in Kinshasa, Zaire, Centre Ivoirien des Recherches Economiques et Sociales (CIRES) in Abidjan, Ivory Coast and the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER).

All these are university based research institutes and, it would appear, that the one which is most university dominated and influenced is ISSER at Legon. The tendency with the others is to work in more closely with the Government so that they can best serve the development needs of the governments. Thus NISER in Ibadan runs a consultancy service in Lagos to maintain its connection with the governmental headquarters and directly assists with feasibility studies and evaluations and appraisal of on-going projects for Government. The measure of autonomy from University control differs from institute to institute. But the general trend seems to be in the direction of weaker University control and more integration with government aspirations as "town" and "gown" get together. NISER appears to be moving in this direction and there is talk of plans even to site the physical facilities away from the university campus. There is a similar process in evidence at Abidjan where (CIRES) buildings are being sited away from the university campus, perhaps, as a physical

demonstration of its closer connections and programme matching with the government.

By the institute being within the university as part of it and predominantly influenced and even dominated by the academics, standards are supposed to be guarded. Much store is set by academic excellence of the output of the institute, and the likelihood of publishable material emanating from it to gain it recognition outside, is greater. On the other hand, closer collaboration with government in finding solutions to the development problems while not giving rise to the erection of the institutes international academic stature may give it the satisfaction of seeing the fruits of its endeavours reflected, perhaps visibly, in the well being of the community. What better reward than this can one hope to get in one's career.

The University atmosphere though in some ways restrictive on the full development capacity of the institute sited within it, and controlled by it, is still to our mind to be preferred to complete separation from it and integration with the government system. But we maintain that the more tenuous the universities' hold the better it will be for the service it must give to the community. What, one may ask, is ISSER's stand in this matter ? ISSER would wish for no dramatic change in its present relationships with the University. With the services properly streamlined, and adequate arrangements made for the recognition and remuneration of worthwhile research efforts by the individual or group researchers, the institute must seek the involvement of government's planning agencies from the early stages of the planning of the research agenda through the stages of project identification, development and execution. It is felt that in this way relevancy will be assured, as effect is thus given to the close collaboration of "town" with "gown." We maintain that this is a more meaningful way of seeking and achieving relevancy than through the existing channels of Advisory Councils of public and private officials in their personal or even official capacities and the submission to government of research reports and publications often unintelligible to the lay reader. We seek at ISSER to bring this about through our workshops with government officials and interested bodies which we convene on *ad hoc* basis at all stages of our programme formulation and execution. We hope that the Government will be willing

and ready to bring "town" to "gown" in the way we propose, to facilitate that dialogue which is undeniably mutually satisfying.

I would like to conclude, Mr. Chairman, with one other aspect of university research which is a relatively new development. I refer to contract research and the part played by Third World research institutes in these endeavours. These research contracts may be negotiated directly with a United Nations Agency such as the International Labour Organization or the World Bank or, indirectly, through an institution such as the United States Agency for International Development or some university department or institution. By this an institute such as ISSER contacts to do a certain study for the contracting agent for an agreed fee. A time limit is usually set for the submission of the final report.

Ability to engage in contract research depends on the resources available and the existence of the necessary infrastructure enabling the contracting institute to respond to the research agenda proposed. The fee may be a few to several thousand dollars and may even include the remains of a vehicle, a typewriter or some other form of equipment. Other perquisites making these attractive are overseas trips for the project director on briefing sessions or to attend workshops or symposia on the project. The project may be directly related to the programme of work of the contracting institute in which case it is fortunate, it may, on the other hand, be only remotely related or completely unrelated. More often than not these agenda may contain some hidden agenda which may or may not surface during the execution of the project. Whatever the case may be, Mr. Chairman, these agenda are drawn up in foreign institutions where they are conceived and planned. They are often global or regional in scope and the parts farmed out to particular institutes are meant to obtain the necessary parts to fit into a main jigsaw puzzle. They are like particular stones which are required to fit into particular parts of a main edifice designed for erection elsewhere, the complete plans of which and the final form of which may never be revealed to our local stone masons who may merely cut, shape and polish the material according to specifications for transmission to the overseas builders. I suggest that for the benefits accruing to the local institute the exercises are not usually really worthwhile. For it should be in

our interest to be architects and planners of research and not mere artisans preparing component parts for a main structure elsewhere.

In this kind of collaboration, which ends up in the building up of certain research individuals or groups, abroad, who are usually privileged to have easy access to funding sources we, accept to act as "hewers of wood and drawers of water" for a mere mess of potage as we have described earlier while our contributions build them up into international experts with all the stature, honour and glory that go with it. The question one would like to have answered is whether the Third World scholar can ever win the sympathy of the donor agencies to be granted equal facility for undertaking projects of the nature that are tackled in this fashion or on this scale? In my experience, this is almost an impossibility. The one advantage is when the project seems to relate an on-going project within the institute or forms a part of its own programme. But even in such cases the problem of copyright over the data resulting from the study more often than not prevents the subsequent use of the material by the local executing agent. Thus the benefits can, at best, be minimal. We are normally forced into such contracts because of the weak position of the Third World scholar and his institute, the poor rewards of the executing agencies in their normal work at home which, for ever, make them look outside for some of the benefits we have had the occasion to list earlier, and his remoteness, in every way, from funding agencies. In these situations, the question of relevance so vital to us, hardly becomes pertinent. Thus in many cases we have to be alert and exceedingly selective in the acceptance of contract research from overseas. Mr. Chairman, your humble servant, in the exercise of extreme caution in this regard, may have incurred the displeasure of great foreign agencies, but we have felt that we have acted in good faith and in the ultimate interest of African scholarship and genuine relevancy to our development aspirations.

Thank you.

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