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## Editorial



### A POLITICAL GIANT PASSES AWAY

For about four decades, Ghanaian politics has been dominated by three political giants: J.B. Danquah, Kwame Nkrumah and K.A. Busia. These serious, controversial and highly principled politicians and towering men of vision were, undoubtedly, anxious for effect, and went to considerable trouble and took immense risks to put forward doctrines on the basis of which they believed the Ghanaian polity should be organized. It is a lasting tribute to the profound impact they had on their countrymen that political forces in Ghana are still mainly polarised around them. With the passing away of Dr. Kofi Abrefa Busia at Oxford on 28 August 1978 at the rather early age of 65, this seminal, colourful and impressive phase in Ghanaian politics has come to an end.

Busia achieved distinction - national as well as international - in two separate careers: as an active and a supremely rational politician and as a highly successful and productive academic. Indeed, one might add a third, since Busia was a brilliant administrator during colonial days. As an academic, Busia's brilliance and eloquence are acknowledged on all sides. From early school days to the time he got his bachelor's and doctorate degrees at Oxford, Busia was marked out for a brilliant academic career. In fact, he lived up to expectation, for having been appointed to a lectureship at the then University College of the Gold Coast in 1949, by 1954 he was a full Professor of Sociology.

As a scholar, Busia is most likely to be remembered as the author of the two most authoritative books on social change in Ghana: **The Position of the Chief and Social Survey of Sekondi-Takoradi**, works which are a model of clarity of thought and lucidity of style. He brought to his role as a scholar the perception of an acute and sympathetic observer, the trained mind and erudition of a professional sociologist and an immense capacity for hardwork. Busia's contribution to scholarship was very distinguished. Had Busia chosen to remain in the serene and comfortable cloisters of the university, he would unquestionably have been appointed the first African Vice-Chancellor.

Busia was not, however, a simple careerist. He sought not only to interpret the social and political world in which he found himself, but also he sought to change it. In this he was acting in a tradition of Ghanaian politics which dates from Mensah Sarbah. Sarbah, Casely Hayford, Sekyi, Danquah and Busia have sought in an academic way to understand their societies, and have gone on to write academic treatises on

### OBSERVER NOTICE

All the contents of this issue, including the Editorial, were already in the press when the details of the 1978/79 Budget were announced on radio and tv. We would like to assure the public that the Budget will be discussed in the next issue.

their societies; of them all, the most thoroughly professional was Busia. When Nkrumah broke away from the United Gold Coast Convention to form the Convention People's Party (C.P.P.), Busia saw dictatorship coming a long way off, a fact he found nonetheless distressing.

From 1951 he combined university teaching with active politics, and in 1956, he courageously decided to leave the university for the harsh, uncertain and turbulent world of African politics. Right from the beginning, Busia acted from a solid bedrock of principles. Some Ghanaians at the time contended that Busia could have served his country better at the university since politics, it was argued, was not his forte. Busia, however, who saw service as a Christian duty thought that politics provided a bigger, even if precarious, opportunity for serving his fellow Ghanaians. From 1951 until he left Ghana in 1959, he fought, in the company of equally courageous colleagues, against what he perceived as totalitarianism; he campaigned tirelessly for fundamental human rights well before human rights came to be popularised by President Carter as the touchstone of well-run governments.

There is one surprising fact about Busia's political career up to this point. Even though, the highest office he achieved was the Leadership of the Opposition, he managed to win such reputation for his performance that the Independence Constitution reflected his views on civil liberties and democracy. In exile, he most actively and consistently championed the cause and welfare of fellow exiles, detainees and other victims of political oppression at international conferences and meetings. It says much for the sincerity and honesty with which he held his convictions that when he returned to Ghana in 1966, and well before he became Prime Minister, he played a leading role in ensuring that liberal democratic values and institutions would find a fertile soil in post-1966 Ghana. The Centre for Civic Education and the Second Republican Constitution of 1969 unmistakably bear the imprint of his enormous influence in this period. Busia, then, needs to be evaluated as an influential politician before he became Prime Minister. If Nkrumah helped to create a radical democratic tradition in Ghana, Busia has put enormous efforts into building a viable, liberal democratic tradition on very shallow and shifting foundations.

As Prime Minister Busia attached top priority to building a viable democracy in the country. It is to the eternal credit of Busia that his government was the least oppressive in our history as an independent nation; and also that his government detained no one except for a crime or offence as established by due process of law; that it was possible to have a free press; and finally, that, it was possible for his opponents to hurl insults and insinuations at him and get away with it all.

Both the success and the failure of the Progress Party government under the leadership of Busia may be ascribed to the same quality of the leader and most of his leading associates: a rational turn of mind combined with a readiness to speak their mind on all occasions on all manner of topics,

regardless of the political consequences of any such speeches. Busia came to power in extremely difficult circumstances. As a convinced democrat, he did not inherit democratic institutions nor a coherent group of people with continuous political experience. The political forces released by the fall of Nkrumah and the end of a military dictatorship pulled in all kinds of directions. Given the severe economic crisis inherited from Nkrumah - a cause and an effect of the mess Busia found himself in - the P.P. government needed all the political skills to cope adequately with these problems.

Busia rightly saw the need to drastically attack the citadels of privilege in the society by asking city-based elites - soldiers, civil servants, professionals - to make sacrifices for the rural majority through the payment of a development levy; he also properly sought to bridge the gap between urban areas where the few live, and the rural hinterland where the majority of Ghanaians live; the cedi was devalued by only 40% instead of the 139% surreptitiously imposed by the SMC recently. In terms of their grasp of the nature of our problems, and solutions required, if Busia's rule had not been abruptly ended by Acheampong in 1972, Ghana in all probability, would have had one of the most progressive governments since independence.

The main weakness of the Busia government was that the country's problems and their solutions were, emotionally and intellectually, too clear to those in the government. Given the massive electoral support they had, most members of the government saw no need to explain in a patient way to the broad masses of the people the need for all the radical initiatives they were taking. It was not immediately clear to the members of the government that their policies had the potential of undermining the dominance of city-based social groups. The rationale and implications of these measures and the urgency of the task ahead appeared so obvious to them that they saw no need to win the approval of opponents and entrenched social groups in this enterprise. The government became rather curt and impatient with foes and even friends when challenged about their policies; they also tended to be over-hasty in implementing laudable plans; and took on too many enemies at the same time. There was no political need for Busia to cling tenaciously to his views on dialogue with South Africa when he was so clearly out of step with Ghanaian and international public opinion on the question. Also, the case for the Aliens Compliance Order might have been obvious, but it was clumsily implemented. Busia also needed workers support in his confrontation with the TUC, and needed as well considerable more political skill in dismissing public servants and putting himself on a collision course with the courts. He was well-meaning, but gave the impression that he was up to some mischief. The anger of powerful social groups he caused was entirely gratuitous. All this was interpreted in some quarters as arrogance and insensitivity, qualities which to enemies justified the coup of 1972. But to say this is to confuse style with substance. The P.P. government was probably arrogant and clumsy, but it was a

government which had substance. With hindsight, it is clear to majority of Ghanaians that Acheampong's coup of 1972 was an unmitigated national disaster. Because of this military intervention, Busia's brief reign as Prime Minister must be seen as one of great promise rather than of achievement.

Busia has been a much misunderstood and traduced person. It has been insinuated that he was corrupt. Acheampong in his six years' rule has not been able to produce any convincing evidence to sustain this calumny. From time to time, in his long political career, there has been speculation that he was a tribalist, and a conservative in politics, speculation that was, indeed, on occasions fanned by his own words. The problem here is that these labels tell us nothing about a man who tended to use the language of sociology in contexts where the language of politics was called for.

Busia was certainly not a tribalist for he simply believed that primary groups are the building blocks for nations. And a person who wrote what he did write about chiefs, education and politics could not, by any stretch of the imagination, be called a conservative. As a firm believer in human rights and an uncompromising opponent of oppression his views would be seen as subversive by whites in Southern Africa. If Busia appeared to be what some say he was it was simply because he had far too much respect for scholarly truth.

Busia has given a long and distinguished service to his country. It is an irony of history that circumstances in Ghana were such that he could live for only five in the last twenty years of his life in the country he has served for so long. A long-standing and an indefatigable campaigner for human rights, a committed liberal democrat, a devout Christian, an outstanding and an internationally recognized scholar, a highly principled politician, Kofi Abrefa Busia has left solid footprints on the sands of time.

## Economy

### DEVALUATION VERSUS DEVALUATION

By  
J. Ofori-Atta

In the last eleven years the ill-fated Cedi has suffered three devaluations. Each government since Nkrumah has found it necessary to adjust the exchange rate it inherited downwards. The NLC devalued in July 1967, the Progress Party devalued in December 1971 and the SMC devalued the Cedi in August 1978.

The cumulative result of these devaluations is that in monetary terms the September 1978 Cedi is worth only 16 per cent of its June 1967 value!!

Each devaluation was intended to correct fundamental disequilibrium in the balance of payments. Each was preceded by unsustainable external deficits and economic and budgetary crisis at home.

In spite of the repeated devaluations, however, there is not much data by which to test the sensitivity of the Ghanaian economy to the devaluation stimulus.

The NLC devaluation was half-hearted. Apart from some initial favourable impact on timber

exports, the leverage of the adjustment was allowed to be quickly eroded in fiscal concessions and subsidies on consumption and expansion in aggregate demand in an attempt to reduce unemployment. The Busia devaluation lasted but two weeks—and the bit of it retained by the revaluation was undermined by a distinctly opposite economic regime. The SMC devaluation is barely four weeks old.

Not surprisingly, the devaluation argument has tended to be conducted in general and heuristic terms—lacking in empirical basis and sometimes weak even in its theoretical foundations. But elasticities of supply and demand differ between different countries especially in the degree of factor mobility, foreign trade dependence, the degree of industrialization, the level of technological sophistication as well as in saving and consumption propensities and patterns of income distribution such that a given percentage variation of the exchange rate would have quite different economic implications for different countries.

What the Ghanaian people, however, do know as a fact is that devaluation is a discrete change in the cedi-dollar parity—which produces a traumatic effect on the cost of living, generates open inflation, writes down national income, reduces the real value of their savings and expenditures, worsens income distribution and causes industrial strife.

It is not easy to establish that currency overvaluation is harmful; that there is a growth-devaluation nexus or that devaluation is an instrument for economic growth. It is equally not easy to show, within the Ghanaian context, that devaluation is more efficient as a tool of economic management than quantitative measures in that it improves income distribution or allocates resources more in line with true social costs or that it does help exports.

It is not the purpose of this article to engage in sterile theoretical arguments. My objects are to compare the structural aspects of the 1971 devaluation with the SMC devaluation of 1978 and to discuss their economic and political implications.

#### Profile of Devaluation

The Table below outlines the statistical effects of the two recent devaluations.

	CEDI-DOLLAR EQUIVALENCES	
	Progress Party (Dec. 1971)	S.M.C. (Aug. 1978)
A. Cedi/Dollar		
Pre-Devaluation	£1.00 = \$0.98	£1.00 = \$0.87
Post-Devaluation	£1.00 = \$0.55	£1.00 = \$0.36
Adjustment Rate	44%	59%
B. Dollar/Cedi		
Pre-Devaluation	\$1.00 = £1.02	\$1.00 = £1.15
Post-Devaluation	\$1.00 = £1.78	\$1.00 = £2.75
Effective Devaluation	74%	139%

Busia adjusted the Cedi-Dollar rate downwards by 44%; the SMC have devalued by as much as 59%. The implicit dollar-cedi adjustment was 74% - which meant that in the case of the Busia devaluation Cedi holders were required to pay 74% more cedis to secure a dollar; in the case of the SMC devaluation the dollar price has jumped up by 139%. That is the real measure of the burden of the devaluations, i.e. the SMC devaluation is nearly twice as oppressive as the Busia devaluation. A Senior Civil Servant had occasion to describe the Busia devaluation as "vicious". He has every reason now to describe the SMC devaluation as "murderous".

At a time of such unprecedented economic hardship—of rampant inflation and in the face of a constitutional crisis with incipient social unrest, the obvious pertinent questions are, What does the SMC expect to achieve by the devaluation? What determined its magnitude? Can an already dispirited people smarting under the yoke of shortages and economic dislocation absorb the real burden of a devaluation of such a magnitude?

These questions provide a convenient starting point for a review of the Busia and the SMC devaluations.

The first order effect of devaluation is that it causes a sharp discrete change in relative prices; it triggers off an adjustment mechanism that re-allocates resources—with distributional and output effects. Thus the exchange rate is a crucial variable in the determination of national income and in the distribution of such income. Quite clearly, then, the total economic effects of an exchange rate adjustment will not only depend upon the magnitude of the adjustment itself but also upon the policy measures that accompany it. Thus normally devaluation appears within a policy package and it is the content of the package which determines the character of the devaluation, i.e., how the burden of the devaluation is distributed; the sectors of the economy to be encouraged or penalized and how consumption and savings are to behave.

#### Types of Devaluation

Thus we can distinguish four devaluation types, namely:—

- (1) Straight devaluation—a mere discrete change in the exchange rate unaccompanied by any other discernible economic measures.
- (2) Devaluation with stabilization - i.e. devaluation accompanied by deflationary measures to reduce aggregate demand (Ghana 1967, and 1971).
- (3) Devaluation with liberalisation - whereby a liberal trade regime substitutes for trade restrictions after the exchange rate adjustment (Ghana 1971).
- (4) Devaluation accompanied by partial or full unification of exchange rates—whereby a pre-existing diversity of exchange rates is collapsed into fewer rates or a single rate (Ghana 1971).

A devaluation package could involve stabilization, liberalisation and exchange rate unification simultaneously, as was the Ghana 1971 case. Obviously where the devaluation package aims

at multiple objectives, the induced inter-actions will be more complex and it would certainly be incorrect to judge it in terms of the possibilities of the trade balance only.

Another aspect of the Busia devaluation was the expressed recognition given to the allocative and distributional implications of the event and the determination to use fiscal and other policy measures to alleviate the burden on low income classes - i.e. to make the burden of the devaluation progressive or consistent with ability to bear - and also to reinforce the allocative mechanisms with incentives whilst at the same time clearing away the distortions inhibiting the economic system.

Thus simultaneously with the devaluation the Busia government abolished forthwith all surcharges on imports; raised the producer price of cocoa by 25%; promised similar price increases to producers of all other agricultural export products marketed by the CMB; raised the minimum wage by 33%; promised graduated increases in wages and salaries for other employees in the Public Service who earned less than ₵1,000.00 per annum. At the same time the Service Payments Allocation Tax (SPAT) was abolished and the Export and Tourist bonuses were similarly cancelled. Additionally the obnoxious 180-day credit system (inherited from Nkrumah) under which the import trade was financed was to be abolished. Finally depending upon the outturn of the balance of payments, exchange controls were to be lifted altogether to return the Cedi to full convertibility.

The character of the devaluation was fully determined in a comprehensive package which

- (a) determined the magnitude of the exchange rate adjustment and
- (b) provided an opportunity to shift economic policy to a new basis—a decade of economic controls having failed to help either economic growth or to protect the balance of payments.

#### Objects of S. M. C. Devaluation

Now precisely what are the objects of the SMC devaluation? At the time of writing this article three weeks after the event nothing has been issued from the Government to suggest that the devaluation is anything but a mere discrete change in the exchange rate. Is it the intention of the Government to pass on the full burden of the devaluation to the workers and the farmers? Are we still going to operate within the framework of quantitative controls or not? How was the magnitude of the devaluation determined?

Quite apart from the economic merits or demerits of the devaluation, these questions raise a fundamental issue of public accountability.

Firstly, has the SMC the right to impose a policy with such severe fundamental repercussions on Ghanaians and on the economy without notice and without so much as care to explain the basis of their actions? This is precisely the most obnoxious aspect of military rule—that Ghanaians can be taken for granted; that a military government is

accountable only to itself; that the civilian population can damn themselves?

Secondly, does the SMC understand the full implications of their action — that the cedi price of the dollar has gone up by as much as 140%, i.e. that importers have to pay as much as 140% more cedis for all ranges of imports — foods, medicines, spare parts, raw materials, capital equipment etc — and all transactions denominated in foreign currency?

Thirdly, what is left of the credibility of the SMC and General Acheampong who forcibly displaced a popularly elected government precisely for devaluing the cedi? Is that not KWASEABUO *par excellence* — to sack a government for devaluing by 74% and to turn around to devalue by an even larger rate of 140%? Surely the SMC must recognize the cost to the nation of this policy reversal and be held responsible for it; they must be held responsible for arresting the economic progress of the nation; they must also be held responsible for six years of inept economic management and for allowing a socially destructive high rate of inflation to build up behind an unsupportable rate of exchange for six years.

There are, however, important lessons to learn from the episode of the last six years and which should be highlighted for the benefit of those responsible for the management of the economy.

Quite clearly neither the economy nor the balance of payments have benefited from two decades and a half of economic controls. All the assumptions have been frustrated by the internal distortions generated by these controls themselves. It is regrettable therefore that the liberalisation alternative of 1969/71 was so short-lived.

In particular it must now be quite clear to all that the devaluation of 1971 was not necessarily caused by the liberalisation policy of Busia — otherwise how can we explain the SMC devaluation? It follows also that the balance of payments deficit of 1971 cannot be attributed *per se* to trade liberalisation either — otherwise how can we explain the persistent deficits of the past three years? A developing country pursuing economic growth and at the same time changing its economic structure whilst dependent upon foreign markets and resources is simply prone to instability.

#### Some Conclusions

A close and careful study of the situation leads to the following conclusions:—

- (a) The Ghanaian balance of payments has shown a persistent tendency to be unfavourable. Deficits of varying amounts have been recorded under both liberalised and quantitative regimes.
- (b) The size of the deficits appears to be explained only by the degree of severity or laxity with which the government restrains imports (in either regime) and by the level of cocoa prices which largely determines both foreign exchange availability and Ghana's terms of trade. The one is discretionary, the other is determined by forces outside the control of the government.

- (c) There is also no evidence to suggest that the balance of payments tends to be more negative under a liberalised regime. On the contrary, the available evidence appears to point to the fact that both national economic growth and income distribution are improved under a liberalised regime.
- (d) It would be necessary under a liberalised regime just as it would be necessary under the controlled regime to ensure:—
  - (i) that imports are directed towards socially optimal uses and
  - (ii) that the amounts of imports are limited to quantities that permit the accumulation of savings in foreign currency or at least restrain the rate at which foreign debts grow.
- (e) There is preliminary evidence to suggest that the import boom of 1970-71 was due to the failure of the government to raise sufficiently the effective tax rate on imports to go with the import liberalisation policy. The surcharges imposed to restrain imports had a low bite and therefore failed to protect the balance of payments. In other words it is the restraining mechanism that failed because the level was inappropriate.

It is recommended that the SMC must seize the opportunity to do another *volte face* — begin a systematic dismantling of the controls which have shackled the economy for several years. They simply have not yielded positive dividends.

Finally it should be made quite clear to all that until we succeed in altering the structure of the economy and economic growth becomes self-sustaining and the management of the economy improves, the exchange rate would come under repeated attacks. In the circumstance it is time to abandon the view that the exchange rate is some sacred cow which cannot be sacrificed or that devaluation is proof of policy failure. Rather we would do well to keep the situation daily under close surveillance and adjust the exchange rate frequently and in small doses when it becomes necessary instead of wasting time to defend an indefensible exchange rate until we are forced to make a massive change with disastrous social and economic consequences.

## Politics

### LESSONS IN NATION BUILDING

by

Agyare Koilarbi

Historians of both contemporary and past events have always lamented the fact that men never learn from the experience of others, theoretical knowledge of such events notwithstanding. Dictators continue to surface in various parts of the globe despite the incontrovertible evidence that dictatorial governments always collapse leaving in their wake a trail of hatred for those who made it possible.

Those who learn the least from historical events are often those who wield political power. Each leader thinks he will be spared the fate of other dictators. Acheampong always thought and perhaps sincerely believed that though fate had given him the mantle of Kwame Nkrumah he would be spared the consequence of totalitarian rule.

It is probably not correct to say that we do not learn from history. We learn but only after we have experienced it ourselves. The more bitter the experience the faster the learning process. The period between 1972 and 1978 has been the most tragic period in the Republic's history. It is a period characterised by the worst atrocities ever committed on the people of Ghana. Not only were people arrested and detained on the flimsiest excuse but massive and brutal violence was unleashed on innocent citizens of the Republic.

### Oppression and Barbarism

Those who dared question the conduct of the government or any of its agencies were simply beaten up, or taken to military custody where they were subjected to the most gruesome torture and violence. A few have lost their lives and many have been maimed; the victims come from all classes of people. Acheampong's viciousness reached its peak during the campaign on Union Government. Thuggery and police brutality became the order of the day. Not only did the police unleash violence on innocent people but in clear instances collaborated with organised thugs hired by Acheampong's Special Aides to disrupt anti-Union Government rallies.

Ghana sank so low that I occasionally wondered whether the rulers were indeed Ghanaians, for I had long laboured under the illusion that political violence as experienced by countries like Uganda could never happen here because of the peaceful nature of Ghanaians. Under Acheampong I quickly realised that there is only a thin line between civilisation and barbarism. If by accident of miscalculation, political power falls into the hands of a buffoon or even a good person and there are no restraints or adequate checks and balances, however civilised a community may be it stands the danger of degenerating into unimaginable depths of depravity and violence.

After Acheampong, I seem to have a better understanding why Germany, the most industrialised and scientific nation in Europe, in the 1930's easily and quickly succumbed to barbarism and violence of unusual proportions. Without adequate institutional checks every nation faces that possibility. But for his removal, Acheampong was well on his way to taking Ghana along the lines of what is happening in Uganda. He openly and unashamedly boasted to representatives of the Professional Bodies last year that he was capable of turning Ghana into another Uganda or Ethiopia.

To achieve his ambition of becoming President he had no qualms about sending fully armed policemen and soldiers to beat up innocent 10 and 14 year old kids of Mfantispim Secondary School who were merely protesting about the poor quality of food served in their dining halls.

So indiscriminate was the use of force that armoured cars were even sent to the campus of Opoku Ware Secondary School in Kumasi simply because the students had registered their disapproval of the concept of Union Government. Whatever the circumstances there can be no excuse for sending armed policemen to confront kids of such tender ages. This is not to speak of the open rampage at the Advanced Training College in Winneba where the students were beaten up and a female student indecently assaulted.

### The Economy

Economically too we did not fare any better. Since 1972, Ghana has witnessed a steady decline in the growth of her economy. By 1976 all indications were that the economy had ground to a halt. Inflation has been and still is the worst in our history. It has accelerated from an ordinary mild inflation to a hyper inflation. Ghana was ranked in last year's United Nation Economic Report as the country with the second highest rate of inflation in the world after Argentina.

Food prices rose to such astronomical heights that it could have led to food riots in other countries. In fact it was the immediate cause of the professional strike last year. A situation was also created whereby commodities passed through several hands before reaching the actual consumer. The occasional and erratic use of Armed forces personnel to deal with traders only led to outright disappearance of essential commodities and basic foodstuffs.

In the face of the threat of imminent collapse of the economy, Acheampong consistently had the nerve to tell the outside world that Ghana was prospering more than ever before. He refused to admit that the 'Operation Feed Yourself' programme had been a failure as evidenced by alarming food shortages and even famine in the Northern parts of the country. Indeed the man and his regime were an insult to the intelligence of Ghanaians! The sheer illiteracy and crudeness which he displayed would make angels weep. He believed he was a kind of Messiah ordained to rule Ghana forever. In 1975 he remarked to a local newsmen that it would be irresponsible for him to hand over power to a civilian administration. Buffoonery and rudeness were simply part of the man's character!

Acheampong's forced resignation did not come to me as a surprise. What has rather surprised me is that it took his colleagues so long to realise that the game was a one man show. The truth is that it had always been a one man show.

The past six years have been traumatic for Ghana. Never before has the citizens of the Republic been subjected to this kind of barbarism. The interlude of Acheampong's rule has shown what will happen to the Republic if we do not devise effective institutions which will nurture a plural democracy.

### General Lessons

The barbarism of post 1972 coup Ghana must teach us a number of lessons. The biggest lessons which Acheampong rule must have taught this

nation is that, Army rule is no better alternative to party politics. The myth about the political efficiency of soldiers which developed in this country as a result of the popularity of the 1966 coup is broken forever. Everybody now seems to be saying that there is no alternative to an elected civilian government in an open democracy. However rotten an elected civilian administration is, there is always the hope that it would be thrown out of office by a dissatisfied electorate. But when a military administration is rotten there is hardly any way you can get it out of office save for organising another coup d'etat. Acheampong's mismanagement has been a great civic education for the Republic. It has dispelled myths about the political ability of soldiers in a way which no amount of theoretical civic education would have achieved.

As a nation we must draw and learn from this whole experience. As for the army, it looks as if it is about to grasp the basic truth which many people have tried to make them understand since independence. The truth being that politics is not good for the army, and the army is no good for politics. Acheampong's attempt to institutionalise military involvement in politics has undermined discipline and morale in the forces. Politics is and will always be divisive and any army which gets involved will be plagued by division. Experience in other parts of the world has confirmed this point over and over again.

The fact that all these evils could happen for almost seven years is an indication that we must take a second look at the command system of the army. The automatic obedience which the officer corps exact from their men has been abused. Hence the need to train our soldiers in such a way that they will adopt a more critical attitude towards whatever instructions they are given. Germany has had to do a similar thing after Hitler had misled the German army to create chaos and confusion in the world. And I am afraid plural democracy can only survive in the country when soldiers are educated to disregard instructions which may undermine the constitutional authority of the Republic.

#### Lessons for Politicians

Events of post 1972 Ghana offer lessons not only for soldiers but also for politicians generally. First of all, the ease with which Acheampong got rid of the Progress Party government is an indication that the politicians of the day had not yet learnt how to defend our democracy. Probably their conduct accounted for the failure of other soldiers to come to their aid. However, all the evidence seems to indicate that the 1972 coup would have occurred however excellent the Progress Party government had performed in office. Acheampong openly stated soon after 1972 that he had planned his coup just about 6 months after the Progress Party was installed in office and there is evidence that there were several groups planning a coup, and Acheampong had to move faster to forestall them from acting. The 1969 constitutional experiment was doomed to fail because it did not have the necessary apparatus to defend it against its numerous enemies most of whom were waiting for an opportune time to strike.

Politicians must learn to accept defeat when they lose elections or fail to come to power by the ballot box. Acheampong's coup was largely encouraged by various groups of politicians who had failed in their bid for power at the 1969 general elections. The opposition leader, Mr. Madjitey, openly supported the coup and held a rally in his constituency to congratulate the military leaders for doing what he and his colleagues in the opposition had tried to do constitutionally. Even the speaker of the National Assembly who should have stood up for parliamentary Democracy subsequently accepted the post of an adviser to Acheampong. Later he tried to justify his action by saying that he was politically neutral. As Speaker of an Assembly made up of parties he is neutral only as between the various contending parties. He cannot be neutral when the whole system of parliamentary democracy is shoved aside by some political gangster. Ironically almost all the politicians who collaborated with Acheampong in the early days of his regime eventually became victims of his viciousness in one way or the other.

What all of us must realise is that there will be no peace in this country until we accept the fact that political leadership must only be got through an electoral process. Once a man has been elected into office, it does not matter whether he is a conservative, reactionary or arrogant, he must be allowed to finish his term of office until the electorate give a different verdict. Not even the charge of tribalism or mismanagement should be enough to upset the constitutional order. The verdict of whether a particular Administration is good or bad, should be left for the whole country to decide because as individuals we all have our personal views on government policies. Even the great Lord Keynes, one of the finest economists of our century admitted that there can be no single approach to solving economic problems. Each government must choose what kind of economic policies it will adopt and when the choice is made, only the electorate must decide whether a government's policies are good or not.

A violent overthrow of a freely elected government may be justified only and only if the mass of the people are deprived of the opportunity to decide freely whether they want a particular government or not.

In part II of this article I will examine the leading question of what the civilian population must do to counter any future disruption of the constitutional order.

## Men and Ideas

### THE SOCIOLOGY OF KOFI BUSIA

Max Assimeng

It is tempting to think that the late Dr. Kofi Abrefa Busia might be evaluated, by contemporary men of letters and of affairs, mainly in terms of his contribution to practical political life in Ghana. It is probable, therefore, that his success or failure in politics—depending upon the perspective of the analyst—would dominate the tenor of obituaries about him.

Perhaps this is as things should be. Of all the scholar-activists in a century-old social and political history of this country, Busia stands perhaps the most supreme. He was a consistent and profound intellectual who also gained power to effect changes in the nature of society.

It is obvious to all who came to know Busia, either in person or by literature, or both, that even if he had not entered into Africa's turbulent arena of practical politics, his memory would still be enshrined in the annals of intellectual history. This had been the principal expectation of the erstwhile don. Indeed, the present writer recalls Busia making an indirect allusion to this view. This was during an address at a meeting with university senior members in 1970 or 1971. When he jocularly said that 'Oxford refuses to dismiss me'. It was prophetic then; but it is significant that it was death, rather than Oxford, which ultimately dismissed his life-long attachment to the living world of scholarship.

### Preliminary Remarks

While several scholars and politicians would mourn, with sorrow, the sudden death, in Oxford, of Busia, it may well be that it is the world of African sociology that would feel his loss most. But his death, in some unanticipated direction, may be said to have been a positive solution to some of the agonizing problems over which Busia must have pondered in his last days. His own understanding of Akan cosmology, buttressed by his strong Christian faith, had convinced him that death 'ever remained a conundrum.' But, to those of us now alive, death appears to have solved problems for Busia, and opened other problems for his friends and foes alike.

Busia must have been alert in the final days of his life to take note of the ultimate toppling of his own totem; to receive reports on the state of the Ghanaian society and economy since his overthrow and to appreciate how a new concept of 'redemption' — now clothed in mythical and religious symbolism, but in the borrowed garb of 'revolution' — could be used to forcibly and disastrously reshuffle the stratification or ranking order of Ghanaian society. Finally, he must have mused over reports that the value of education — moral, technical, certification, for which he invested so much and wrote so clearly and persuasively — had sunk so low as the international esteem of the cedi.

The actual personalia about Busia's life should be left to those better qualified to provide. Mr. C.E. Donkoh, who claims to be 'the only man who knows..... most intimately enough' has a recent book on **Nkrumah and Busia** and provides useful personal data about Busia's biography.

I should like to concentrate instead on Busia's sociology, in so far as it can be said that he carved and followed a consistent and systematic paradigm in the analysis and interpretation of social structures and their functioning. Even then, it is essential to mention that the catholicity of Busia's learning, and the wide-ranging nature of his topics of discourse, cannot be adequately evaluated by only one person, in this era of academic specialisms. In the field of sociology alone, a well-prepared symposium would be required to cope with the different perspectives of his contributions. I write about Busia mainly from the perspective of a student of Social theory and sociology of religion.

From Busia's days as a Government research officer, to his sudden death when he was reported to be dictating a manuscript to a secretary, Busia did not stop writing. He did not write merely as a means of sustenance or to add to the length of bibliographic titles to his credit. His writings were solid, lucid, researched, and academic. A prominent feature of his scholarship is that he tried consistently, me-

thodically, and in a disciplined posture, to grow with knowledge.

### As a Sociologist

The solidity of his sociological imagination begins appropriately with his Oxford University doctoral thesis which, in 1951, was published as **The Position of the Chief in the Modern Political System of Ashanti**. Although the thesis was written, and under the direction of men, at the Institute of Social Anthropology, this departmentalization in Oxford was only a matter of convenience. There is as yet no separate Department of Sociology at Oxford. This is why it is mere hair-splitting to argue whether he was a sociologist or a social anthropologist. Those who want to discuss Busia's specific sociological credentials are advised to do two things: they should read his works; and they should also read sociology.

From the moment that his reworked and updated dissertation was published, Busia's contribution to the nature of 'sympathetic understanding' of social reality, in the sense in which Max Weber used the term, became established. Bronislaw Malinowski and Radcliffe Brown, two of the founding fathers of modern methodology in the comparative study of societies, would have entirely appreciated the approach of participant observation and painstaking, 'passionate detachment' of Busia. The framework of the approach is also evident in his (1950) **Report on a Social Survey of Sekondi-Takoradi**. In addition, the new disciplinary trend of humanist sociology should certainly approve his study of human societies as embodiments of actual thinking, feeling, and acting people.

G. Saunders, in a review of **The Position of the Chief** described it in the authoritative journal *Africa* (April 1952, p. 178) as 'a remarkably full, frank, and clear statement of the most important problems facing Ashanti today'. This description is, in spite of Busia's characteristic modesty in claiming, for the book, that 'one cannot exhaust a subject in one day.'

Busia had been born into a segment of traditional social structure which took confidence in serenity and order for granted, after a long period of inter-tribal warfare. What sociologists call the 'primary group', in its community sense of emotional attachment and bond of solidarity, ensured meaning and integration for the individual in the village. The pattern of authority was clear, and there was very little questioning of incumbents to office and power, a questioning that could seriously disturb traditional set-up.

The family or lineage had been seen by Busia as the hub of social and political organization; from this intimate understanding of the village social life, he had gained the conviction that social structure was no more than blood-brotherhood writ large. Hence his later exhortations to Ghanaians to be 'each other's keeper,' a position he must later have found unrealistic. This integration model of society should have given way to the accommodation of a conflict perspective in his view of society. This is because, with colonization, the emergence of new men, and the challenge to traditional authority, Busia himself had come to find the chief's palace at the village, district, and provincial levels as the new area of conflict, confusion and corruption.

### Comparative Thought Processes

It is true that Busia's analysis of power relations in transitional communities, as epitomized in **The Position of the Chief**, served to put him on the map of scholarship, and that this monograph of his has been cited often in academic exercises. But it is perhaps truer that his contribution to knowledge lay more in his study of comparative thought

processes. It is in this regard that Busia was essentially a sociologist of religion. He grappled with the Levy-Bruhlian problem of 'How Natives Think', and the relationship between categories of thought and the nature of social life and social organization.

The first of such discussions may be found in his essay on 'The Ashanti of the Gold Coast', in Daryll Forde's collection of African cosmological ideas. This theme of the mutual co-existence of the mythical and the empirical, the religious and the positive apparatuses in the African mind, puzzled him; but it also gave him the key with which to understand the entire cultural background that determines behaviour in the African setting.

He carried a similar message in his contribution to a Christian Council of Ghana symposium on Christianity and African Culture, when he again dwelt upon 'The African World View'. This particular essay, or versions of it, in which he developed the thesis of the 'Christian veneer', later appeared in several languages in a number of world religious journals. From that period the World Christian Council sought his assistance on a number of tasks, including a later research assignment into the nature of urban churches in Britain.

### Religious Perspectives

In between these several teaching and research assignments, and while still warning his heedless countrymen about the dangers of confusing propriety and charlatanism, he managed to present, in *The Student World* (1950), a 'Sociological Evaluation of the Church in Africa,' which the present writer found quite useful even in the 1970s. It is also characteristic of his intellectual fertility that, during the heydays of political confusion in Ghana in the late 1950s, he could contribute a three-part article, in *Practical Anthropology*, on 'Africa in Transition'. Busia analysed, in the series, (a) Africa Before European Colonization; (b) Africa Under European Colonialism; and (c) The Challenge of Technical Civilization. Later, writing on these challenges of modernization and acculturation in the developing world, he enquired in a 1963 essay, whether 'The Distinction Between Primitive and Higher Religions has any Sociological Significance.' Even his *The Challenge of Africa* (1962) and *Africa in Search of Democracy* (1967), begin and end, even if implicitly, with the contextualization of political analysis within the framework of cosmology. These religious perspectives may have given him personal mental repose and psychological integration. But an undue emphasis on religion in the analysis of human nature and social institutions, could not succeed in presenting a complete matter-of-fact basis of societal existence which he wished to do something about.

Professor Busia had a view of sociology as a handmaiden for understanding, evaluation, and social reconstruction. He held this view of social segments, such as religious groups; of secular collectivities, such as men and women pursuing mundane callings in urban communities (he showed considerable sympathy and understanding for Sekondi-Takoradi prostitutes); and of a whole network of nations, such as Ghana grappling with the spectre of corruption, dictatorship, and collective unreason. His view was that, once the correct understanding or perception had been obtained of phenomena, there was no reason why men with reason would not respond to the challenge of doing something about such phenomena.

Busia did not stay in academic institutions in Ghana up to a period when he could groom succeeding generations of a sociological Busiana. Most of his students in sociology are now in public administration rather than in university

service, and it is not easy to measure how far a Busia tradition has been carried into governmental service. However, as current and future students come to read Busia, they may come to evaluate his theory and methodology as a sociologist. He would then be better appreciated when serious divergences of opinion come to polarize Ghanaian sociologists into pro-and anti-Busia, in terms of the way he viewed human nature and social structure.

## Tribute



PROFESSOR K.A.B. JONES - QUARTEY

During the temporary suspension of the publication of the *Legon Observer*, the country in general and the Legon Society on National Affairs and especially the Editorial Committee of the *Legon Observer* in particular sustained a tragic and an irreparable loss in the death of Professor Kwartey Asoasa Brempong Jones-Quartey on 29th November 1976. Since SOAS, as he was popularly known by his colleagues, was one of the founding fathers of the Legon Society on National Affairs and the brain and moving spirit behind the *Legon Observer* in its formative years, we of the Society and the *Observer* feel it our bounden duty to devote some of our columns to his obituary, however belated this may be.

Professor Jones-Quartey was born in Accra on 2nd January, 1913. After his elementary education in Ghana, he went to Sierra Leone at the age of 12 and remained there till 1933 during which he received his secondary education at the Freetown Grammar School. SOAS never forget this early association of his with Sierra Leone, and throughout his life, he considered Freetown as his second, if not his first, home. On his return to Ghana, he was employed as a reporter on the African Morning Post then under the editorship of the famous Nigerian nationalist and Pan-Africanist, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe.

In 1937, he continued to demonstrate his spirit of adventure and enterprise by choosing not to go to the United Kingdom for further education as was then the common practice of Ghanaians but rather to go to the less-chartered country of the United States. He remained there till 1946 during which he obtained the B.A. degree in the Liberal Arts (cum laude) at Lincoln University, and the M.A. degree in Political Science at Columbia University. He crossed over to Britain in 1946 and remained there for another two years before returning home to Ghana in 1948. In 1950, SOAS joined the senior staff of the University of Ghana as editor of the series of pamphlets being sponsored by the then Department of Extra-Mural Studies and he remained with the University until his retirement in 1974 and his untimely and lamentable death in 1976.

During his sixty-four year span of life, SOAS distinguished himself first as a Ghanaian nationalist and then as a Pan-Africanist, secondly as a journalist, thirdly as a firm believer in and advocate of the basic freedoms notably the freedom of the press and the individual, fourthly as a University don and scholar, and finally as a family man. It is these various facts of his life on which we would dwell here.

SOAS's interest in and active participation in national affairs began right from the time of his return home in 1948. It is rather significant that in the very year of his return, he was offered the post of Secretary-General of the United Gold Coast Convention. Though he declined this offer, he got involved in the battle for independence. After independence, he followed the political developments in the country with keen interest and never hesitated to express his views on national issues. It was mainly out of his concern for the nation that he became so instrumental in the formation in 1966 of the Legon Society on National Affairs to safeguard the freedom which was restored to the country by the coup of 1966. As he himself put it in the very first editorial of the *Legon Observer*: "Many of us are resolved never again to be caught trying to save the future by sacrificing the present; never again to remain quiet if our liberties are being invaded or curtailed hoping that somebody would eventually perform any risky national obligations for us!" And it was because of this determination that he devoted so much of his time to the *Legon Observer*. This is particularly borne out not only by the very prominent role he played at all times in the activities of the Society, but also by the various national posts that he held. He served as Chairman of the Commission of Enquiry into the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1967, became a member of the National Advisory Committee and until his death was a member of the National Council for Higher Education.

SOAS, however, never remained a narrow-minded Ghanaian nationalist. Throughout his life he showed keen interest and participated actively in Pan-Africanism and Pan-Africanist activities. Indeed, his very name, Kwatei Asoana Brempong Jones-Quartey with its Ga, Akan and Sierra-Leonean elements testify to this commitment. It is also significant that he maintained his connections which he forged during his studies in Britain with people like George Padmore, Jomo Kenyatta, Wallace Johnson, Bankole Awonor Renner and Makonnen.

His second main preoccupation was Journalism. Journalism was the second nature of SOAS. He practised it as a profession, studied it as an academic discipline, used it as a weapon and did everything he could to promote its proper development and practice in this country. His practice of Journalism dates as far back as 1935 when he was Sports Editor to *Zik of the African Morning Post*. During his student days at Lincoln and Columbia University in U.S.A.

and during his stay in Britain, he was always closely associated with the mass media of communication. He worked on the "Lincolnian" from 1937-41, edited the "Lion", a college year book in 1942, and "African Interpreter" and "The African Eagle" from 1942 to 45 and while in Britain became a member of the Editorial Board of the West African Students Union magazine and its editor in 1947 to 1948.

We make bold to say that but for his dedication to the *Legon Observer* it would not have become the institution that it did become. In the early days of the paper, old SOAS was not only the Chairman of its editorial committee, but he worked tirelessly night and day and at great personal sacrifice, to ensure that the paper made its fortnightly appearance. Undoubtedly, the Editorial Committee immensely benefited from his mature judgement, moderating influence, and above all, his vast experience. He continued to work with every devotion on the paper and never did we see SOAS as disconcerted and broken-hearted as when he saw the letter of the Printer announcing his decision to stop the printing of the *Legon Observer*, and as recounted elsewhere, he devoted a substantial part of his last three years in a relentless battle for the resumption of the publication of the *Observer*.

I cannot do better in illustrating his conception of journalism as a tool than to quote what he himself wrote on it in the maiden issue of the *Legon Observer*: "We seek to put at the disposal of Government and people such knowledge, information, or insight as we—and others—may be able to offer, touching upon all matters of importance or usefulness to the whole country. We wish through the *Observer* to provide a forum for the independent, critical, uncensored discussion of public affairs, bound by no rules except those of legality, objectivity, fairplay, and 'parliamentary' language."

The Editorial Committee of the *Legon Observer* in particular, and the Legon Society on National Affairs (LSNA) in general, has lost a great father figure. His wise counsel, patience, moderating influence and his uncompromising dedication to the cause of national reconstruction will be missed by all members of the Legon Society on National Affairs.

Besides being a nationalist, Pan-Africanist and journalist, SOAS also distinguished himself as a University don and scholar. As already indicated, SOAS's association with the University began in 1950 when he was appointed as Editor of the "West African Affairs" series of pamphlets. Two years later, he was appointed Assistant Director of the Department. In 1962 he earned promotion to the grade of Associate Professorship and then had to move to the Institute of African Studies. In 1966, he returned as Acting Director to the Institute of Public Education which had by then been reorganised and redesignated Institute of Adult Education. He became its full Director and Professor in 1969 and remained there till his retirement in 1974. In all these years, SOAS brought new life and new vistas in the field of adult education.

It was also while at his post and especially his retirement that he actively pursued one of his many interests, journalism as an academic discipline. Among his publications are the *Biography of Nnamdi Azikiwe, A Summary History of Ghana Press, 1822-1960; The West African Press: A Social and Political History; and finally History, Politics and Early Press in Ghana: The fictions and the facts*. And nothing became such a source of joy and fulfilment to SOAS as the establishment of the School of Journalism and Communication in the University in 1976. As he put it in a letter to the

Registrar in May 1973 on his closing services in the University: "..... it only remains for me to express a further wish to be allowed to participate in the work of the new Institute of Journalism and Communication during its initial year of operation. This is naturally the fulfilment of a kind of dream for me, which had it not been for my age and my wish to retire, in fact, would have been for me a long and joyful activity for many years." SOAS not only readily put his vast experience and knowledge at the service of the school but he in fact continued to lecture on the historical development of the West African Press till his death.

In spite of this wide diversity of interests and activities, SOAS found time to be a good family man and a friend to all and sundry. He married Pearl Winifred Bruce and had four children, namely, Kwatei, Nee Ofram, Kwei Mensah and Kwatelai, whom he did everything in his power to provide with the necessary training and education. He was a kind and devoted husband and a responsible and loving father.

In his tribute to SOAS on the day of his burial, the President of the society concluded "SOAS, we wish to assure you that we will uphold and promote all the ideals we shared with you. We further declare to you that as soon as the times change and permission is granted, we will resume the publication of the *Legon Observer*, the paper which you did so much to establish and institutionalize. SOAS, we are aware of the fact that you have immortalized your name in this country in particular and in the world in general. To perpetuate your name and good works in this University, the Society has decided to institute a Jones-Quartey Memorial Prize in Journalism in the School of Journalism and Communication to be awarded annually to the best final year student of the School".

We are indeed happy to state that the times have indeed changed and we have resumed the publication of the *Observer*. Thanks to the generosity of the Pioneer Tobacco Company, we have also formally instituted the Jones-Quartey Memorial Prize in Journalism. We would like to believe that those two events will not only bring happiness and a sense of fulfilment to SOAS in his grave, but will also make his rest eternally peaceful.

#### NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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## Observer Notebook

### Blay-Miezah And Buckman

On Friday, September 1, the government issued a statement denying allegations made by Mr. J. A. Blay-Miezah against Mr. E. K. Buckman, Commissioner for SMC affairs. The allegation was that certain moneys totalling C48,000 had been collected for Mr. Buckman by two officers of the Special Branch. The government statement said that there is conclusive evidence that no such moneys were ever paid to Mr. Buckman and that the allegations are therefore baseless.

Whatever the merits in the case made by Mr. Blay-Miezah and the denial by the government, we find the manner in which the case has been handled thoroughly unsatisfactory. Mr. Buckman is a public official holding a very sensitive post and when his integrity is so publicly and categorically impugned, it is certainly not enough to issue a denial and rest the matter. Perhaps it may even be said that the government statement should provide ammunition to Mr. Buckman to publicly challenge Mr. Blay-Miezah in order to clear his name. This is what the courts are there for. This is certainly a good opportunity to protect the image of senior public servants from being "so irresponsibly dragged in the mud by Dr. Blay-Miezah", to quote the government statement. Only a court action or public confrontation can convince the public about Mr. Buckman's probity and deter Mr. Blay-Miezah from indulging further in his alleged pastime of mud-slinging against public officials.

We are telling Mr. Buckman and the government that we are not convinced by the official statement on the matter, and the principle of public accountability should spur Mr. Buckman to publicly clear his name either through the courts or through any appropriate channels. The government is entitled to protect the reputation of its senior servants but the public needs to be assured that the reputation exists in the first place. We are waiting impatiently for Mr. Buckman's reaction to the episode; otherwise we shall draw our own conclusions.

But is it not a little disturbing that the state-owned newspapers which had not bothered to publish Mr. Blay-Miezah's allegations and the specific sum involved saw it fit to publish the government's denial without even so much as giving a retrospective report of the allegation? Is all this just a question of journalistic incompetence, a conspiracy of silence or sheer sycophancy? And yet we are told that there is press freedom now.

#### Who Declared Which Assets?

Following the rapacity of some members of government of the First Republic, it became necessary to insist on a declaration of assets by members of government under the Second Republic. This was to ensure that government

members did not use their offices to acquire illegal wealth. It was the failure of several members of the Busia government to declare their assets on assumption of office that set them on an early collision course with the National Union of Ghana Students in 1970.

On seizing power, Colonel Acheampong, as he then was, used this failure to declare assets as evidence of bad faith in his indictment of the politicians and as part of the justification for his coup d'etat. We were assured then that members of his team were going to declare their assets and we have no reason to believe that they did not.

Now, a declaration of assets is not made for the mere fun of it. The object is to compare the assets accumulated by an individual between his entry into and exit from office. Now that we have seen the end of one government and the beginning of another - even if only partially so - it is necessary to know what is going to be done about the declaration of assets. We consider that those members of the old NRC/SMC who have left office should be made to declare their assets so that we can make necessary comparisons and draw our own conclusion.

We are here thinking in particular of General Acheampong, Major-General Kotei, Major-General Utuka and Mr. Ernest Ako, but we do not see why the exercise should not include those who were retired earlier, such as the former C.D.S., Air Force and Navy Commanders. We demand that this exercise be done now in fairness both to the individuals concerned and to the country so that we can all know what they acquired in office and how, and what they may be acquiring now that they are out of office and free to go into private business.

We insist that this be done now and publicly because those who accept public office should be prepared to subject themselves to public scrutiny in respect of their conduct to show that they did not abuse their public office by using it for private ends. We are certainly not impressed by the indifferent speed at which the present SMC is trying to investigate the causes of our social and economic malaise under the inept and corrupt Acheampong government.

We are insisting on this second declaration of assets because we think what was done to members of previous civilian government members should be done to retired members of the military government too in the name of ordinary justice and fairplay. The members concerned themselves should welcome this opportunity to give an account of their stewardship and to forestall any unhealthy speculations about their financial activities. This, we further insist, must be done now before any of them is tempted to frustrate the exercise. Already the government has wasted too much time before undertaking this obvious exercise and any further delay will be unacceptable. Even in this matter, it is better late than never. And, incidentally, the retired or dismissed special aides and advisers, corporation directors and other senior officials, both military and civilian, need to be subjected to the test. What is good for the goose must also be good for the gander.

## PROFESSOR BUSIA'S DEATH—LESSON FOR THE SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL

We believe it is an old English adage which says 'a stitch in time saves nine'. We are not aware of the origins of this adage but we are in no doubt as to its appropriateness when reflecting on the implications of the sudden and lamentable death abroad of Professor K.A. Busia. It seems to have been the wish of a majority of the people of this country that the amnesty granted by the new Supreme Military Council (S.M.C.) to the political detainees and refugees of post 30th March vintage should be extended to include all people in these categories since the coup of 1972. Many associations and bodies as well as individuals in various memoranda and in personal discussions with the Supreme Military Council have indeed made this demand among many others. Had this popular demand been attended to in time, it is extremely likely that the late Professor Busia would not have died at the time he did, or at least would have died in peace in his own country. By delaying, the Supreme Military Council now find themselves expressing sorrow on the death of someone whom they have kept in exile.

We sincerely hope that the Supreme Military Council will take the appropriate lesson from this tragic episode and stop dragging their feet on some of the popular demands of the people of this country, among which are (1) the immediate release of all those people imprisoned for attempting to overthrow Akyeampong's government, (2) the immediate release of all political and unclassified detainees, and (3) the extension of the amnesty to all those who have fled the country since January 1972. In other words, the Supreme Military Council should pay heed to the old adage that 'a stitch in time saves nine'. In this case, the stitch would not have saved nine, it would have saved a national calamity and embarrassment.

S.M.C. act now before you are again overtaken by events.

## Letters

### Welcome, "Legon Observer"

Sir — May I seize this opportunity of your return to welcome you back to print. Indeed many were those who missed your pages especially during the turbulent days between December 1977 and April 1978, for obvious reasons.

It is hoped that your return will be a sweet one with your usual analytical, positive and constructive criticisms in the interest of peace and stability in this our dear country.

It appears clear that he who cleverly prevented you from business, and thus from contributing to the shaping of policies, has realised his mistake since whoever lacks competent advice, or ignores it, is always overtaken by events.

At the same time, please permit me to take this belated opportunity to extend a word of welcome and congratulations to our gallant University students who are back to their various campuses.

Never in the history of Ghana have students sacrificed so much to call a spade a spade, thereby saving the whole country from false political indoctrination and maladministration. The sense of judgement and the unity of purpose with which they executed their business was admirable. They proved beyond every doubt that they were not as immature and of little minds as people who could hardly understand them though they were.

It is the hope and wish of many people that now that they are back, they will in no distant future revive their spirit of nationalism and patriotism with practical demonstrations such as were seen of them in the early post-13th January days, and also that they will maintain the respectable image which they have carved for themselves by avoiding the temptations of flouting authorities unnecessarily inside or outside their campuses.

To both the *Legon Observer* and the students of our Universities I say, welcome. Let the torch continue to burn so that the truth will always stand.

King Bruce Boateng

Accra.

### Deportation And The SMC

Sir — Fattal and Asckhar claim to be Ghanaians. Fair enough! Would there have been anything wrong with putting them before a court to answer any charges against them and imprisoned if they were found guilty? The deportation may be effected after their imprisonment, though this is debatable.

This procedure would have been much better than instant deportation. If they decide to take up residence in one of the neighbouring African countries, it will be easy for them to subvert this country from abroad.

I would like to warn that it is better to uproot or remove the viperous worm that gnaws the bowels of the "commonwealth" completely by its roots, wherever it may be found than to cut its trunk in a way that — it will be easy for it to grow into a gigantic tree with "seven or more devilish branches" to threaten the commonwealth, with its disastrous consequences. Half measures are dangerous!

F. C. Essandoh

Nsawam Road,  
Achimota Village.

### Patriotism

Sir — Thanks for the successful effort in rehabilitating your incisive journal. It denotes patriotism of no mean order at a time when it is fashionable not to sound and act according to the old-age virtue.

You were gagged for daring to shun mindless enthusiasm for the status quo four years ago. Since then, there has been an increasing revolution of falling expectations with the result that we have the position of being runners-up only to Argentina in the world-inflation league.

While most would agree with Stephen Decatur's celebrated toast, "Our Country may she be always right, but our Country right or wrong", it is also pertinent to heed Carl Schurz's amendment "If right to be kept right, if wrong to be kept right".

For, if there is a vision for a happier Ghana, perhaps we must also not take the present reality for granted.

A. A. Amoako

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Kumasi.

### Preparatory Schools

SIR—Last week the Ghanaian Times, which appears to attack the University once every three weeks, gave a big headline to an attack by an educationalist, Mr Owusu, on preparatory schools. The objection seemed to be that the schools were good and taught well, and that the children of the poor could not afford to get in. But is that a reason for abolishing them? The poor sometimes cannot afford medicine; does that mean that nobody should be allowed medicine? The poor sometimes cannot afford good food; does that mean that nobody should be allowed good food? Surely the thing is that everybody should have the medicine they need, and good food, and a good education. The government should try to raise the standard of the state schools until they are as good as the preparatory schools. Moreover, if all the people who say that the preparatory schools are unjust were to pay the fees of a poor man's child and get him into one, there would be less injustice. The people would then find that they had to pinch and scrape and were no longer rich, which would teach them a lesson.

Independent schools benefit the community because they keep up standards and because they make experiments. For in tance, in schools like Gordonstoun the pupils are trained to keep physically fit, in schools like Summerhill all lessons are voluntary, and some of the pupils have grown up and become University Teachers. At schools like Ranui in New Zealand there is a lot of freedom for the pupils and emphasis on creative art. In schools like the Gatehouse Learning Centre in London, every child has his or her own time-table, with the result that children written off as idiots can be taught to use their brains enough to play chess, children of seven begin Latin and use a book that most schools give to twelve-year-olds, and children of fourteen take examinations meant for fifteen or sixteen-year-olds. In Ghana, it was the independent schools that introduced vocational, technical, and commercial courses before the assisted schools began to copy them.

There is also a principle, that of freedom of association. The freedom to open a school, and to send one's children to the school one wants, is part of this, and is one of the Human Rights defined by the United Nations. Not to allow it would disobey the United Nations, and would also be an act against freedom and the mark of the slave-state.

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### Is the Drilling Still on?

SIR—On 23rd August, 1978, at about 8a.m., I found myself confined beyond the security check point ready to board a plane at the Kotoka International Airport. From there I witnessed an incident which I feel should be brought to the notice of the authorities concerned and also to the general public.

A soldier with a rifle stripped on his back was drilling someone in civilian clothes. The victim was being made to hop up and down in a crouching position, and from time to time being made to hop on his knees. Any time he stopped, the soldier hit him and continued to hit him with some object he had in his hand in spite of protestations from the victim. When he would take no further beatings, the victim obeyed whatever instructions were given and the drilling continued.

What was sad about this incident was that this was happening very near the offices of Ghana Airways and a number of people walked past from time to time quite unconcerned. The question that one may ask is: should brutalities be allowed to continue in the new Ghana - post Achampong? If the person being drilled had committed an offence or crime should he not be reported to the nearest police station to be charged rather than for someone to take the law into his own hands?

I should be grateful if those in authority at the airport will investigate this case. I also hope that when officials see such inhuman acts being committed they will make efforts to intervene. The attitude of "I mind my own business" is surely what leads ultimately to repression not only of individuals but of a whole nation.

Dept. of Mathematics, Legon.

*J.M. Hyde*

## Opinion

### AN OPEN LETTER TO THE SMC ON NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

By W. B. OFUATEY-KUDJOE

The reconstituted Supreme Military Council (SMC) and you are to be congratulated for saving us from the specter of Union Government. However, our gratitude should not prevent us from pointing out in the most emphatic terms that your decision to hand over the administration of the country to a Transitional (Interim) National Government is very unfortunate.

First, the way in which the government presented the idea amounts to an assault on the right of the Ghanaian people to choose their own government. Clearly, if the people must choose, then they must do so in an atmosphere of free and frank PUBLIC DISCUSSION. AND THE WAY IN WHICH THE ISSUE WAS PRESENTED SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN CALCULATED TO INHIBIT FREE DISCUSSION.

True, your government has pledged to allow free discussion on the issue. But now can that be taken seriously. For even BEFORE the discussion on an appropriate government for Ghana had started, the government turned it into a debate on National government vs. Party Politics, and then proceeded to place itself squarely in the position on one of the protagonists. Furthermore, there seems to be a carefully orchestrated attempt to convince the Ghanaian people that the decision in favour of National Government was made in accordance with their wishes...How else are we to interpret the editorial of August 1st, in which, dutifully echoing its masters voice, the Daily Graphic engaged in a curious bit of circular reasoning, which ended up with the declaration, that National Government should be supported because it is supported by the public opinion.

In fact, what the government had done was to consult what you described as "a number of individuals and representatives of groups from various sections of the community". Now are we really expected to believe that a few so-called legitimate interest groups and a handful of hand-picked advisers, hidden from public view, represent the wishes of the people of Ghana?

Pursuant to this coordinated effort, the Graphic has printed a series of presumably unsolicited testimonials in favour of National Government from influential leaders, such as the Right Reverend Sintim-Misa, then Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, the Rev. Father Hilary Senoo, Secretary-General of the National Catholic Secretariat, and latterly, the Eastern Region House of Chiefs. The journalistic recklessness of this exercise, is demonstrated by the fact that these endorsements have been subsequently repudiated by most of the persons and institutions. It is my hope that this process of seeking endorsements does not degenerate into the sad practice of importing foreign persons of dubious qualifications and even more dubious intentions, to be feted at the expense of the Ghanaian people, in exchange for well publicized endorsements of National Government, as we have seen in the recent past.

Be that as it may, this attempt of the government to foreclose the National Government debate is dangerously divisive and devastating in its effect on free discussion. First, it forces those of us who are opposed to the idea into the uncomfortable and undesired position, of being opponents of the government, and thus by public implication of being disloyal to the country. Under these circumstances it becomes easy for those who, for whatever reasons may wish to be known as favouring the view of the government, to hurl recriminations against us, as "disgruntled politicians" or "irresponsible intellectuals" who are somehow less patriotic than others, and who therefore oppose National Government due to sinister and selfish personal interest.

Any one who has been in Ghana during the past year is only too familiar with this technique for muting opposition and driving those who hold opinions contrary to that of the government, into the relative safety of silence. If there is any doubt, let me state that this process has already begun. Please take serious note of an article in the August 25th issue of the Daily Graphic in which the author presents a skillful but nevertheless transparent insinuation, that instead of offering the necessary help, intellectuals are rather busy blurring the vision of people with "theories on so-called imponderables". Let me say now, with all the emphasis at my command, that I for one resent deeply any slur on my patriotism or sincerity. I resent any insinuation that that by speaking out I wish to undermine the present government which amounts to a one year interim government (although I do not see the point of following it with another interim government for four years or more years). I merely wish to speak out. I wish to speak out, not by private, discreet or anonymous submission to the government. I wish to speak out PUBLICLY in the hope that my thoughts will attract DISCUSSION, whether it be agreement, disagreement, rejection or endorsement. The fact that some of those who originally supported National Government have been gracious and courageous enough to change their views in public, must prove to any objective observer that, contrary to the belief of your government, opinions on this issue are far from settled, and that therefore free, open and untrammelled discussion in which all sides are heard with the government taking no sides, will give the public an opportunity to think creatively about the issue and thus give us the best chance of reaching a sound decision which will be acceptable to all the people. In any case, the assault on the fundamental right of the Ghanaian people to choose their form of government under conditions of free and uncoerced public discussion, is not to be tolerated. I trust that the S.M.C. would not wish to be guilty of that charge.

## THE NATURE OF THE CASE FOR NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

If we wish to engage in serious analysis of the concept of national Government we must do so in terms of its potential for regulating our national life in a way which can effectively deal with our problems and also help us to realize our aspirations as a people. To be fair, this point is not lost on the supporters of National Government including the Ad Hoc Committee on Union Government. Consistent with this, the Committee and other supporters of the idea have made many claims on its behalf. It has been claimed, for instance, that National Government will save us from national disaster, and also reconcile and unite the Ghanaian people. To be sure, these are all laudable objectives. However, so far we have had to take on faith the ability of National Government to achieve them. I have never heard, anywhere, any argument, let alone a convincing one, as to just how National Government will lead to a solution of our problems. For instance we read in the August 1st issue of the Daily Graphic that

"...in the present chaotic conditions in which the political and economic fortunes of the country are plunged, only national government can save us"

Now we have been liberated and we have been redeemed. If we are to be saved, I think we ought to be told exactly how this salvation is to be accomplished, and exactly what we are being saved from. It has also been suggested in the 19th August issue of the Daily Graphic that National Government should be supported because

"...it will...serve as a cooling period (sic) during which time the explosive situation in the country would have been defused, reconciliation achieved and we shall fully come of age and be able to tackle the truly democratic process as practiced in other parts of the world."

The suggestion that the Ghanaian people are not yet of age is insulting in the extreme. If we are not of age, are we then to go back under colonial tutelage to better prepare our-selves for the responsibilities of statehood? How would we know when we come of age? Can we not argue that the very fact that we are demanding democratic participation in the affairs of the state, demonstrates that we are of age? In any case, in precisely what way will National Government be a cooling off period? May it not in fact contribute to the exacerbation of the explosiveness of the situation (as it already appears to be doing)? And how precisely will National Government achieve national reconciliation?

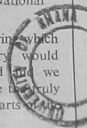
So far, the answers to these questions have not been forthcoming. What we have, is a catechism, a statement of faith, which without benefit of analysis, is propagated as a self evident truth and presented to us, as if the approving stamp of the government, and the increasing stridency with which it is proclaimed, is all that is required to prove its veracity.

### FALLACIOUS BASIS OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT IDEA

On the contrary serious analysis reveals that, the concept of National Government cannot achieve national reconciliation and unity as claimed, because it is based on fallacious notions about the nature of political life. It is argued that with National Government, elected officials will be responsible to the people, rather than to a party. This is a fallacy.

There is no such thing as THE people who act en mass or as discrete individuals. It is a simple fact of political life that people act politically in groups—interest groups. In all political systems, people will compete for access to the processes by which policy is formulated and implemented. This competition is attempted in two ways: by trying to get their representatives into the structure of government, and by attempting to pressure government officials to handle issues of importance to them in ways which will be to their benefit. In both of these activities, people behave in groups. Therefore, elected officials ARE NEVER RESPONSIVE TO ALL THE PEOPLE. THEY ARE USUALLY RESPONSIVE TO SOME OF THE PEOPLE. THOSE PEOPLE TO WHOM THEY OWE THEIR ELECTION AND THOSE WHO HAVE THE MEANS TO PRESSURE THEM.

In highly integrated societies, what happens is that the political institutions are able to successfully integrate these group interests into more or less coherent national policies, by the use of traditional or revolutionary integrative mechanisms. In newly established states with fragile political and civic cultures, the integration of these groups is rendered difficult because the mechanisms for intergrating groups interests are often lacking. At the same time, the absence of a national focus of political activity, and a well developed national consciousness, makes the creation of these integrative mechanisms very problematic. It is this vicious cycle that we know as the problem of national-building. This is the nature of our problem in Ghana.



### NATIONAL GOVERNMENT WILL NOT ACHIEVE NATIONAL UNITY

But the way to solve this problem is not to abolish political groups, or wish them away. Political groups will persist, as anyone in Ghana knows. The frequent warnings issued by the government against political activity should tell the government that people of likeminded interest or ideology will form political groups, in attempt to achieve political influence. The choice that the government has is whether to allow those groups to exist openly so that the terms and rules of their competition for power can be regulated, or whether to push them underground where to safeguard their existence, they may have to resort to clandestine, and sometimes terrorist activity.

The bomb throwings of the underground opposition after Nkrumah had transformed Ghana into a one party state, and the clandestine intrigues of the ex-CPP cadres after their proscription, is eloquent testimony on the dangers attendant on attempt to abolish political groups, whether they be ethnic, sectional, class or national.

The way to solve this problem is to fake all these groups ethnic, regional occupational as given and attempt to bring them together into a national community. This process of national integration can be achieved only by the consistent involvement, of all the groups within the state into meaningful competition within a national forum, and around national issues, so that in time these groups will come to believe, that they have a stake in the society, and that their interests, hopes, aspirations and destiny are indivisible, with those of the other groups in a truly national community. This is how we can achieve true national reconciliation and national unity.

To be sure, this process of national integration is slow and tedious indeed the problem of national unification has

been with us for the entire period of our national existence. Everytime there has been a change of government there have been appeals for national unity. (If the claims for National Government are to be believed, may be, we should have it for ever or perhaps after every change of government.) But seriously, if after all these calls for national unity we have not yet achieved it, then it must be because the transformation of ethnic sectional, sub-national and particularistic loyalties into national loyalty, is a slow, organic, cumulative process, which takes time.

The question that we are confronted with, is whether National Government has the potential to aid in, or accelerate this process of national integration? The answer to that question, has to be an emphatic NO! The proponents of National Government argue that National Government will work because it is based on a consensus model of politics which has respectable standing in political thought. This, of course, is a fallacy. As political scientists know, models of social and political behaviour are useful mainly to the extent that they reflect empirical reality with a fair amount of accuracy. The fallacy in the analysis is the result of a confusion between reality and aspirations. It is certainly true that we are aspiring to create a society which may approximate the consensus model but our present reality can only be described by the conflict model. Indeed the whole debate on National Government is meaningless unless we accept the premise that we have a very seriously divided society which we wish to change into a unified society. Unity may be our aspiration, but divisiveness is our reality and the only way to achieve it, is by the creation of institutions of national group scope.

National Government calls for the abolition of national parties, which are in fact national alliances of like minded people, cutting across and therefore attempting to integrate loyalties. The notion that such a political system, will be able to achieve national unity is either wishful thinking or fraudulent. National Government cannot create national unity merely by the stroke of a constitutional pen. It can do so only through the generation of a national dynamic. And there is no doubt in my mind that National Government which proposes to organize political activity exclusively on the bases of local platforms, and local appeals will have no choice but to accentuate **localism** at the expense of nationalism, and since our present residency patterns are basically ethnic and tribal the effect of National Government, instead of creating national unity would be to increase ethnic particularism, ethnic rivalry and ethnic animosities. This is not theoretical conjecture. This is certainly.

#### NATIONAL GOVERNMENT WILL LEAD TO DICTATORSHIP

National Government is to be rejected not only because it will surely fail to achieve national reconciliation and national unity, but also, and more seriously because it will just as surely lead to a catastrophic return of the all the worse aspects of the NRC/SMC regime under the leadership of General Acheampong. In the absence of any truly national institutions around which to rally the population, the government would have no choice, but to attempt to mobilize mass support for its programs by collecting together a motley crew of advisors and political brokers who would invariably turn out to be lobbyists, influence peddlers, sycophants, and fortune-seekers into a secretive, cabalistic, oppressive, dictatorial, corrupt, incompetent government, characterized by intrigue, back-door deals,

devoid of truly national leadership, devoid of coherent national program and besieged by conflicting and contradictory ad-hoc policies. Thus National Government without a party base will bring us right back to the same kind of system we have just escaped from. The country certainly cannot afford four more years of that.

Actually the fact that National Government without a political party would be disastrous must have been recognized by the Ad Hoc Committee on Union Government, that is why they proposed the establishment of a National Movement as an indispensable institution within the National Government which would specifically be given integrative, educative and political functions, such as

"to serve as a unifying factor particularly among members of Parliament (and) facilitate the development of clear national, political and social goals."

It must seem rather curious, that having abolished national political parties, this new type of government attempts to put the functions which are ordinarily performed by these national parties into the hands of a National Movement. But must surely be transparently clear, that whatever this National Movement may be called, (we may call it a National Liberation Movement, a National Redemption Movement, a National Salvation Movement or whatever) it will be in fact be a political party. What this means is that as proposed NATIONAL GOVERNMENT IS A EUPHIMISM FOR A ONE-PARTY STATE.

The realization of this fact cannot but give impetus to the widely held belief that National Government is in fact the same thing as Union Government, clothed in more acceptable attire as indeed the Ad Hoc Committee stated in its report. In this regard, it may be recalled that, the original idea of Union Government was proposed by General Acheampong, as a subterfuge to create a national movement using such organizations as the National Charter Committees, on the crest of which he hoped to ride to the leadership of a one-party state. Some people suggest that the elimination of the institutional representation of the forces in National Government means that it is different from Union Government. For those who hold this simplistic view, it needs to be pointed out, that for the people who have to live under them, the difference between a one-party dictatorship under the control of the military, and a one-party dictatorship under a party which either controls or has the support of the military, is merely academic.

The question still remains. Is the fact that National Government as proposed would turn out to be a one-party state, enough reason to reject it? May it not be argued, that one-party state has the integrative and political ability to carve out a national ideology, and, produce national social and political goals with which to bind the people together? The answer is that while this may be so at the outset, these one-party states develop certain tendencies which make them dysfunctional in the long run, both with regard to national integration, and in terms of its abuses of power. In such systems the tendency to depend almost exclusively on ideological and party loyalty for holding office, encourages intrigue, sycophancy and governmental incompetence. Eventually, the ideological infighting among party functionaries, tends to erode the integrative capability of the party, leading to bewildering discrepancies between declared objectives and actual behaviour; a confused situation in which confused party followers cynically attempt to manoeuvre themselves between alternative party lines.

All we have to do is to look at our own history to find an example of this phenomenon. This is precisely what happened when the Kwame Nkrumah government transformed Ghana into a one-party dictatorship. Before long, the C.P.P., which had performed a relatively successful integrative role in the face of competition from rival national parties, began to atrophy into an immense and unwieldy patronage system, dominated by a small group of opportunists and sycophants operating beyond the reach of public scrutiny, so that the government lost all its capability to mobilize the Ghanaian people and degenerated into a corrupt and inefficient regime seeking to eliminate all opposition to its many excesses through massive repression and terror. And all this took place in much less than the four years envisaged for this interim experiment.

Put simply, my argument so far, is that, as proposed, National Government will necessarily be an unstable condition which will end up in one of two ways. If the National Movement takes hold, then National Government will end as a one-party dictatorship characterized by massive repression and doubtful integrative capability. If, on the other hand, the National Movement fails to materialize, then the National Government will lead to the same corrupt, incompetent and purposeless government we have had recently, with the only difference that this time it will be run by civilians.

#### THE CASE AGAINST PARTY-POLITICS IS FALSE

I would like to turn my attention to the charges against multi-party politics in Ghana. Ostensibly, the idea of National Government was proposed by the government because the country is not ready for party politics. The reason most commonly given for this conviction is that party-politics, has been responsible for a lot of the divisiveness, acrimony, and even political violence in our society. This statement has been repeated so often that it has become a never questioned myth. But that is all it really is ... a myth. This myth, however, is simply not supported by the facts and it is time for it to be exploded.

If we take a dispassionate look at our history, we will find that we have had two periods of open party competition (from 1957 to 1960 and from 1969 to 1972), a total of 6 years are opposed to 14 years of one-party or military dictatorship. It is certainly true that during this period of multi-party politics there was violence and divisiveness. But it would take the wildest imagination to suggest that these incidents were limited to those periods. As a matter of fact, during the period of multi-party politics there was less violence, sabotage, repression, corruption and incompetence than there was during the periods of dictatorship. In fact some of the best periods in our national political life has been during periods of multi-party politics.

In the light of this fact, it would seem to me that we are definitely ready for party-politics. What the facts supported is that we are not ready for civilian or military dictatorships. Infact the major crises that we have had in our national life have not been caused by governments during periods of multi-party politics but were caused by dictatorships during the Nkrumah and Acheampong regimes.

In picking on multi-party politics, therefore, the proponents of National Government have picked on a false issue.

This is the most pernicious aspect of the call for National Government that it diverts the attention of the country from the real problems we are facing. Our real problem at this time is not divisiveness and lack of unity. There is no more divisiveness now than we have had in other periods of our national existence. Indeed one might say that the country is unified in the belief that military rule must go. Divisiveness is certainly not the problem that has brought us to our present economic and political crisis. Incredible incompetence, gross corruption, purposeless, incoherent national leadership. These are the causes of our present crisis. These causes have to be eliminated. If they are not, our discussion about National Government will be merely academic.

The question which we need to raise is not National Government Vs. Party Politics, but what type of governmental structure would offer us the best chance of combating the problems of incompetence, corruption and national direction. The answer to that question is multi-party politics. This is not to suggest that we do not need to improve upon or modify the type of party politics we have had in the past. We certainly need to. But our history suggests very strongly that the problems of incompetence, corruption and political incoherence have been at their lowest during the periods of multi-party politics. This is not accidental. It is inherent in the nature of the multi-party system.

As our history has shown, the greatest boon to incompetence and corruption is secrecy. By the same token, the greatest instrument for combating those evils is the sharp glare of publicity. For this reason parties in government always tend to favour some sort of shroud of secrecy around their activities, lest they be embarrassed. At the same time Opposition parties are always fanatically committed to publicity. All opposition parties want to be in power, and they soon realize that their chance of getting into power is based, in large part, on their ability to show that the national policies of the incumbents are either irrelevant or positively detrimental to the people. It is this fact, which encourages good and honest government. Since it wishes to stay in power, the incumbent party develops a powerful incentive, not to embarrass itself by incompetent or corrupt behaviour, and endeavours to develop a national program which will appeal to as wide a section of the national community as possible.

This is the key to the whole issue. The system which affords us the best opportunity to minimize incompetence and corruption and to maximize national cohesiveness is one that has an Opposition Party, and a system which has an Opposition party has to be, by definition, a multi-party system.

#### THE PARTY SYSTEM WILL REDUCE CORRUPTION

Let us look at the problem of corruption more closely. It has been suggested that in order to eliminate corruption the people of Ghana must be changed. Now it may be true that the people must be changed. But if the viability of our political system depends on changing the people then we will have to wait a long time. Furthermore, if the point of this discussion is to fashion a system for honest men, then it is futile. Because we are not all honest. If we were, we probably wouldn't need a government. What we are looking for is a system which will work in spite of or taking into consideration, the imperfections of men.

As a social fact, corruption is conditioned by three factors need, opportunity and the expectation of escape from apprehension. The economic pressures of our society place powerful urges on public officials to be corrupt. But this condition is not exclusive to Ghanaians. The more important factors are that public officials are in a position where they have the opportunity to be corrupt, and they are usually convinced that they can do so with impunity. It is for this reason that corruption is more rampant during dictatorial regimes which are able to ensure that the activities of officials are beyond public scrutiny.

The word probe has become a household word in Ghana. After every change of government there are numerous commissions of enquiry into the activities of ex-government officials. Lately we are beginning to hear about a mysterious Neoplan bus, and a multimillion dollar import license for a mattress manufacturer to import cement and rice to be sold at a profit to a government trading corporation and other bizarre activities of the previous regime. The problem however is that these probes are usually too late. By that time massive amounts of public funds have already been squandered, the person being probed may be beyond extradition and the freezing of assets which have already been spirited away becomes a joke at the expense of the people.

We cannot have honest government, unless we can probe government activities while the government is still in power and we cannot do this unless we have a political system with an Opposition party which is dedicated to and justifies its entire existence on exposing the incumbent government. In this regard it is important to note that the Opposition party also becomes the champion of the integrity of the judiciary, and the freedom of the press. Because it cannot fail to see, that the extent of its success in exposing the incumbents and causing them to be punished, depends on the existence of an independent judiciary and a free press. This was the lesson of Watergate, the Proforms Case and many others. Even in our own country, it was during a multi-party regime that the Opposition was able to expose the Wenchi affair. Such an expose will have been impossible during dictatorships precisely because of the absence of Opposition Parties.

#### THE MULTI-PARTY WILL INCREASE COMPETENCE

All that has been said about the higher probability of honest government under conditions of multi-party politics is also true for the higher probability of more competent government, and for the same reasons. However, there are other ways in which party politics tends to encourage competency in government. First, with press freedom, independent judiciary and the protection of civil liberties which are attendant on multi-party systems, it becomes possible for many more people who may have some experience with the serious problems facing the nation to become engaged in political activity, since they are not consistently threatened with the same prohibitive deprivations, they are likely to suffer, under dictatorial regimes. Furthermore, with the expansion of the political arena the pool of competent personnel is likely to be expanded through the provision of various opportunities such as shadow cabinets, and Congressional Committees for people to serve their political apprenticeships and gain valuable experience, before they have to face the actual trials of high level political office. At the same time, faced with the constant challenge of Opposition parties, government parties are likely to place a high premium not only on qualifications of party loyalty but also on professional

competence and personal integrity so that they are more likely to be more efficient and honest, or at least avoid the kind of excesses and corruption that we have seen under one party dictatorships.

Finally, the debates on national issues which opposition parties invariably force on the incumbents forces the latter to undertake more exhaustive and thorough analyses of their national programmes, and also forces them to monitor more closely the wishes and aspirations of the electorate so as not to lose touch with their political base.

#### THE MULTI-PARTY SYSTEM WILL INCREASE NATIONAL INTEGRATION

Even for the functions of national reconciliation and unity the political system which offers us the best hope is the multi-party system. This is due to the fact that the parties are the most important instruments for integrating the activities of groups within the state, into a national framework. First, the parties are by their very nature national institutions. They attempt to organize themselves on national lines, and in so doing, develop alliances which cut across sectional, ethnic and particularistic lines. Furthermore, they are forced into preparing their platforms and manifestoes around national issues, and thus endeavour to create national rather than sectional consciousness among the population.

It has been argued in support of National Government that this function of developing national programs can be entrusted to a group of eminent experts. This proposition is unacceptable. It is based on the postulation of ideological and interest consensus which we simply do not have in this country. Therefore the question of which experts will be picked to serve on this proposed body, becomes a matter of political interest which should be left to the electorate. Politics is a matter of choosing both leaders and policies, and it is party politics, organized on a nationwide basis, that will ensure, that the people will have the right to choose political leaders after prior discussion. It is only through this type of national participation through cross-ethnic national alliance parties, that national integration and national unity can really be achieved.

As we all know, Party politics is not perfect. I have not argued that and I won't. What I have tried to argue is that as compared to both the impracticable National Government without parties, and the more probable one party National dictatorship, the multi-party political system offers us the best chance of achieving national unity and also avoiding the persistent problems of governmental incompetence, gross corruption and lack of national political leadership.

#### NEED FOR CREATIVE ADAPTATION

This does not mean however that we should adopt a party system which is not suitable for our society. In the past we have made the mistake of equating party politics with the Westminster brand of Parliamentary democracy. And it may be that the reason why in the past we have not derived all that we could from our multi-party system is due to an unnecessarily slavish copying of the British parliamentary system. What we need therefore is to engage in creative and imaginative adaptation of a multi-party system to our society. Although this is somewhat outside the scope of this discussion I will mention one issue that comes readily to mind. This is the issue of what may be called Parliamentary Dictatorship.

Although the parliamentary system is probably suited to the relatively homogeneous British society its importation into Ghana with its multi-ethnic and fragmented society has often led to a kind of elected dictatorship. This system has two characteristics; which have tended to limit the potential of multi-party politics in Ghana. One of these characteristics is that the electoral and Cabinet systems have made it possible on occasion, for a party to gain control of the legislature and executive branches of government, without having a truly broadbased national constituency.

As a result these governments have tended to be associated with a particular ethnic groups, thus inhibiting a sense of belonging and participation, and therefore a sense of national commitment, on the part of other ethnic and sectional groups. Furthermore, these elected dictatorships have often been able to use their supremacy in the executive and legislative branches to erode the powers of the judiciary thus putting themselves in a position to transform the society constitutionally into a one party state and also violate with impunity, all the constitutional protection of civil freedom. One way to avoid this kind of situation might be to develop an electoral system which will elect a national leader, only on the basis of his being able to win both the popular vote as well as at least two thirds of all the regions of Ghana. This will force the national political parties to develop a truly national base, campaign literally all over the country without concentrating on a few groups, and develop a truly national political platform. This would increase the integrative potential of the national political parties to adreege yet unprecedented in Ghanaian society. Coupled with this, a constitutional system of checks and balances with clear separation of functions and authority between the executive, legislative and judiciary branches, similar perhaps to the American model, might be able to check the deterioration of our multi-party system into a de facto one-party, minority, elected dictatorship. In this regard it must be noted that some of the many of the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on Union Government are very encouraging, although they do not go far enough.

#### CONCLUSION: LEGITIMACY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND GOOD GOVERNMENT.

After 21 years of difficult independence Ghanaians have finally come to appreciate the relationship between accountability and competence in government. We have come to grips with the fact that although a government can be accountable and incompetent, it is virtually impossible for a government to be competent without being accountable to the population. In short, we have come to see that competence requires legitimacy.

In the past, most Ghanaians were not at all concerned with the question of legitimacy. For reasons that are obvious, many Ghanaians believed that the difference between the politics of the bullet and the politics of the ballot box was for them quite irrelevant, and that whatever happened, it always ended up in the manipulation and exploitation of the less fortunate and the less influential... What they were concerned with, in the main, was which government promised to administer the society in such a way as to give them a relatively comfortable existence. For this reason, all coups in Ghana have been popular with large segments of the population. And in many sections of the community, there was widespread feeling that by virtue of their training and discipline the forces were more capable of managing the economy satisfactorily. What has happened in the past few years is that the armed

forces have managed to convince a great many Ghanaians that they are not only more incompetent, but they are also more corrupt and more lacking in national leadership than any of the other regimes. If there is a crisis today, it is in the armed forces, not only because it has been found to be incompetent but also because it has been found to be illegitimate.

The call for civilian rule is a manifestation of a new found confidence on the part of the Ghanaian people. A new found confidence in the realization that they do not have to be ruled without their consent even by those who wield the weapons; that they have the ability to remove even a military regime, even if only indirectly. It is a new declaration of independence, a defiant assertion that they will not tolerate a government unless it is legitimate and that for them legitimacy means accountability to the people who are, and must be, the source of power in this society. It is a demand by the Ghanaian people for participation in the shaping of their destiny, a demand which cannot be rolled back except by the most ruthless and savagely repressive means, and even then not for long.

What we are saying is that  
 WE SHALL HAVE A GOVERNMENT WHICH IS  
 ACCOUNTABLE TO US THAT THE GOVERNMENT  
 WILL NOT BE ACCOUNTABLE UNLESS IT IS  
 WATCHED WITH SUSPICIOUS VIGILANCE,  
 THAT A GOVERNMENT CANNOT BE SUCCESSFULLY  
 WATCHED, EXCEPT BY AN OPPOSITION PARTY,  
 WHOSE FORTUNES AT THE NEXT ELECTIONS,  
 DEPEND ON THEIR ABILITY TO EXPOSE THE IN-  
 CUMBENTS.  
 THAT WE CANNOT HAVE AN OPPOSITION PARTY  
 WITHOUT HAVING MULTI-PARTY POLITICS  
 IN SHORT, WE SHALL HAVE PARTY POLITICS IF  
 WE DO NOT  
 WE WILL NOT HAVE ACCOUNTABLE GOVERN-  
 MENT,  
 WE WILL NOT HAVE HONEST GOVERNMENT,  
 WE WILL NOT HAVE COMPETENT GOVERNMENT  
 WE WILL NOT HAVE GOOD GOVERNMENT  
 WE WILL BE RIGHT BACK WHERE WE ARE NOW.

## Social Issues

### ON BUSSES AND BOOKS

- A. What is the best thing that the government could do to improve the foreign exchange situation?
- B. The foreign exchange situation is not what matters most. For example, in ancient Athens the law-giver, Solon, actually forbade the rich farmers to export corn and get foreign exchange, and they had to sell it, at home, for such a low price that people would buy it and not die.
- A. Don't go off the point. What would you do if you wanted to improve the foreign exchange situation?
- B. I should restrict the importation of cars and import a lot of double-decker' busses. And I mean real, British double-decker 'busses, with comfortable

seats, not the single-decker ones we have now where the weakest go to the wall where the seats are.

- A. The weakest can't get to the wall because somebody else has usually got there first. But if we imported better 'busses, how would that improve the foreign exchange situation? You would save on the cars and lose on the busses.
- B. You forget that one double-decker 'bus can do the work of three cars. That would save metal, and foreign exchange, and space, and airpollution, and save lives as well.
- A. How would it save lives?
- B. Because 'busses run to a time-table and cars do not, so the cars bump into each other and the 'busses do not. Also there would be only one dirty exhaust-pipe instead of thirty.
- A. How would it save lives?
- B. Because there would be more need to waste space widening the roads to make room for the cars.
- A. Would that save enough space to make any difference?
- B. Yes, most certainly. In England every motor-way wastes thirteen acres of land for every mile, which could have been used for growing food. And there is more waste of space when stone is carried, as well as the waste of stones, which could have been used for building, but are cut up into silly little pieces for the roads.
- A. But, however much you hate cars, (except when somebody offers you a lift and then you always wriggle into the car), you must admit that we need some of them for ambulances and doctors and people who live in villages.
- B. For ambulances and doctors, yes, but many of the people in the villages could use electric cars, which do not pollute the air and do not go quite so fast, and there should be electric taxis in the cities for people with heavy luggage, bad legs, or a bad hurry. But if there were more 'busses, fewer taxis would be needed.
- A. But if we stop widening the roads, how will we solve the unemployment problem?
- B. We could build a library in every village.
- A. Why?
- B. We are always lamenting that young people go to the towns instead of staying in the villages, and that teachers do not want to teach in villages, but in towns. But what do we expect teachers to do? If they are any good, they want to look things up in libraries, and the only good library here is at Legon.
- A. How about Cape Coast and Kumasi and the Accra Central Library?
- B. Those are not in villages, and the Accra Central Library is not as good as those in capital cities in Europe. It is about as good as a library in a suburb in England, like Eccles or Eltham.
- A. And we do have libraries in regional capitals like Ho.
- B. But not as good as even the inadequate one in Accra.
- A. But surely European countries do not have enormous libraries in the villages?
- B. They have libraries, even there, though not enormous, and if the book that the teacher wants is not there, he can order it, and it is sent from another library.
- A. But that can be done here as well.
- B. Only after writing a lot of letters and making a long palaver with the library board. In Britain it can be had within two weeks. And this can be improved without using up any foreign exchange. All we should have to do would be to use our brains.
- A. But would have to use foreign exchange if you bought more books which you would have to do if you improved the libraries.
- B. But what better and cheaper thing could you spend it on? Ghana, at the moment, is mind-starved.
- A. And body-starved.
- B. We all know that. But people who live near a good library may not realize how mind-starved the people here are, even in Accra.
- A. But Accra is full of people selling books.
- B. No doubt, but is any of them the book you want?
- A. No, but some body else might.
- B. But I am talking to you. Unless you can get the books you want in Accra, either at once or soon after ordering them, you must admit that you find serious book-buying impossible. And how can you teach in school without text-books?
- A. You could dictate something.
- B. And then there is some fine phonetic spelling.
- A. Or write it on the board.
- B. A very second-best thing. The pupils should be working through the book each at his or her own pace with his or her own copy. And how can University students learn without books? And how lecturers lecture? Or how can researchers research or inventors invent? Don't we want to invent things and make progress? And here's another thing - suppose an art teacher says "The Greeks made beautiful vases" or "the mediaeval people made beautiful stained-glass windows", just how is he to make anybody understand who has not seen one, or even a picture of one?
- A. But even if the government allowed the import of books so that they could see a picture of one, they

could not possibly afford to buy real Greek vases for a museum, still less any Gothic windows.

- B. But the British Museum and other places sell replicas of ancient vases; the museum in Accra could perfectly well buy some of them. Or we could have a new museum, full of nothing but replicas, like the old Crystal Palace in England.
- A. Where?
- B. Burn down the Makola market and put it there. It is unnecessary so near the big shops, and not over-clean, and the women buy things from the big shops early in the morning and re-sell at a profit.

(At this point a number of women seize B and throw B. and throw him into the Korle Lagoon.)

#### TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS

The *Legon Observer* is a forum for public discussion of views and issues. All interesting and stimulating contributions are welcome; but intending contributors should observe the following rules:

- All correspondence must be supplied with the real name and full address of the writer even if these are not meant for publication. Letters with incomplete addresses shall not be published.
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## For The Record

### GHANA BAR ASSOCIATION RESOLUTIONS ON NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

At an Emergency General Meeting of the Ghana Bar Association held at the Ghana School of Law, Accra, on Monday, 7th August, 1978, the Association decided not to nominate any representative to serve on the Constitutional Drafting Commission on National Government and also passed the following Resolutions:-

- That the Constitutional Drafting Commission should be dissolved in its original and expanded forms.
- That the proposed National Government is a disguised form of Union Government, is unworkable in any event and inimical to the true interest of the Country.
- That the National Government scheme which originated from Koranteng-Addow's Report denies the people of Ghana the freedom to choose their own future form of Government.
- That in the place of National Government the Ghana Bar Association urges the formation of a Government based on Political Parties.
- That a Constituent Assembly be set up promptly to decide the future form of Government for Ghana using the 1969 Constitution as a working basis.
- That the Association calls upon the Government to dispense with the services of the present Attorney-General on the grounds:-
  - That the Bar Association has lost confidence in him; and,
  - That he has been consistently ill-advising Government by pressing his idea of National Government thereby jeopardising the security of the Supreme Military Council, the Bar Association and all who supported the overthrow of General I. K. Acheampong.

(Sgd) W.A.N. ADUMUA-BOSSMAN  
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

September 4 — 13, 1978

### OPTIMISM ABOUT GHANA'S PROBLEMS

The Ambassador of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in Ghana, Mr. Choi U Jin has expressed confidence in the ability of Ghanaians to overcome their problems and build a prosperous nation.

Speaking in an interview with the press, Mr. Choi also said that it was his desire to improve the cultural relations between Ghana and the People's Republic of Korea.

### SOLDIERS WARNED

The Chief of Defence Staff Lt-Gen. Joshua Hamidu has warned that any soldier who tarnished the image of the Armed Forces, in this last phase of their rule, will be dealt

with severely. Lt. Gen. Hamidu gave this warning when he addressed officers and men of the Air Force Station in Takoradi.

He emphasised that the reconstituted SMC was determined to provide a new sense of mission and realism for the nation within the remaining ten months and he urged the soldiers to contribute positively towards the success of this goal.

#### COMMITTEE TO PROBE CMB

The Government has set up a Committee of Inquiry to probe the activities of the Cocoa Marketing Board from 1970-1978.

The Committee under the chairmanship of Mr. Justice P. N. K. Archer, an Appeal Court Judge, will investigate among other things, the purchasing and sale of cocoa, the mode of transportation and earnings from sale of cocoa, the activities of foreign and local buying agents and the causes of the declining production of the industry.

The Committee is expected to submit its report by December 1, this year. The Government has also announced that two other Committees have been set up to investigate the operations of the State Fishing Corporation and the National Shipping Line, the Black Star Line.

#### MANAGING DIRECTORS DISMISSED

The Government has announced the dismissal of five managing directors of state-owned corporations and the redeployment of two others in response to the need to streamline the management of these corporations.

Those affected are Mr. S. K. Awuah, Managing Director of Food Distribution Corporation, Commander J. D. Boham, Managing Director of State Fishing Corporation, and Mr. J. W. Twum, Executive Director of Bast Fibre Development Board.

The others are Lt. Col. R. J. A. Dantoh, Managing Director of Loyalty Industries Ltd., and Mr. E. Ala Lomo, Managing Director of Prefabricated Panel Concrete Factory.

Mr. D. A. Nunoo-Quarcoo, Managing Director of Ghana Water and Sewerage Corporation and Mr. E. Francois, Chief Executive of Ghana Highway Authority have been redeployed to the Ministry of Works and Housing as technical directors.

#### UNIONIST ATTACKS T.U.C LEADERSHIP

Mr. J. R. Baiden, General Secretary of the Maritime and Dockworkers Union of the TUC has accused the present leadership of the TUC of lack of dynamism, competence, direction and motivation.

He also deplored the leadership's lack of courage "to speak constructively" on important matters concerning the workers and the nation.

Mr. Baiden was speaking at a press conference at which he announced his candidature of the post of Secretary-General of the TUC at the forthcoming quadrennial congress of the TUC to be held at Winneba from September 18-20.

He said the present leadership took decisions on major issues, which, in most cases did not reflect the wishes and aspirations of workers, and those who raised "a dissenting voice" in support of the workers were made scape-goats and unjustly victimised.

#### NEW MEASURES ON AIRLINE TICKETS

A government statement issued in Accra has directed that with effect from September 11, this year, beginning with Ghana Airways West Coast Flights tickets due to travellers would be issued to them at the check-in counter at the airport.

The statement said, however, that agency coupons would be issued at the time of buying tickets, to enable travellers process their visa or foreign exchange applications.

These new measures, the statement explained, were aimed at checking illicit trafficking in airline tickets.

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