

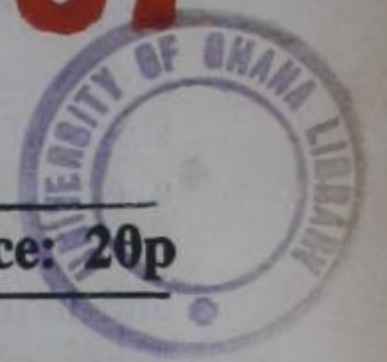
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OUR SECOND MEDICAL SCHOOL

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Editorial

14 JUN 1974

THE PROBLEMS OF THE FARMER

THE PROPOSAL to establish a Social Security Scheme for farmers which the Head of State, Col. I.K. Acheampong, is reported to have announced at Kumasi about a fortnight ago has attracted a good deal of interest. We think, however, that the proposal provides an occasion to remind this country generally of the hard lot of the Ghanaian farmer and the desperate need that there is to improve his situation. The proposed Social Security Scheme, which needs to be worked out in detail first, will, if it finally gets off the ground, no doubt bring eventual relief to such farmers as belong to it, but if these farmers are to live decent lives in the meanwhile, and indeed if they are to be able to contribute to the scheme then some more immediate types of assistance ought to go to them. It is now known, for instance, that the "rich cocoa farmer" is largely a myth; that more than 80% of cocoa farmers in this country earn less than ₵1,000 per annum. The food farmer is much worse off: the market for his crop is still not guaranteed; only recently, with the coming of the Agricultural Development Bank, has he got access to a public source of financial assistance; his storage problems remain unsolved. Very recently Ghana television reported the case of some tomato farmers in the Akumadan area in Ashanti whose produce was in danger of rotting on the farm because no buyer would pay a fair price—and this at a period when it cannot be said that tomatoes are overabundant and cheap.

The problems facing the Ghanaian farmer need to be tackled in three general areas, namely, marketing, credit facilities and input availability. As has been pointed out before in this paper the marketing network on which the Ghanaian farmer is compelled to rely is vastly inefficient. The feeder-road problem continues to be with us in spite of all the talking that has been done about it both by members of government and by other interested persons and bodies. There is evidence certainly that the feeder road problem is beginning to get some of the attention it deserves. For instance, work is reported to have started on a network of 44 feeder roads in food producing areas in the Upper Region at a cost of about ₵3 million. But more needs to be done in this regard and urgently.

Then there is the question of the vehicles themselves in which the goods can be conveyed to the markets. The improvement of feeder roads will certainly make vehicle owners more ready to ply the food producing routes, but it is true to say that the availability of spare parts at centres sufficiently close to the food producing areas will also improve the

situation. The next problem under the general area of marketing relates to the prices of the food-stuffs. The cocoa farmer at the moment "enjoys" a guaranteed minimum price which is at least reliable. The same cannot be said for other farmers and in the case of certain commodities the minimum prices which government has stipulated have been impossible to enforce for various reasons: either the prices have been unrealistic or the farmers have not been sufficiently organised to hold their own against the "notorious" middleman who is, when all is said and done, only a shrewd businessman. Perhaps an answer here lies in encouraging farmers to organise with the assistance of the Department of Co-operatives and especially within the scope of the New Local Government system for the better marketing of their produce.

The second general problem area is that of credit facility; and here it can be stated as a general rule that the Ghanaian farmer is starved of credit. The Agricultural Development Bank exists now and is doing some useful work. More than 14 million cedis, it is reported, has been set aside by the Bank as credit to farmers during the current phase of Operation, Feed Yourself. But the Agricultural Development Bank is recent and, what is more, is not sufficiently decentralised and thus too remote from the majority of food farmers. In view of this, the effort of the Agricultural Development Bank to open more farm credit facilities in "remote" parts of the country is praiseworthy, but needs to be undertaken with a greater sense of despatch.

The third general area relates to inputs. The shortage of such a vital agricultural implement as the cutlass is as notorious as it is deplorable. But there are other inputs whose availability needs to be improved. Seeds and other planting materials are not being produced in sufficient quantities to meet demand and the Seed Multiplication Unit needs to be induced to do more in this regard. Chemicals too pose a problem sometimes. The distribution network is often inadequate—and this holds for the seeds too—and often they are not there at the exact time when they are needed. Spraying, for instance, needs to be done at a certain time and it is of no use to the farmer if the necessary chemical arrives copiously two months after the time. Again, in the distribution of inputs, the farmers need to organise to help themselves, perhaps it is not satisfactory to sell cutlasses and other implements solely through agencies like the G.N.T.C. which after all are not sufficiently close to the farmer.

But even when we have discussed these three broad areas we have not exhausted the farmer's problems. Consumer goods are less available and their prices are higher in the rural areas. The farmer

who is often more taxed than the urban worker enjoys less of the benefits of taxation. Indeed there has been a tendency in the country over the years to regard the farmer and the rural dweller not as human beings but more as a kind of inanimate source of food, industrial raw material and export earnings. In this connection, it is our view that it is not meaningful to talk of improving marketing facilities or credit facilities to farmers without at the same time thinking of improving the quality of life of the people who produce most of the country's wealth. Nor is this simply a matter of justice, it also is a case of commonsense. Farming will thrive and be sustained only if people find life in the rural area at least tolerable if not satisfactory. The need for raising the standard of life in rural Ghana has been recognised for some years in this country, but, perhaps more than any other area, it demands more urgent attention.

Social Problems

BUSH FIRES IN GHANA

By

J. M. Lock

In a recent issue of the *Legon Observer*, J. O. M. Pobee, in his interesting account of a visit to the Northern and Upper Regions, mentioned the destructive effects of bush fires on crops, particularly rice, and suggested that the burning of bush should be made illegal as soon as possible. There have been similar suggestions in the national press. An important criterion in creating new laws is that they should be enforceable, otherwise we arrive at a situation where a law exists but has no effect; indeed the kind of situation which makes the law an ass. I would contend that laws will make very little, if any, difference to the frequency of bush fires, and would like to discuss this contention here and make some alternative suggestions.

It is well-known that fires have been a feature of the savanna zones of Africa for thousands of years. This is borne out by early written accounts, and by archaeological discoveries. It is also strongly suggested by the plants which grow naturally in such places. The trees, for instance, have a thick rough bark, in contrast to the relatively thin bark of forest species. This is believed to insulate the delicate living tissues of the tree from the heat of the fire. Anyone can observe that after a fire in the savanna the trees revive quickly and soon appear green and healthy, whereas in the forest many trees are killed by fires. Also, in the savanna many of the grasses and other herbs have under-

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ground parts which are insulated by the soil from the heat of the fire, and thus survive. These observations suggest that the savanna vegetation is adapted to fires, and since the process of adaptation requires many thousands if not millions of years, we may conclude that fires are a very ancient feature of savannas. However, we may also safely assume that since the advent of the safety match, which puts the ability to start a bush fire into every man's pocket, the frequency of fires has greatly increased. At the present time most of the savanna zone is burnt each year; formerly it was probably burnt less often.

Experiments in Uganda

Much has been written about bush fires in Africa, but regrettably rather few of these papers describe the results of experiments at first-hand. The majority either express the unsupported opinions of the author, or repeat previous experimental results. From the few long-term experiments which have been written up, one may extract the following general conclusions. Firstly, the time of year at which burning is carried out is important. A fire late in the dry season, when the fuel is dry, burns faster and hotter than one early in the dry season when there is still some moisture left in the grass. In general, fires later in the dry season tend to encourage grass growth at the expense of trees, since tree seedlings are unable to establish themselves and there are thus no replacements for the occasional mature tree which dies. Early fires, on the other hand, encourage tree growth at the expense of grasses. Total exclusion of fires has a similar effect to early burning. As a result of these experimental findings, foresters in many parts of Africa have tended to recommend early burning, while those interested in cattle raising have recommended late burning to prevent spread of woody vegetation into grassland.

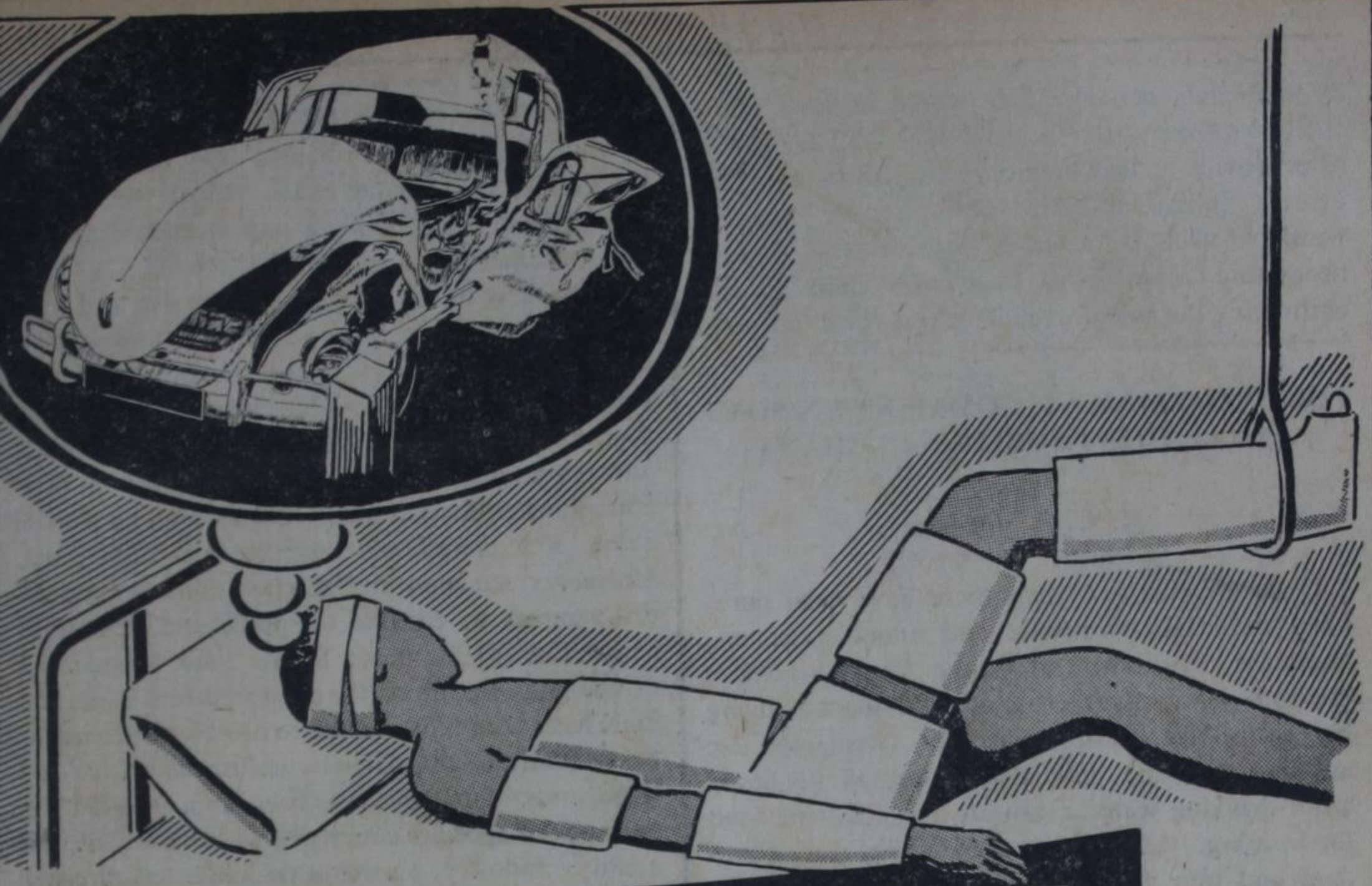
One may well ask why it is that foresters have not gone all the way and recommended complete exclusion of fires. The reason for this has been that in almost every case where this has been attempted, fires have managed to enter from outside and the result has usually been a destructive late fire. If exclusion of fire succeeds for one or two years, and is followed by an unwanted accidental late fire, there is even more destruction of woody vegetation because of the build-up of dead grass fuel. In the Kidepo Valley National Park in north-east Uganda, an attempt, lasting two years, was made to control burning. The area is relatively small (500 square miles), remote from major settlements, and regularly patrolled by air,

by motor vehicles, and by guards on foot. Fire-breaks were constructed and attempts were made to control any fires which started accidentally. In spite of all these precautions, only minimal control was achieved in the first year, and virtually none at all in the second. The attempt was abandoned after two years, having yielded nothing but experience. In Ruwenzori National Park in western Uganda, similar attempts were made and were even less successful, mainly owing to the presence of villages and main roads running through the Park. In this case also some attempts were made to control fires, but they were usually unsuccessful even though the grass was much shorter, and thus burnt much less fiercely, than the grass in most of the Ghana savanna. If control measures fail in such small, well-patrolled areas, broken up by roads and tracks, and under paramilitary supervision, how can we expect success in the wide open spaces of Northern Ghana?

The Ghanaian Case

Over much of the Northern and Upper Regions of Ghana, savanna burning does no harm to the natural vegetation of the area which, as we have seen, is well adapted to survive such happenings. Possibly, exclusion of fire would allow more rapid build-up of plant nutrients in the soil in the fallow period between one crop and the next, but gains here would be small. The critical places are, clearly, the rice farms, and, to a lesser extent and mainly in southern Ghana, sugar cane farms. The rice must remain in the fields well into the dry season so that it can be harvested dry, and stored satisfactorily. Also the ground must dry out before heavy harvesting machines can operate smoothly. Rice crops are thus particularly vulnerable to bush fires entering from the savannas.

Surely the solution to this problem lies with the farmers. It should be possible, when clearing the land, to allow an extra strip round each field, to be cleared of vegetation but not planted. At the end of the wet season, as soon as the grass becomes dry enough to burn, the grass on the outside of this strip should be burned. The bare strip will prevent the fire spreading to the rice, and the early burning will be of low intensity and will not spread far. As a further precaution firing may be done late in the evening or early in the morning while the grass is moist with dew. Such measures would cost a little money, but if they prevent a whole crop from going up in smoke they would quickly pay for themselves. They would provide protection against fire spreading casually from surrounding bush, and while they would not give complete protection from the fires caused



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by malicious persons, they would at least make the task of such persons more difficult. They would also provide a clear boundary strip to be patrolled against animal and bird pests. Such measures would, I feel, be a more positive step towards protecting crops from bush fires than an all-embracing but unenforceable ban on bush burning.

THE ENVIRONMENT: COMMENT ON SOME POLLUTION PROBLEMS IN GHANA

By
K. O. A. Mensah

OVER the past two years there have been many press coverages, symposia and many statements about the environment of Ghana. This, I believe, is due to a genuine awareness of our impact as living beings on the environment. The Ghanaian, like any human being, has always wanted his good clean drinking water, clean air and adequate land for farming. All these, at some stage, were abundant and were there for the asking. If land, for instance, got depleted in one spot it was enough to turn to other virgin areas to get it.

With increase in population and our desire to still satisfy these basic needs we have begun to turn away from the nomadic existence to an intensive utilization of our resources, quite often carelessly. Industrialists have also come in with their desperate demand for raw materials. For profit maximization they often resort to overexploitation of what resources are available; their chimneys pour out smoke: machinery and other gadgetry provide previously unheard noise.

Awareness of the Public

The cumulative effect of the intensive resource utilization, industrial emissions, overexploitation, aggravated by further increases in population is pollution of the environment in which we live. The pollution is seen either as a direct poisoning of the environment, so that drinking water is filled with impurities, the air assumes a rather acid smell, the atmosphere is overcast with haze; or as a direct excessive removal of a resource (as for example trees) with its possible consequences of local climatic changes, silting of streams and of course scarcity of the resource.

It is only through early awareness and regard for conservation, not in a negative sense, but in the sense of proper utilization including precautions against direct poisoning that environmental pollution can be reduced. This awareness is one which seems to have come rather late for a number of countries, and yet when it came it was a major issue in colleges, in local and national politics, in

the church etc. In the U.S.A., over a period of several years Lake Erie died a slow death before the eyes of many Americans. No one seemed to care until it was time for a **post mortem** examination; Rachel Carson shocked the U.S.A. into an awareness of the dangers of excessive and irrational use of insecticides at a time when it was fashionable to just resort to the use of insecticides without a thought on possible alternative measures. Not much attention had been paid to the problem and as a result DDT, for instance, seemed to have contaminated food, animals and all. Full awareness came, after considerable damage had been done, University students and teachers alike organized programmes to educate the public and themselves about the environment; Senate and Presidential campaigns were run on the environmental issue, and there have been bills enacted to protect the environment from contamination by industrial waste, and large sums of money have been appropriated for the work of agencies concerned with environmental quality. Industry, on the other hand, has directed research into reduction of the emission of pollutants into the environment. The word environment came to be used interchangeably with ecology for broader definition. Environment, understood as ecology, then refers to the interrelationships, which without proper protective measures or rational interference can upset the quality of the environment, in terms of the proper balance that for survival and for aesthetics reasons must exist among non-living matter (sunlight, air), plant (from algae to trees), consumers (including man), and decomposers (bacteria).

It is with this in mind that a few of the environmental problems in Ghana are reiterated to bring them to the awareness of the wider public in the hope that attempts can be made to find solutions to those that need to be solved and to prevent other from raising their ugly heads.

Overexploitation in Ghana

1. The forgotten case of Sra village in the Eastern Region of Ghana whose water resources were depleted as a result of uncontrolled degradation of the first vegetation of the headwaters of her streams may be enough to evoke a question like "Are we not overexploiting our forests?", which is on the lips of many Ghanaians as they see lorry loads of timber on the roads. The usual answer is that what is seen amounts to proceeds from salvage exploitation i.e. removal of what would otherwise be lost naturally in the forest.

The question however is warranted, in the face of a seeming abundance of wood and high market value for it. There is the danger of indiscriminate exploitation which apart from precariously ex-



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posing soils to weathering agencies would also deplete the nation, in an untimely manner, of a valuable resource.

With most exploitable forest lands in Ghana not in private ownership it is hopefully possible to exert appropriate controls that will ensure good conservation practices.

2. There is the story of Atewa Range Forest Reserve which is under investigation for possible exploitation of the bauxite deposits. In a recent paper put out by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research attention was drawn to the scientific value of the flora and fauna of this Reserve and the aesthetic value of the area for tourism. The open cast mining process which is envisaged is likely to remove most or all of these values. This, of course, would create many pollution hazards including silting of the nearby streams and destruction of the peculiar plant and animal life. The report made extensive recommendations which if considered would minimize these hazards during the mining operations. There is no indication that the planners are aware of these recommendations or are concerned about these seemingly non-mining problems. This is mentioned in the hope that the recommendations, at least would be considered in the feasibility studies and also during the mining operations.

Educating the Public

3. Another CSIR report dealt with the waste disposal system of the Tata Brewery. The report generally considered the system inefficient and that it posed health hazards which resulted from pollution of the Odaw River drainage system with waste. The already slow moving stream was rendered even slower and there was a foul smell from the very putrid water. Again several recommendations were made for reducing these hazards. Some of the recommendations I understand have been implemented, and others will no doubt be seen to.

The Odaw River is not the only victim of industrial waste disposal. The case of Volta River below the Akosombo Textile Factory has been discussed before in the newspapers. Overall reaction from the point of view of reduction of pollution I understand was favourable.

These are by no means the last we shall see or hear about river pollution. There are several industries which by their nature are better sited near streams into which wastes are instinctively disposed. A good example is pulp and paper production. As we, in Ghana, start thinking of producing paper locally, we ought at the outset also to consider the pollution hazards that are attendant to the industry. Some countries have come up with the idea of

recycling the water to retrieve chemicals and pulp. Without proper safeguards, streams are going to be polluted, which of course, will result in death of fresh water fish and also increase costs of water purification for drinking purposes.

There is talk of establishing a chemical industry in Ghana. While we welcome the idea we should also caution ourselves against turning our not too polluted atmosphere into semblances of the haze-covered industrial cities of the U.S.A. or Britain.

One reason why these environmental problems are mentioned is that we all need to bear in mind that we cannot shrug our shoulders over them as the inevitable committant of industrialization. Regardless of the degree of industrialization of a country, environmental pollution problems of one kind or another can arise if appropriate precautions are not taken. These problems are also mentioned to remind those who are in a position to implement recommendations, such as those for the Atewa Range Forest Reserve and Tata Brewery, to, at least, give an indication that they are mindful of the problems. In other parts of the world, governmental action had to be invoked to curb pollution. It made industrialists seek uses for their waste products, various recycling plants were established and the individual had to refrain from practices which contributed to pollution.

It would neither be desirable nor politic to legislate against the spraying of cocoa but it should be possible meantime to educate cocoa farmers on possible dangers of insecticides and ways of reducing contamination; the Forestry labourer needs a constant reminder, by way of education, to restrict his use of arboricides to desired purposes; the farmer and field assistant need to know, through education and not punishment, that corn coated with Mercuric chloride is not meant to be eaten; the motorist must be taught to take pride in using a clean uncluttered road. One can add endlessly to this list.

The Environmental Protection Council in Ghana will, it is hoped, to be the watchdog against attempts at polluting our environment. One hopes that the public will lend support to this organization and thus make it possible, in Ghana, through education only, to get the environmental protection we so urgently need.



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Africa

A YEAR OF AFRICAN SOLIDARITY: THE OAU AT ELEVEN

By

S. K. B. Asante

THE CURRENT summit conference of the Organisation of African Unity being held in Mogadishu is the first working summit of the Organisation since the proclamation of the new "action decade" in May last year. While it is true that the OAU is still far from achieving the type of unity in Africa which was envisaged in 1963, there is, however, much evidence to suggest that in this eleventh year, the Organisation has made a significant step towards African consolidation and solidarity. This new mood is being demonstrated today in Mogadishu where African Heads of State and Government are mobilising all their strength and determination to wipe out for ever from the African continent the anachronistic pockets of the so-called Portuguese African territories. This brief sketch is intended to review evidence of this new kind of solidarity during the OAU's eleventh year and also direct attention to the need for further move on the road to unity on which it has embarked.

The Middle East War

It was perhaps the outbreak of the fourth Middle East war in October last year which first brought out evidence of solidarity among members of the OAU. The Middle East conflict had before then widened the gap between Ethiopia and the Arab states and exacerbated other conflicts within the OAU. Despite the pressure on the part of the African Arabs countries to gain the support of the sub-Saharan states, the trend, by and large, was to exclude the Middle East from the deliberations of African councils. Thus when the tenth anniversary meeting of the OAU took a common stand on the protracted Middle East crisis, it was not generally believed, especially in the light of the 1965 Rhodesian episode, that this common front could ever be maintained and demonstrated when confronted with reality. That the member states of the OAU were able to implement their May 1973 resolution and collectively opt for the Arab cause, despite the enormous fund of goodwill which Israel had built up among many African states since the mid-1950s, is a significant demonstration of this new mood of African solidarity.

The eleventh year of the OAU thus witnessed the emergence of a new kind of Afro-Arab solidarity. The essence of this solidarity was that the Arab states had at long last managed to convince the sub-Saharan African states that Israel was a real threat to the peace and security of the African continent. Consequently, Egypt's struggle for the recovery of the Sinai Desert occupied by Israel was put at the same level with the liberation of southern Africa from white supremacy. Israel today cannot hope to retain her friendship with any self-respecting state in black Africa without unequivocally cutting her links, however indirect and unofficial these links may be, with Portugal and the regimes in southern Africa. As a result of this new kind of Afro-Arab solidarity, Pan-African unity has now come to include Arabs of north Africa.

Economic Cooperation

The common economic approach initiated by the African states since May last year to the continent's relations with such extra-African economic groupings as the European Economic Community is further evidence of solidarity during the year under review. The first African Trade Ministers' Conference held in Abidjan in May 1973 brought the whole of Africa together to map out a common front in her approach towards relationship with the enlarged E.E.C. The recommendations of the conference were approved at the OAU tenth anniversary summit meeting as an "African Declaration on Co-operation, Development and Economic Independence". This charter of Economic Independence required African countries to speak with one voice on all monetary and economic matters. Following the adoption of the economic charter, African Trade Ministers, under the leadership of Nigeria's Commissioner of Trade, Wenike Briggs, confronted the EEC negotiators in Brussels on 25 July, 1973. African states have now realised that the most effective weapon at their disposal is their unity, and that there can be no issue bigger than their common stand for the good of all.

This common stand was nowhere expressed with greater unanimity and a higher sense of dedication than on the issue of the African liberation struggle. Spurred on by the Accra "Declaration" of the Liberation Committee of January 1973 and especially by the April, 1973, Oslo International Conference of Experts for the Support of Victims of Colonialism and Apartheid, as well as the resolution for action against apartheid adopted by the International Trade Union Conference at Geneva on 16 June, 1973, African states throughout the period under review gave top priority to the

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struggle against the last strongholds of colonialism in Africa. It was unequivocally declared on many occasions that the only language the regimes of Portugal, South Africa and Rhodesia understand is force.

Portuguese Colonialism

This renewed enthusiasm for the liberation struggle in Africa yielded the much needed fruit, at least, in Guinea-Bissau, where on 24th September 1973, after a protracted revolutionary armed struggle stretching over a decade, the African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde Islands declared the country free from the shackles of Portuguese colonialism. This declaration of independence by the revolutionaries in Guinea-Bissau marked a very significant decisive phase in the African liberation struggle. What is more important, it generated the internal tension in Portugal itself which led directly to the coup d'état of April 25, 1974, thus putting an end to half a century of an oppressive fascist regime in Portugal.

With a singleness of purpose and renewed zeal and enthusiasm the current summit meeting in Mogadishu of African Heads of State and Government has focused special attention on the issue of Portuguese colonialism in Africa. They have once again re-affirmed that as long as Portugal fails to adopt a clear stand that takes into consideration the realities in Africa and the right to total independence for the people and territories under its colonial domination there will be no alternative but the intensification of the struggle and the prosecution of the national liberation wars. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that confronted with the African solidarity, the new head of Portugal, President Antonio de Spínola could not but declare his offer to Portugal's African territories self-determination in which the right of political independence would be implicit.

It is important to stress, however, that the demonstration of African solidarity during the first year of O.A.U.'s "action decade" has still not transformed the desire for unity into fruitful reality. What we have had so far, as the *Africa* magazine has currently editorialised, "is an abundance of talk about unity with sadly little positive action to promote it". After almost a decade and a half of political independence, African-controlled Africa is not united, as the leaders of its drive for independence had dreamed it would be, but is composed of a greater number of different nationalities one for each of its forty two independent states. The grand proposals of a continental military defence pact, continental economic integration and continental foreign policy and the rest have

had only a theoretical appeal, and have met with little success. Yet the greatest potential strength of independent African countries is their unity in support of constructive objectives.

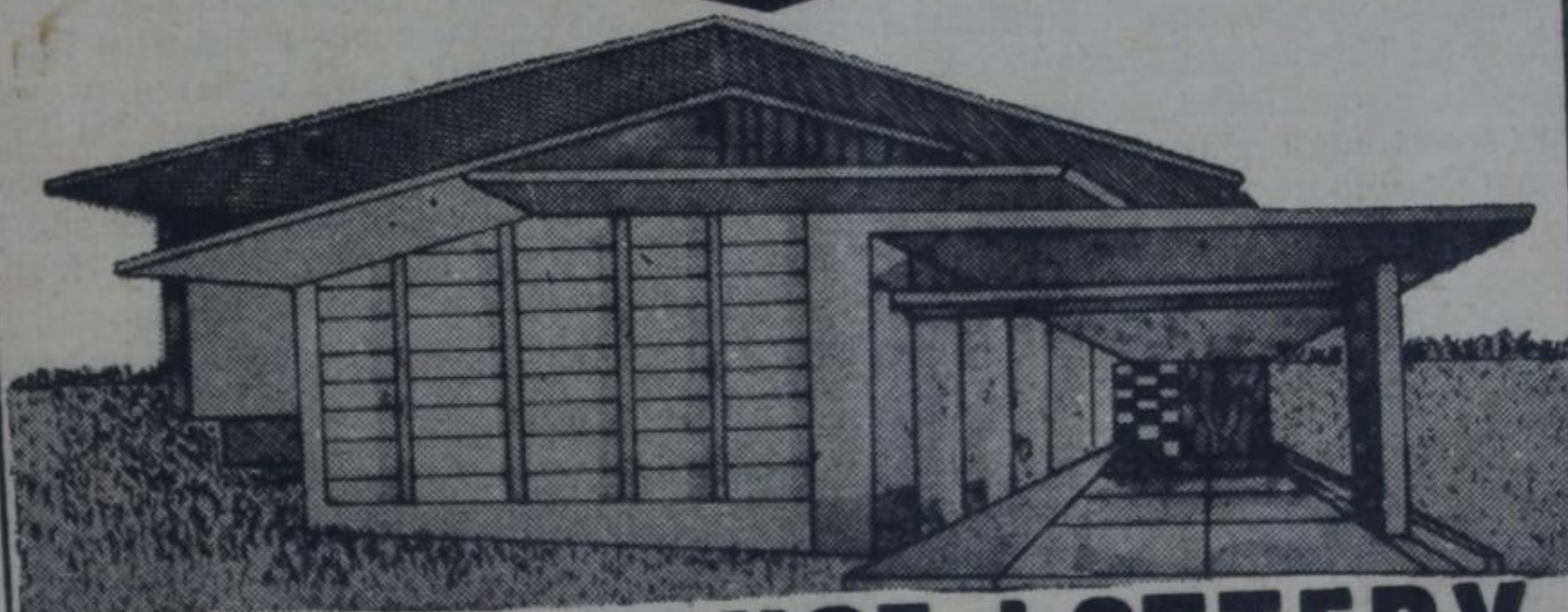
It is high time that the independent African states realised that the thrust of African unity would help them contain in their countries the centrifugal forces of ethnicity and diverse nationalism. For, within one community of independent and prosperous African states, embracing all the people of Africa, who in diversity enjoy common basic values and traditions, the concept of exclusive ethnic nationalism will have no place. Furthermore, the integrating force of African unity will also restore the unity of African peoples which colonial rule has destroyed. Within the community of African nations, unencumbered by the constraints of exclusive sovereignties, African peoples could move freely and interact with one another as they wished.

"Action Decade"

The point cannot be overemphasised that a divided Africa can only have a limited role in the effort to establish collective security based on justice. It is unfortunate but nevertheless true that on matters which affect the vital interests and survival of the international community in all efforts to establish peace, on the question of disarmament, on regulating the use of the sea and its resources, in the effort to establish an equitable economic and social world order — any nation's ability today to contribute effectively to such endeavours is commensurate with its economic strength and the degree of unity of its people. And for Africa to be listened to when she speaks out in defence of freedom and peace, and her interest to be taken account of and for her contributions to the continuing effort to create a stable world order to be worthwhile, she needs all the strength that can come only from the unity of action and purpose of her peoples.

It is against this background that we urge the African Heads of State and Government currently meeting in Mogadishu to begin in the second year of the O.A.U.'s "action decade" with a new orientation that would bring about greater progress towards unity. For instance, the introduction is long overdue of a Voice of Africa Radio, not only to counteract Radio South Africa and all the other radios endeavouring to brainwash us, but also to foster a continental spirit. Such an African Radio will also be highly instrumental to the introduction of a common language. Besides, to encourage intra-African co-operation, such common institutions as an All African University, an All African Air Service, an All African Highway

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STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

Ladies & Gentlemen,

ON behalf of the Directors, I would like to welcome you to this Annual General Meeting of Kingsway Stores of Ghana Limited. This is the Seventh Annual General Meeting since Kingsway became a public Company in 1967, and we particularly welcome those who are attending for the first time. The Report and Accounts have been circulated and, I would like, therefore, first of all to tell you something about the results which are covered in this Report.

Results

Gross margins have declined during the year under review but this reduction has been more than offset by a substantial increase in turn-over which is up on the previous year by more than 2 million cedis. The expenses of running the business have also increased but by a comparatively insignificant amount. In fact I think we can attribute the final, extremely good result, to management's success in containing expenses in every area, during a period when inflation has had its effect upon so many costs.

I would particularly like to draw your attention to the improved liquidity of the business. In the previous year, there was a net payment of interest on working capital but in the year under review your Company has obtained a net yield to the business in interest earned on surplus cash deposits.

The transfer of net profit to the Income Surplus Account is not a great deal higher than the amount transferred last year, but you may remember that I reported a favourable tax adjustment in last year's figures which provided a big increase in the net profit. With this in mind, therefore, I hope that you will agree with me that the management have achieved a most praiseworthy result. This result reflects the extremely hard work which had gone into the procurement of merchandise though at the same time we must give credit to the Government agencies responsible for the import programme, for their sympa-

thetic and helpful treatment of our needs. We must also not forget to give grateful thanks to the Banking Institutions for their help and co-operation in providing hard credit facilities during the year.

Dividend

The Directors have recommended a gross dividend of 50p per share against the 40p which was recommended and declared payable in the previous year; an increase of 25%.

You will be aware that the level of dividends is still controlled by the Prices and Incomes Board as part of the overall policy of the Government to control inflation. Directors, of course, must always maintain a careful balance between the need to give fair dividends to share-holders and to retain some of the profit in the business. Profit retained helps to create more profit and has already had the effect of reducing interest charges. Strictly speaking, where there is an active market dealing in shares, large increases in the Income Surplus Balance could bring about an increase in the capital value of shares. Those of you, therefore, who may be considering the sale of your shares might like to give this matter further thought.

Representations regarding the abatement of tax deducted at source continue, and we do hope that the Authorities concerned are still giving the matter active consideration. Once again, we have to report that no dividends were remitted to overseas shareholders during the year.

Developments

Further substantial developments are in the planning stage, however a great deal of detailed planning work must be carried out, and it is not possible at this time to put a date upon the completion of these proposals.

An extension to our very successful suburban Store at Kotobabi has started and both Kingsway, Cape Coast and Kingsway, Tema are being renovated and improved. In fact it is intended that all outlets should be modernised and plans are under consideration for what is a fairly long term

development programme. In Accra the Second of this Store will be improved and will provide better facilities for the staff including air-conditioning.

ure

four Ghanaians were promoted to management at the beginning of 1974, and I am pleased to report that all the Merchandise Controllers' posts held by Ghanaians. I am very pleased to be able to report that in the very near future a Ghanaian, Mr. D. K. Aninakwah, will be appointed to succeed Mr. J. S. Guthrie as General Manager of Kingsway Stores of Ghana Limited. Mr. Aninakwah has been with the Company for more than 33 years and has a vast experience in business. At the same time, I am sure you will agree that it is proper for me to thank on my behalf, Mr. Guthrie, who for the past 5 years has led your Company through a series of ever improving results which will provide a big challenge to future managements. I am happy to be able to report that Mr. Guthrie will remain on the Board of Kingsway where his skill and experience will be available to the business in the future.

I regret to report that this will be the last occasion on which I shall address you at the Annual General Meeting as I shall be leaving Ghana later this year. The greater part of my career in West Africa has been concerned with the Kingsway business in Nigeria and Ghana, and I am sorry that the time must come for me to sever the relationship.

The immediate future prospects of the business are good and results for the first half of the current financial year show an improvement over last year. The stock and on order position is satisfactory and more recently we have been able to play a greater part in the distribution of foreign foods and commodities. It is a great pity that the escalation of crude oil costs has had a damaging effect on the balance of payment position, at a time when the prudent husbanding of foreign exchange resources over the past 2 years was beginning to bear fruit. However, we accept that import control must continue, and I am sure that a continuation of cost saving and improvements in efficiency will keep your Company in a profitable state.

Staff

The success of management policy in containing costs and improving efficiency can only be achieved with the full support of everybody, and I am happy to report that all members of the staff have continued their full co-operation and effective work output. We are most grateful to them, and I hope that I may on behalf of the Board, the Management and the Share-holders convey to them our gratitude for their loyalty and their contribution to the well being of the Company.

Finally, Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you all very much for coming this afternoon and on behalf of the Board, I can assure you that we will continue to preserve your interests in the future.

C. Richards

Development Authority, an All African Shipping Line, and All African Telecommunications Union and an All African News Agency be should be established.

The question of African unity and solidarity should be given the greatest attention by the assembled Heads of State and Government in Mogadishu. This question is reflected in the O.A.U. charter itself which clearly states that the first purpose of the Organisation is "to promote the unity and solidarity of the African states". The more this unity and solidarity is achieved and maintained, the greater the impact of the independent African states in international relations. Their international objectives for the extension of human rights, greater equalisation of opportunities for development for all states, more influence in international affairs for the smaller states, and peaceful processes in international disputes, are

both valid and far-sighted. The degree to which the independent African states themselves act according to these principles will determine in considerable measure how effectively they can persuade other states to do likewise.

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Observer Notebook

Profit and Loss in State Enterprises

It certainly is a cause for anxiety when state enterprises loose 30 million cedis in thirteen years and we share Dr. K. D. Fordwor's concern over this matter. In a speech, reported in the **Daily Graphic** of 31st May 1974, the Executive Chairman of the Capital Investment Board and Special Assistant to the Commissioner for Finance made a call for a search to be mounted "to find out what has been going wrong and to devise remedial action to save them (the state enterprises)....."

The ordinary man, as usual, does have his ideas about why state enterprises do so badly. In his view, there is too much indulgence by the top brass of state enterprises in wining and dining; too many instances of the abuse of official cars — cars which are too big anyway — on unofficial errands including taking Madam to the hairdresser; and too many instances of very high investment in needlessly prestigious buildings; etc. etc. Of course, the ordinary man may not completely understand the world of business and public administration, but his views cannot be lightly dismissed. Certainly, the life style of the heads of corporations ought to reflect the state of solvency or insolvency of the organisations over which they preside.

But more important, perhaps, it should be obvious to policy-makers that the performance of state enterprises is conditioned by such variables as their organisation and structure, their relations with the Government, their relations with the workers and with consumers, their obligations to the community and a host of national and non-commercial obligations which state enterprises are expected to carry. These factors make public pronouncements about state enterprises making losses and not profit misleading and too simple. The economic and financial rights and obligations of state enterprises have been based on the assumption that they are neither straightforward commercial houses nor social services, but a combination of both.

It is against this background that the financial and economic principles which state enterprises are required by law to observe should be rigidly interpreted. The idea that state enterprises should "pay their way" and not necessarily make profit should be interpreted to mean that they should provide out of their revenues payment of operational expenses, interest on capital and amortisation of debts. This way the state enterprises will be made to carry the full burden of providing

from their revenues for the maintenance of their capital assets, expansion, research and development.

In the area of capital account the dialogue between the state enterprises and the government which bears the responsibility of keeping the public sector investment within the nation's resources and is also the provider of public capital must be seriously and scrupulously conducted. The Government should shoulder its responsibility of scrutinising and approving capital expenditure to ensure that expenditure in excess of the approved ceiling, or borrowing in excess do not constitute permanent features of financial administration in state enterprises.

Another area worthy of consideration is the limited freedom state enterprises have to make upward price adjustments, especially where the prices are artificially low. It is not easy for state enterprises to fix economic prices because public opinion is shocked when state enterprises make upward price adjustments even though costs and prices elsewhere have risen. It may be that increase in price alone will not help state enterprises to break-even and that concern for improvement in commercial efficiency, maximum and better use of qualified personnel, rational employment practices, and discontinuation of commercially unprofitable activities will result in increased productivity, part of which should be available to improve their financial results. But alas! there is a limit to the extent to which state enterprises can do all these without offending public interest.

All this is to say that state enterprises should not be looked upon only as commercial concerns which may be judged only by the result of profits: state enterprises have wider obligations than commercial houses in the private sector. The matter for concern in the search to save the state enterprises will be for the people of the country to find a reasonable balance between the concepts of service and profit for state enterprises in general and for each industry in particular. It will be for the Government to decide for itself the quality of leadership it wants to offer and the balance it wants to maintain between giving direction in matters of policy and interference in the management of state enterprises.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

J. M. LOCK: Lecturer, Botany Dept., Legon

K. O. A. MENSAH: Lecturer, Botany Dept., Legon

M. D. STEUER: Professor, Economics Dept., Legon



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Vandalism in International Football

Playing football in an international match outside one's country is becoming a dangerous venture, and the danger increases in direct proportion to the stakes involved. In recent times, players of the national team of Ghana have been roughly treated and physically assaulted in Nigeria, in Togo, in Zaire and lately in the Centrafrican Republic capital of Bangui. In one other country our players were declared *personae non gratae*, and on another occasion, elsewhere, law enforcing officers were among the assailants of our players, not to mention the burning down of the bus on which our players travelled to another country. In this particular matter we have a record of restraint and civilised behaviour of which we can be justly proud.

Despite subsequent protests and apologies, such incidents have been on the increase, and the situation needs to be arrested. Following the latest incident at Bangui in which our players fell victim to harsh treatment and physical assault, it has been suggested that to ensure the safety of players, such games should be played on neutral ground. While such an arrangement might ensure greater safety to the players, it will rob supporters of the opportunity of seeing their players in action, and reduce the excitement of the game. Such a solution would, on the other hand, be defeatist and would mean that one is giving in to the barbaric instincts of over-enthusiastic fans.

The better solution would be to impress upon authorities in the host countries that they are responsible for the welfare, comfort and safety of visiting teams, and that it is their duty to restrain the enthusiasm or barbaric instincts of their people. To enforce this type of discipline, it will be necessary to impose sanctions. For example, a country in which visiting players were manhandled, could be suspended for a season or two from participation in the games for a first offence. Any subsequent offence should attract a severer punishment, including permanent exclusion.

Unless the African Football Confederation is prepared to take such stringent measures against offending clubs or countries, the spirit of the games will be ruined. So far all that is open to an offended country is to refuse to play the offending side, and this looks like punishing the law-abiding teams or civilised countries, whereas the contrary should be the case. The games were instituted to foster friendship and understanding, but if no steps are taken to end the murderous partisanship of the recent past, they could well become a dangerous source of discord.

Letters

Onward With The Revolution — Rejoinders (2)

SIR — Mr. Y. Amefia Opoku's letter — "Onward with the Revolution" — in L.O. IX/10 exposes clearly the hollow emptiness of some of our national dailies as far as objective journalism is concerned. How can the Editor of a whole NATIONAL newspaper devote a whole Editorial to such a trivial event as a Ghanaian refusing a "foreign" dish? In any case, if this incident had involved an ordinary person would the hotel authorities have tolerated him or would the press have taken any notice?

There is and has been one festering canker destroying the very fabric and progress of our Ghanaian society but unfortunately no Government has as yet effectively addressed itself to it. This canker is the notorious, irrelevant and sycophantic adulation showered by the national dailies on "politically" privileged rulers of the country in a manner so embarrassingly unthinking as to smack of illiteracy. One expects the national dailies to protect and educate the helpless commoner and subject all public and governing servants to open scrutiny, continuous assessment and accountability. One expects the national press to publicise, or even criticise, incidents of atrocious abuses of civic, civilian, and legal rights of citizens by others in more armed or privileged positions. But what do we see of our press instead? An infantile display of sycophancy and hero-worshipping!

It is doubtful if the press alone is to blame for this state of affairs in a country. As long as governments arrogate to themselves the right to appoint editors of our dailies, they should always expect to be "worshiped" by these dailies. Only a truly independent press has the necessary employment safeguards to dare criticise a government. Perhaps our national press could be made somewhat independent and useful by delegating the appointment and dismissal of editors, directors, and other senior staff to such institutions as the Ghana Institute of Journalism, the Council for Higher Education, or the Academy of Arts and Science — at least some institution reasonably independent of government influence.

A government operating under its own self-appointed press is likely to live under illusions because such a press is technically not independent. Hence, any talk about offering it freedom of expression may be basically contradictory. Let us restrain our "self-reliance" sentiments, and humbly take a cue from the objective and critical journalism which obtains in "Watergated" U.S., miners-strike afflicted Britain, or spy-scandalised West Germany. Perhaps then, we might find a clue to improving our economy by forestalling and exposing corruption, nepotism, and other social evils through an independent (and therefore) objective honest and bold press; such a press may also help us retrieve some guarantees for our civilian, legal and employment rights. That's what I would call a REVOLUTION.

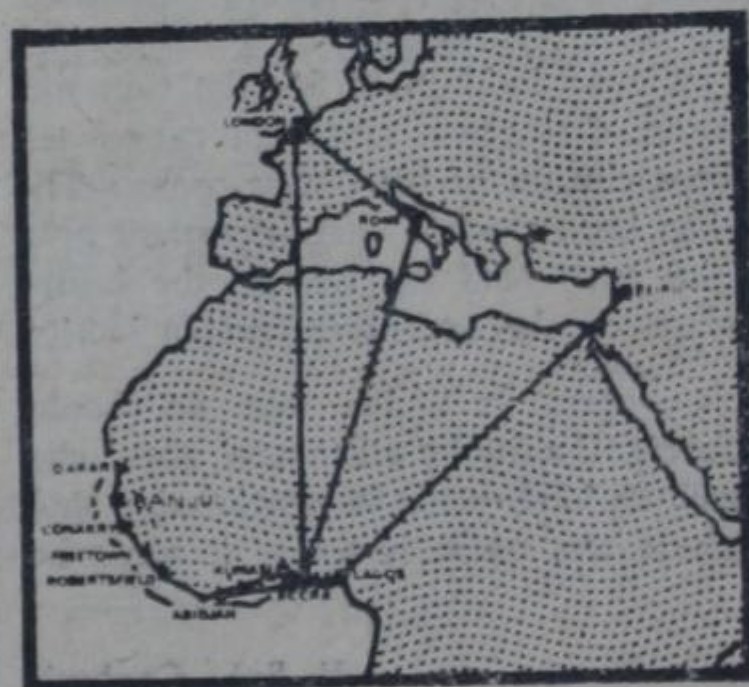
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SIR — Mr. Y. Amefia Opoku's letter 'Onward with the Revolution' which appeared in a past issue of your interesting journal ought not to stand without comment. It was impressively ludicrous. Mr. Opoku did not understand why a government official's refusal to eat potatoes and salad was made a news item in a national daily. He was disheartened to discover that such a trivial episode was considered important enough to merit editorial comment! But why not?

The question, Mr. Opoku, is not whether salad is really foreign or whether 'Kofi Workman' becomes less Ghanaian on eating potato chips. The crux of the matter is whether a Commissioner of State ought to display an affinity for expensive tastes to the detriment of the public exchequer. The important words are 'Commissioner of State' and 'expensive tastes'.

If Kofi Workman decides to spend two thirds of his salary on 'condiments like cream, sauce, flowerbuds', saute chicken a la Jerusalem, or la viande Chateaubriand, that will be the financial problem of a private individual. The effect this will have on his budget will be of no public interest. A public figure, however, is handicapped because his daily habits assume public importance. He is circumscribed as to his freedom of decision. In the incident under discussion whether the said Commissioner ate 'akple' or 'macaroni' is of public interest because for a long time the public has complained about a discrepancy between words and deeds on the part of government officials: that they preach one thing and practise another. Thus if after all the sermonizing on 'self-reliance' and 'eat Ghanaian foods' we find a Commissioner masticating with relish potato chips and salad, this would prove to be hypocrisy and lipservice at their acme. I do not write to hold brief for the Commissioner on the question of sincerity since one cannot tell what he eats in the seclusion of his dining-room. The point, nevertheless has been made — that important government personalities must lead the way in the campaign to rid Ghanaians on the expensive foreign habits.

If Mr. Opoku is sincere in saying that we should 'learn to lose our foreign habits by all means', then why does he take so much childish pride in proclaiming that 'my favourite drink is tea. Not just tea, it must be twining's'?

Adisadel College
Cape Coast

E. Spio Garbrah

"Oh Dunia!"

SIR — Mr. J. O. M. Pobee describing the Northern and Upper Regions (L.O. IX/11 p. 262) asks for the meaning of "Oh Dunia!" Dunia is the Hindi word for world, so the expression "Oh Dunia" could mean "What a World!"

P.O. Box 4236
Accra

Roger A. Davis

Duplication In Our Universities — Another Rejoinder

SIR — Under the headline "Duplication in Our Universities" the *Legon Observer* of 17-30 May, 1974, (Vol. IX/10) accuses the University of Cape Coast of contemplating duplicating a Principles of Management and Accountancy Course which is already being taught in another Ghanaian University. In doing so the paper misrepresented the statement of the Vice-Chancellor of the University who only said "The University has there-

fore decided that SOME (caps mine) Principles of Management and Accounting should now be taught to all its students".

To put the record straight, I quote the relevant portion of the Vice-Chancellor's address, delivered on the occasion of the second congregation on 20th April, 1974:

"It is felt at present that some other disciplines are becoming more and more indispensable to the training for leadership in this country and that such disciplines will also have to be made available to every graduate irrespective of his subject as is the case with African studies. The University has therefore decided that some Principles of Management and Accounting should now be taught to all its students. This is because in a young country like Ghana, most teachers are too soon faced with the shouldering of responsibilities of headship of their schools. The African Studies programme has thus been expanded into an African and General Studies Programme to accommodate the study of these new subjects.

(Note — expansion does not and has not involved the employing of new hands to teach the topics — they are being handled by the University's serving officers like the Acting Chief Accountant; the University is simply tapping its available resources to the full). It is thus hoped that our future public servants especially our teachers, educational administrators and heads of schools who have studied here will be better equipped to assist in the maintenance of sanity in the economic and financial life of the country at their various positions. This move, we think, marks an important step in our efforts towards curriculum relevance".

From the above quotation any idea that there is going to be anything like "courses in Principles of Accounting and Management in Cape Coast — courses which will ultimately lead to the setting up of a School of Accountancy and Management", as held by the *Observer*, is hardly discernible. It may surprise the paper to learn that even though the University of Cape Coast has never had the intention of starting a course in medicine which would eventually grow into a Medical School, efforts are made to give some idea about medicine to all students who do the African Studies course by the teaching of topics like "Sickle Cell". I hope the *Observer* agrees with me that to achieve the aims outlined by the Vice-Chancellor by sending all University of Cape Coast graduates to Greenhill for these very simple (in the context above) courses would be unpardonably wasteful.

There is another dimension to the issue. Somewhere in the said speech the Vice-Chancellor hinted: "Other obviously urgent areas for our future development here include Business Education, but time would not permit me to elaborate it now". It is not clear if the *Observer* in any way tried to connect the "Principles of Management and Accounting" with this course. In any case, I hope it will not raise hell about Business Education which aims at producing teachers for our Secretarial, Commercial and Business Schools and our Polytechnics, because the setting up of such a course would be a duplication of nothing.

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Matters Arising

THE PROPOSED MEDICAL SCHOOL AT KUMASI

Published below is an official statement received from the Registrar's office of the University of Science and Technology.

DUPLICATION IN OUR UNIVERSITIES

I WISH to comment on the editorial of the *Legon Observer* Vol. IX/10 published in May, 1974 with above caption.

The rationale behind the delimitation of University functions is certainly not to inhibit the natural growth of the Universities. It is to ensure that all the resources of the three Universities and similar institutions in the country are used in the most efficient way for the purpose of higher education. For some training schemes, the resources of one University may be adequate. For others, we may have to use facilities at all two or possibly all three Universities. The nature and magnitude of the manpower problem and the facilities already available at various centres should guide us on the most effective course of action.

For the training of medical personnel, mammoth medical centre has indeed been proposed which is estimated to cost between 30 and 40 million cedis. Whether this project will be more efficient than expanding the facilities at Korle Bu and using those at the U.S.T. and Okomfo Anokye will have to be considered on the basis of the facts and figures.

What the Vice-Chancellor of the U.S.T. told the 13th Annual Congregation could be summarised as follows:

1. There is a prima facie case for training medical and para-medical personnel at the U.S.T.
2. The University has set up a Committee to consider the matter in depth and report to the Academic Board.
3. The recommendations of the Academic Board would be communicated to the University Council for its decision.

It is difficult to understand how this factual announcement to Congregation and to the public should lead to the kind of panic displayed by the *Legon Observer* in this matter.

There is no gainsaying the fact that Legon alone would not be able to produce enough doctors to meet the needs of the country in the foreseeable future even if it reached its maximum production capacity, and the country does not have to wait until Legon reaches this stage before a second medical school is started when another institution like the U.S.T. has the resources that can be harnessed to start one. One could then say as well that Achimota Secondary School should have been expanded to reach its maximum production capacity before other secondary schools were established. However, more secondary schools had to be established as rapidly as possible to cater for the manpower requirements of the country.

Similarly, the proposal to start a second medical school at the U.S.T. is dictated by the scarcity of doctors in the country—there is at the moment one doctor to about 9,000 people as compared to one doctor to about 500 people in some developed countries. There is not only an acute shortage of doctors in the country but also of para-medical personnel such as biochemists,

bacteriologists, microbiologists, medical technologists, all of whom could be trained at the U.S.T., which is better equipped to undertake this task than any other institution in this country.

The question of duplication arises only where a new course is mounted in an institution when there is already another institution with adequate resources and facilities to meet the manpower requirements of the country. But it is highly impossible for Legon alone to produce enough doctors to meet the needs of the country in the foreseeable future.

The argument that the establishment of a second medical school "will aggravate our already serious problem of shortage of personnel to teach science in Secondary Schools and man research establishments" because most science students are induced by the high salaries paid to doctors to opt for medicine is not tenable. Firstly, not all science students who leave the sixth forms satisfy the entry requirements for the medical school. Moreover, the best of the students who enter the medical school could on completion of their courses carry out medical research as well. Secondly, doctors are at the moment paid high salaries because of scarcity, and the only way to prevent the perpetuation of this situation is to train more doctors.

The question of staffing poses no problems because there are enough adequately trained persons here and abroad to man even three medical schools in Ghana.

The only argument against the establishment of another medical school should have been finance, and the Editor of the *Legon Observer* should rather have touched upon the cost of establishing another medical school and argued as to whether it would be worthwhile establishing it at all. But it is beyond argument that the cost of establishing another medical school at the U.S.T. with its present facilities for pure and applied science would be far less than of building a completely new medical school.

University of Science and
Technology
Kumasi

T. B. B. Sekyi
Senior Asst. Registrar

Film Review

THE AFRICAN DEAL

By
M. D. Steuer

THE remarkable story behind Ghana's first feature film, *CONTACT*, or *THE AFRICAN DEAL*, goes back to 1963 when Sam Aryeetey returned from London to become Managing Director of the Ghana Film Industries Corporation. Over the past decade there has been a steady expansion of the physical plant, an impressive complex of offices, dubbing theatre, sound stage, a viewing theatre, editing rooms, a plant to process black white 16 mm. and 35 mm. film, and many other facilities. A large staff covering the numerous skilled and talented jobs attendant to film production has been trained and employed. The Corporation has been engaged in a variety of activities including film distribution in Ghana, recording, making documentaries and ads for television and cinema, and several non-commercial experiments in low budget feature films. (Technically a 'feature film' is a story film over fifty-five minutes in length intended for cinema distribution.) But all these activities are side lines. The goal throughout has been to make com-

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effort, low quality, middle class media, easily controlled from the centre, over films, an inherently mass media.) Frankly, I feel so strongly about the need for success that it is difficult for me to view this film objectively. One can but try.

Nine out of ten people I have spoken to have enjoyed *CONTACT* and that was my experience as well. Naturally, part of this is the fun of seeing familiar locations, something which will not affect audiences in New York or Tokyo. For them the story will assume more importance, and I believe that there are some ambiguities of the wrong kind in it. The emotional relationship between Sylvia and Eve is at the root of much of this. Are they sexual rivals, or rivals in some other ways? Is Eve really running the scene as she claims? We see no evidence of this. What is going on between the Mac Doughalls in their curious conversation on the Legon campus? Why does Sylvia leave Accra with Donati after having been told by him that she has no future with him? He does not appear to be a man who readily changes his mind. And above all, is there a genuine business struggle between Kofi and Donati, or are they just playing cat and mouse for the sake of it? Neither man seems to have a taste for the game. But if it is for real, we have no idea what they are fighting about. One could go on with many similar questions. No doubt the makers of the film have answers to these questions, but I doubt if they are clear on the screen.

An Allegory?

Other ambiguities arise from the treatment. For example, there is a kind of visual parallel drawn between the slaves in dungeons at Elmina in the historical flashback and today's miners in lift cages at the gold mine. But is the film intending to say anything in this context? More disturbing is the odd scene when Sylvia is tricked into, as we say, giving herself to Kofi's assistant, thinking he is Kofi. She leaves the luncheon table abruptly with an expression which is a cross between indigestion and sexual revulsion. Next we see the assistant agitatedly talking on the phone wearing a bathrobe. And then we see him drinking beer while Sylvia looks up from the bed, starkers, with the only genuinely happy smile she displays in the picture. Yet she is supposed to be hating it. I can't make any sense of it.

Over and above the twists and turns of the plot, *CONTACT*, while definitely an entertainment film, has an allegorical flavour and seems to be saying something. I think it is fair to summarise this as being that since the days of the slave trade things have changed. (In itself a true but banal point.) Ghanaian capitalism is as ruthless and ubiquitous as European capitalism. Though men of both the black and the white races call the tune, women are willing pawns and prizes in the content. Smart, strong people, says the picture, learn to live with this. It would be less than frank if I did not say that I find it an unacceptable views, both factually and morally.

CONTACT is an old fashioned film done in the modern manner. Full frontal nudity tells us in a way what the actor's and actresses' bodies are like, but is not same as insight into characters. Given the story constraints, none of the performers did badly, and Enrico Salerno as Donati, and Boi Amporful as Kofi's assistant turn in good performance. I do not know who played the pimp, but found his cameo the best bit of

acting in the picture. Calvin Lockhart is not convincing, either as a Ghanaian or as a business tycoon who makes fifty million dollar timber deals, owns a gold mine, a harbour, and whose business office is the size of, and of course is, the Headquarters of the Ghana Commercial Bank. He is an interesting actor with many films behind him and his best, I am sure, ahead of him.

The camera work is attractive, and solved difficult problems of lighting and grading (matching up shots under different lighting conditions such that the illusion of a single sequence holds.) There is some shaking on the helicopter shot of the forest which is unfortunate. Bontempi, the director, put together some nice sequences, particularly at Takoradi harbour. The tree felling sequence is first rate, marred only by the dubbing (putting other voices in place of the originals), which is disturbing in many parts of the film. The editing is reasonable throughout and very good in some of the lyrical passages. These are usually accompanied by Hedzole Soundz music, and the music and visuals lift the picture extremely well in those passages, especially the prelude to the gold mine. It is inexplicable why no credit is given on the screen to Hedzole Soundz who appear briefly in the picture (too briefly), but provide a lot of good music off screen. Not to credit them is both unfair and bad business.

With aggressive marketing *CONTACT* has a chance of making money, a good thing in itself, and it could open the door for better pictures. These need not be as serious as *CONTACT* purports to be. But they could easily be more truthful, more humorous, more humane, and show more of Ghana. All movies are dreams. I have been critical of *CONTACT*, but it certainly is not a nightmare. The beaches look good. Ghana looks good. Foreigners play too big a part in *CONTACT*. It is a foreign dream. For better or worse, our money is riding on it and I can only hope that millions of people see it.

Miscellaneous

AND IT CAME TO PASS...

Epistle No. 9

By

Santrofi

AND it came to pass in those days that things were going awry in the empire. Despite all the official statements, the naked truth, as the citizens observed, was that things were going from bad to worse in the matter of price rises. Claims about the resounding success of the Auto-Nourishment Campaign were belied by the realities of the market situation. This, of course, was one of the paradoxes in the empire; whereas all had been told in superlatives and hyperboles that more acreage had been cultivated and more food grown, there was less food in the markets and these naturally cost very high. Not only had the promises of plenty not been redeemed, but there was evidence of stagnation, and some were even tempted to talk of recession.

The sages in the land naturally essayed an explication of the paradox; some asserted that it was all part of ubiquitous Lord Inflation's mischievous deeds, albeit the connection could not be clearly established. Lord In-

flation, as could be imagined, had been made the whipping horse and scapegoat of the empire, and his presence was secretly relished by the imperial authorities, since invoking him was enough to explain away incompetence in all areas of the empire's economic life. Other sages bluntly did affirm that the penury in local food supplies could be simply attributed to the fact that there had been more talk than action. They did go as far as to suggest that the figures of cultivated acreages put out by the imperial authorities might not bear as close a relation to reality as one could have expected, and they cited in support of their scepticism, certain doubts raised on the matter by one of the provincial governors, a most zealous servant of the empire. Others opined that the imperial authorities had not shown sufficient seriousness about the matter of food production beyond mere words; for, it was argued, tolerating a situation in which the most rudimentary tools were denied farmers was not the best encouragement that could be given to farming. In a situation where infant cream was considered to be more deserving of subsidies than cutlasses, the wonder should not be that less food was being produced but that there should be any food at all. Still others did argue that all the available human resources had not been put into the production of food. Those who held this view contented that much greater use could have been made of the imperial forces in this particular matter. To counter this view, a highly placed director of the imperial forces had assured the citizens that the legionaries were carrying their fair share of the food production burden. There were not many in the land who were taken in by this assurance, albeit the official gazetteers, as was their asinine custom, vied with each other in the search for superlatives wherewith to acclaim this gallant and noble gesture of the legionaries in taking part in the Auto-Nourishment Campaign.

Nor was it for nothing or just out of mischief that some doubted the veracity of the claims made by the aforementioned director. The doubters recalled that the cohorts stationed in the metropolitan area had undertaken some farming project a few leagues outside the metropolis. Noises had been made about this venture, even though after a year, the land was so overgrown as to raise doubts about any serious farming efforts having been made in the area.

While all these arguments were going on, it came to pass that the self-same director above-named, did claim that his subordinates who had been seconded to secular organisations were as competent as could be found in the land. No one around had the courage to ask him why, if the efficiency of his men was so self-evident, they had not been attached to the said organisations in fair and open competition. The claim made by the director saddened the heart of many a citizen who detected in it a certain arrogance and complacency to which they had not become unaccustomed under previous imperial authorities. It was, however, generally agreed that it was another form of political patronage, such as had been seen in the land before, and all that the citizens could demand in their helplessness was that the imperial authorities of the day had to be honest about it instead of laying claim to competence in matters on which they had neither the training nor the experience.

And it came to pass in those days that the citizens in the empire had not changed their bad habits. It had been known in the past that they were incorrigible

rumour-mongers. The evil had grown so desperate that the first late emperor had been constrained to address himself to the citizenry thereon in the early hours of one morning. The militiamen who violently divested him of imperial authority were so much worried by this problem of rumour-mongering that they issued an edict making it a serious offence. Their successors who were more or less imbued with some democratic ideals found such a law repugnant and did not specifically legislate on the matter, preferring to deal with such cases within the normal framework of the existing laws. Their successors, once again, found it necessary to issue an edict against rumour-mongering; this law may have reduced the incidence of rumour-spreading, but it certainly did not kill the habit. So was it that rumours started spreading even about the citizenship of the emperor himself. Tremendous efforts were made, presumably on a private initiative, to prove the emperor to be a true-born of the land, and in the process, almost all the communication media in the land were pressed into service. Nobody yet knows the success of this counter-offensive operation, but it was agreed by all that the efforts to disabuse the citizens' mind in that peculiar fashion had only spread the rumour further.

On this particular matter of citizenship the emperor was particularly aggrieved and irate, for he was being treated less well than his predecessors. It had in fact become customary in the empire to raise doubts about the citizenship of a fallen emperor, but never of a reigning, or rather serving emperor. It was in fact revealed that such a charge had been made against the first emperor by some of his early rivals, but he chose to ignore the insinuations and the rumour died a natural death, to be resurrected only after his political demise. The second emperor had suffered the same fate from his detractors, but only after he had been forcibly eased out. What baffled the third emperor was why his detractors should not accord him equal treatment and wait for him to disappear or be "disappeared" before starting the vile rumour. Did this mean a possible loss of love between emperor and subjects? And this naturally accounted for the fanfare wherewith the emperor's true origins were proclaimed so loud and clear. But this was not the end of the emperor's problems.

It had been the custom that the television emissions of the day, or rather of the night, ended with the playing of the imperial hymn and fluttering of the imperial standard on the screen aforementioned. For some reason which was never explained to the citizenry, the nocturnal emissions ended with the playing of the imperial hymn accompanied by the effigy of the emperor. It was not known whether somebody had suddenly discovered that the emperor had been found to be a better symbol of imperial unity and aspiration than the standard or whether it had been proven that he was so engaging in his looks that the citizens had to be regaled with his effigy as adequate compensation for the day's labours. Whatever the reason was, the emperor's image was on the screen every night, as if to warm the subjects, especially the unconverted, the "Big Brother sees it all".

And so it came to pass that the citizens in the empire began wondering whether they were moving forward, going backwards, or remaining stagnant. All these uncertainties notwithstanding, the emperor, in consonance with his ancient custom, strode upon the land and surveyed his work, and found, as usual, that his work could not be bettered, for it was good.

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