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EDITORIAL

THE YEAR IN RETROSPECT

THE YEAR 1967 has been an eventful one for Ghana, both economically and politically. Courageous economic and political decisions—not always popular—have been taken. True to its declared intention of resuscitating a battered economy bequeathed by the old regime, the NLC has found it necessary to lay off redundant labour, devalue our currency, and renegotiate our external debts. It would appear that the NLC has taken all the economic steps which any government in a similar predicament would have taken; but still the economy does not seem to be moving fast enough.

The most intractable economic problem remains, undeniably, the problem of unemployment. Since the coup 61,838 workers have been laid off. Of the total laid off only 13,636 or 22.05 per cent have registered with employment centres. Of those who have registered with employment centres only 37.58 per cent or 8.29 per cent of total laid off, have been placed in employment to date. The public sector of the economy accounts for 84.64 per cent of the total laid off, and the private sector accounts for only 15.36 per cent. These statistics ignore those laid off in the private businesses where proper accounts are not kept. There is also concealed unemployment in agriculture, hence the migration of young men to the towns. This economic phenomenon is, however, offset by the unemployed who, after seeking in vain for jobs in the urban areas, return to the rural areas to depend on the social and economic security system provided by the extended family.

In the foreseeable future it does not appear that the economy can absorb the unemployed, for our population is growing at the rate of 2.6 per cent a year, while the rate of economic growth is only 1.6 per cent. In order to feed our growing population and have more job openings in the economy, economists calculate that we must have, at least, a growth rate of about 8 per cent. The social consequences of the unemployment situation are grave, for in Africa the more unemployed you have the more the demands made on the private incomes of those who are fortunate enough to be in gainful employment. This depresses standards of living all round.

The economic situation is aggravated by our foreign exchange position. According to the 1966-67 Budget we have a total of NC735,216,814 to pay in suppliers' credits. Of this amount not more than 4 per cent is payable in Ghanaian currency. What this means is that in the foreseeable future a lot of the foreign currency we earn will go in payments of suppliers' credits.

The unemployment situation is further aggravated by the number of pupils who pour out of our elementary schools, and who not only have no hope of ever entering secondary schools, training colleges and technical schools, but are also virtually unemployable. According to the Special Commissioner for Labour, in 1966/67, 52,418 left elementary schools; only 9,034 or about 17 per cent of these entered secondary schools, 2,987 or about 6 per cent entered training colleges and less than 1 per cent entered technical institutes. About 39,620 pupils or about 80 per cent have no hope at all of post-elementary education; since they lack skills they are virtually unemployable, especially at this period in our economic history when we are pursuing deflationary policies. These economic difficulties are full of political significance and a lot still has to be done. What can be done?

First, the government should redouble its efforts to build more feeder roads. These feeder roads and similar projects must be labour-intensive with little foreign exchange components, in the sense that we must import little or no machinery for these projects. We need more vision here, not aid. Secondly, Ghanaian businessmen must be encouraged to set up more enterprises which are labour intensive. The government must positively shift its emphasis from pre-occupation with foreign investment, and review the tax system which imposes such a crippling burden on many Ghanaian businessmen who wish to set up on their own. We must, thirdly, expand technical education. We seem not to be doing badly in university education. But what most developing countries need is middle-range technical manpower—the plumber, the car mechanics, electricians, sanitary overseers, masons and builders. Finally, we could experiment with attractive farm settlements on the lines of the farm settlements of Western Nigeria. These settlements could be organized on a credit basis to enable individuals to farm privately. The conditions must be attractive enough to put meaning into our preaching about “back to the land”. We could do a lot more thinking along these lines, and the Government decision to provide guaranteed market prices for maize and rice is a decision in the right direction.

Politically, we began the year on a gloomy note with the death of Gen. Kotoka. However, the NLC has worked admirably as a team since. The outstanding political problem seems to be the return to civilian rule. Civilian rule, it is generally conceded, must come. However, Ghanaians are not yet agreed on the date for its return. Most of the economic problems we face call for political solutions, but the NLC, by its very power structure, is not a government to impose highly controversial political solutions, for the alternative to it will most probably be anarchy. This is the more reason why we must have civilian rule by 1969. The Electoral Commission, it is reliably learnt, has completed its assignment. The Constitutional Commission will soon complete its work, and the mechanics of handing over power would thereafter depend on the NLC. Apart from general declarations of intention to relinquish power “as soon as possible”, the NLC has not been specific and clear on a firm date for a return to civilian rule. In the light of our problems a firm date needs to be announced: our rulers can take consolation in the fact that, to any impartial political observer, from now on the military will be a factor in our politics. This may

or may not be a good thing, but it seems inevitable in the light of the experience of other countries.

We are now witnessing very vaguely an adumbration of political forces. On the evidence so far, there seems to be a polarization between Busia and Gbedemah; objectively, to most Ghanaians the two are old politicians in whom old conflicts, which are now irrelevant, are epitomized. But it seems there is no alternative now to them which is a pity.

All over the country Ghanaians have been told **ad nauseam** to jealously guard their democratic rights. But the emphasis on rights to the total exclusion of the need for economic and social development seems to be politically unrealistic. Rights are not abstract; they are socially and historically conditioned, and it is about time we sharpened our perspectives by emphasising the need to whip up popular enthusiasm for social and economic development. Once a people have economic security they will not need to be told to guard this security. Furthermore, Nkrumah's failure was largely economic; but for the economic difficulties inherent in the “socialist” policies of the old regime, many Ghanaians would have been pathetic to the dictatorial propensities of that regime. To believe otherwise is to mis-read the lesson of the past fifteen years of our history.

With the dismissal of the four editors of the **Evening News** and the **Daily Graphic** the year seems to be ending on a disquieting note. The reasons for their dismissal are not clear, but whatever the reasons the impression is given that the procedure adopted was arbitrary. For example, neither the Commissioner for Information nor the Board of Directors of the two newspapers apparently knew of the decision to dismiss them. This is unfortunate, for unless the decision is rescinded, it will be a standing contradiction of our attempt since the coup to evolve fair and just procedures and to make use of established institutions. For those who have succeeded the former editors it must be remembered that to take advantage of unjust procedures is to be at the mercy of the same.

The year has been a chequered one; but our problems are not at all insurmountable. The NLC still remains our only alternative to anarchy and needs all our support. But the return to civilian rule must be hastened.

Africa

THE NIGERIAN SITUATION—A PERSONAL VIEW

By

Abiola Irele

MR. B. I. Chukwukere in his article "The Conflict of Idealism and Realism", published in the *Legon Observer* Vol. II, No. 24, made an attempt at an objective analysis of the Nigerian situation. But his emotional involvement in events in our country got the better of him, so much so that the overall effect of his article was to give a slant to the events he tried to analyse. He presents a glowing picture of the industrious, unprejudiced Iboman who has become the victim of his progressive idealism and is now struggling for survival against an ignorant, conservative Northerner, in alliance with a jealous rival, the Yorubaman. This appears to me an immoderate, simplified and unjustified view, which I am sure no one familiar with the facts of Nigerian politics will readily accept.

The tribal factor has played an important role in Nigerian politics, and this we must deplore. But it went down to blame everybody else and exonerate the Ibos. The truth is that practically no ethnic group in Nigeria was free of the inward looking tribal sentiment that led to the present civil war. Besides, Ibo solidarity often amounted to an exclusive ethnocentrism which provoked reactions from other ethnic groups in Nigeria and thus contributed its own share to the tribal character of Nigerian politics. Furthermore, Nigerian tribalism was actively fostered by all the politicians who saw in it a lever for personal ambitions. In a country where political parties had no ideological foundations, it was a convenient means of gaining support; the phenomenon was thus to a considerable extent artificially stimulated.

Tiv Politics

Mr. Chukwukere was unable to refrain from emotional language in his article. His reference to "Hausa overlords and their clients, the Tivs especially", is an example of this failing. He cannot however have forgotten, while writing this, that from the year of independence up till the military coup that ended the First Republic, Ibo politicians got along better with the "Hausa overlords" than the Tivs, whose constant protests against their domination by the Hausa-Fulani aristocracy exploded time and again into bloody riots, and whose leaders, like Joseph Tarka, suffered imprisonment and persecution of all kinds at the hand

of the Sardauna's government. If the old North, taken as a whole, had any unity at all, it was that of an under-privileged and despised population, whose economy and administration were dominated by arrogant and unsympathetic Southern elements.

Tiv participation in the massacre of the Ibos last year was therefore exceptional (as was the event itself) and can be explained chiefly by the fact that the young majors who staged the January 1966 coup were indiscriminating in their elimination of non-Ibo politicians and army officers. Counter-moves by the Northern elements would then be organised by simply pointing out the apparent partiality of the January coup. Biafran propaganda has made much of this Northern solidarity, but in this respect, the Biafrans are in fact playing straight into the hands of Hausa-Fulani aristocracy by attaching an undue importance to what was a transient phenomenon.

In the wider context of Nigeria, Mr. Chukwukere chooses to echo the Biafran argument that the Iboman, who has been the most steadfast advocate of unity, is now disillusioned and has abandoned this ideal out of a sense of rejection. I agree that the wide diffusion of Ibos all over Nigeria gave them a stronger sense of the need for national unity than all other ethnic groups, but the paradox here is that while they admitted the need for the wide concept of a Nigerian nation, they hardly offered this concept an effective terrain of operation in Iboland. In short, Ibo advocacy for Nigerian unity, to say the least, sprang out of an ambivalent attitude. The economic determination of the Ibo vision of Nigerian unity can also not be disputed, even if this became elevated, in the case of some individuals, into an intellectual ideal. May I also remind Mr. Chukwukere that the father of Nigerian nationalism and the first effective advocate of Nigerian unity was in fact a Yoruba, Mr. Herbert Macaulay, who founded the party that was later to be so closely associated with Dr. Azikiwe, of the N.C.N.C. fame.

Azikiwe's Role

Significantly, Macaulay died in Northern Nigeria during a campaign tour in the cause of national independence in 1946, and it was his death that gave Azikiwe the leadership of the party. Furthermore, in the crucial election of 1959, while Awolowo's Action Group made a determined effort to capture the Northern electorate, Azikiwe's N.C.N.C. shied away, making the victory of the Hausa-Fulani party, which was to pave the way for its domination of the Federal House after

independence, all the easier. It is true that the Northern party did not get a majority at these elections, but Azikiwe's party gave it this majority by entering into coalition with it. I recall these facts now because Dr. Azikiwe is reported to have mentioned something about "the facts of Nigerian history" in making his stand for Biafra. I can only remark that he contributed a lot to this history, unless he was referring to the events of the last two years, which cannot be considered as a distinct historical phase, but as an episode, at best.

Of course, one can understand the present mood of the Ibos, for which the collective trauma of the Northern massacres is responsible. But the sympathy one may have for their cruel fate today should not lead us into accepting arguments that are not valid. It is a false kind of logic that sees in any refutation of Biafran arguments a lack of sympathy for their feelings and even an approval of the massacres perpetrated against them or an encouragement of genocide.

Thus, when Mr. Chukwukere puts forward the case for the break-up of Nigeria on the grounds that, as ethnic heterogeneity has obstructed the realisation of Nigerian unity, this is the only realistic course, I do not see how he then goes on to see Biafra as an answer. In the first place, the point about Nigeria being, as he says, "at best a geographical (British) expression" needs qualification. The various peoples of Nigeria were in contact with each other before the advent of the Europeans, and the Western part of Nigeria would most probably have been, unified in the wake of Dan Fodio's advance to the sea anyway. The Yorubas have had a historical relationship with the Binis to their East for centuries, and the Onitsha Ibos themselves trace their origin to Benin. In the Niger Delta, if Professor Dike's account of the area's history in the 19th century is of any significance, surely this is that the Europeans profited from rivalries among the local populations in order not only to further their trade but also to establish their political domination on the coast, and to extend this to the hinterland. Besides, I do not consider it such a negative thing that we should have been brought together by an outside force, for it is the most normal thing in the world. Unlike the poet, a nation is made, not born.

A Special Pleading

But even if one were to accept the principle that a nation must be based on ethnic homogeneity—a principle that wreaked havoc in Europe, causing not only the First World War but providing an

excuse for Hitler's aggression in the thirties—Biafra does not even qualify as a "nation" under these terms. Mr. Chukwukere confuses Ibo nationalism, which is real and manifests itself in Mid-Western Nigeria, with a Biafran front, which is an expedient, serving now as prop to the former. For Biafra was declared at the instigation and under the responsibility of the Ibos, who number more than half of the population of Eastern Nigeria. It is open to question whether the minorities—the Efiks, Ogojas, Ijaws, Ibibios, Kalabiris—are in full agreement with the idea. To argue against Nigeria on ethnic grounds and ignore the case against Biafra on the same grounds would be inconsistent—a flagrant case of special pleading.

What is more, the Ibos would enjoy a preponderance inside Biafra on a scale never watched by the Hausas in Nigeria. And there is no use in saying that the minorities are in agreement with Biafra because their chiefs have declared their support—by the same token, Africans in Rhodesia are in support of Smith's U.D.I. It is often argued too that the case of the minorities in Eastern Nigeria is put forward by Nigerians because of the oil in the Rivers—as if this important factor did not enter into the calculations that led to the decision to secede, creating the prospect of future strife within Biafra itself should it ever survive its present birthpains. It seems to me that Biafran "nationalism" is thus simply a substitution of one form of idealism for another.

Idealism, though, is hardly the word. The ideological foundation of Biafran nationalism is negative in two respects. It is narrow and sectional in an age when a broader and wider sense of identity is the African's only hope of salvation. The circumstances do not altogether justify this curious regression of Ibo leadership. It is a suspect kind of idealism that founders at the first rude shock, for an idea should shine all the more under stress. The second point that makes Biafra unattractive to me is its social implications. There is, something callous in the insistence of the elite upon the idea of Biafra in which the economic and social advantages will accrue mainly to it, but for which the masses, worked upon by skilful propaganda, will have fought and died, but who will bear the brunt of the disadvantages of the reduced area of economic activity that Biafra implies. The mass of petty-traders and workers, many of whom are already ruined, and all of whom face distress for a long time to come, are now fighting for a new "independence" which promises no more to them than Nigeria, and indeed much less.

Mr. Chukwukere does not touch upon this particular point because he sees the failure of Nigeria

only from the point of view of tribal problems. But isn't it possible to see it also from the social point of view? To see the tribal problem as a tremendously successful confidence trick played by the new political class that emerged after independence upon the masses, diverting the latter from their true concerns in order to ensure their own political advantage. None of the political parties in Nigeria had worked out a social programme at independence, and it is significant that the Action Group split, one of remote causes of the present turmoil in Nigeria, should have occurred precisely over the question of evolving a social philosophy. It is even more significant that the conservative elements that broke away from this party should have ultimately sought an alliance with the "aristocratic" party of the North, and that what remained of the A.G. should have gravitated towards the N.C.N.C. A division of political formations along natural lines began to take place in Nigeria about 3 years ago, a reflection of the growing wood of social unrest, marked by an accentuation of trade union militancy. Clearly, a big social problem exists in Nigeria which has been camouflaged so far by "tribal" politics. I would myself maintain that this problem is of far more importance than that posed by the varied ethnic composition of Nigeria.

Solution

Not only then is the tribal explanation too superficial for an understanding of the situation in Nigeria, the solutions Mr. Chukwukere proposes—either a confederation or an outright break-up of Nigeria—do not seem to me an answer. A confederal system in Nigeria on the basis of the four regions of the old federation would simply transfer the ethnic problem from the center to the regions, cutting minorities off from the over-all protection of the central government, and creating areas of interest for a few politicians. The disadvantages of a total break-up of Nigeria, even admitting that any central government anywhere in the world would accept a unilateral declaration of secession lying down, would start to be felt with the very winding-up process. How do we agree to part—especially when the problems of sharing assets and liabilities are raised? Such is the economic integration of Nigeria today and so huge are our foreign debts that we would be bound to quarrel on these pursuits anyway. Lastly, the repercussions of the Nigerian crisis in other African countries cannot be ignored. There is of course a difference between Katanga and Biafra, but surely the point is that circumstances will differ, but the precedent will remain. The con-

demnation of the Biafran move by the O.A.U. may seem like timidity to those who sympathise with Biafra, but can anyone doubt that to accept the principle of secession in Africa today would be to open the royal path to anarchy?

Diverted Energies

May I repeat that my arguing against Biafra does not mean that I do not see that the Ibos have been wronged. I would also add that there was a serious failure in leadership in Lagos at critical moments in the past year or so. But this does not mean that we cannot now be clear-headed in the face of the disaster that will overtake us all if this civil war is carried on much longer. One can admire the sense of commitment of the Ibos, their pluck and their resourcefulness, and still wish that such energy had been directed to a more constructive purpose. One can also admit the past weakness of the Federal authorities and yet find it possible to be in agreement with their refusal to cave in, and thus to undermine all over the continent the authoritative strength that our countries so badly need. There must be found a way out of this tragic vicious circle; and the Federal government could declare now, unilaterally, a cease-fire, accompanied by a more detailed and concrete peace plan offering solid guarantees, sanctioned by the O.A.U., to the Ibos, as well as to other ethnic groups in the country, for that matter. The Ibos themselves should call off the Biafran affair and press for redress and for their rehabilitation, if such a move is made.

As the constitution for the new Nigeria is still to be worked out, I would suggest that the Ibos should accept the principle of states, but demand that they be accorded at least two. The most feasible framework for an effective constitution in Nigeria is the system of states, whose main advantage, as I see it, is that it will give the small ethnic groups a chance not only to express themselves, but also to act as a moderating influence on the larger groups. Mr. Chukwukere suggested at one point of his article that we might adopt the Swiss solution. The constitution of Switzerland is in fact federal, despite the official title of that country, and I think his suggestion most apt, for the Swiss arrived at their present sensible solution only after fighting a senseless civil war.

Dr. Abiola Irele is a Research Fellow in French African Literature at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana. He is a Bini from Benin City, Mid-Western Nigeria and was educated in Ibadan University and the Sorbonne, Paris—Ed.

SIERRA LEONE AFTER THE "NON-COUPS"

1. Background to the March-1967 Elections

By K. A. B. Jones-Quartey

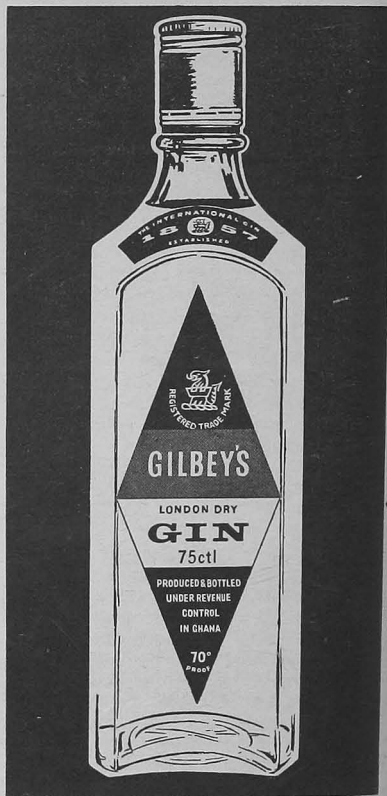
PRE-ELECTION conditions in Sierra Leone in 1966-67 were as chaotic and as potentially explosive as any in sub-Saharan Africa. (See my previous articles on the subject in this paper: L.O. II, Nos. 3, 4, 5, & 7). Politically there was a state of almost complete dysfunction in necessary factors of cohesion and viability such as leadership and consensus; on the other hand there was little to be seen or felt by way of dynamic political and economic planning, or of an ongoing social programme. Economically the national budget had never been more "lowly" nor the standard of living more depressed and depressing, compared with costs, consumer demand, the social expectation explosion, and so on. Above all, the relations between large sectors of the political community and a government which had converted itself rapidly into an oligarchy, then into an oligarch, were of the most hostile and disintegrative. In short a state of disequilibrium, dysfunction, and potential violence had settled upon the country.

This was because of the disastrous policies of the then Prime Minister, Sir Albert Margai, whose attempts to ape his latter-day model, Kwame Nkrumah, have eventually brought him and Sierra Leone to a condition even sadder than Nkrumah's and Ghana's. The Margai regime, like Nkrumah's, had begun in high hopes and great expectations; but, gradually at first then rapidly towards the end, it had become ideologically inflated, economically chaotic, and socially decadent. It had become also, inevitably and fatally, corrupt, tyrannical, and ripe for overthrow.

Albert Margai had inherited from his older brother, the late Sir Milton Margai, no wonderful bed of roses, as it was; Albert made sure it was a bower of thorns by the time he was through. His brother, the cagey old former colonial medical doctor, had been cast in a strictly conservative mould. Sir Milton was adroit and wise in the traditional ways, in which chiefs, for one, could be skilfully manipulated and manoeuvred into political acquiescence or action, by the employment of a combination of superstitious-fear techniques, financial largesse, and punitive sanctions or the threat of same; politicians and party men, for another, could be kept happy, or "snappy", by the tactics of the spoils system. To this extent, that is to say to the extent to

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which he could use the traditional social-control means of obligation, performance, recognition, approval and reward, for his basic political ends. Sir Milton Margai could and did have remarkable and consistent success. But he was also completely innocent of any possible accusation of modernism; he would without doubt steadfastly have held Sierra Leone, for as long as he could, to the quaintly "pre-modern" atmosphere in which he found and left the country. Under the likes of Sir Milton Margai Sierra Leone would, for instance, have kept on describing itself as "Ancient and Loyal"—meaning "ancient" from 1787*, and politically loyal to somebody else's monarch.

In Agony

When Albert Margai succeeded his brother in 1963 it was expected that he would change all that and get Sierra Leone fully into the 20th century. The people, in all their various ethnic, cultural, educational, and economic groupings, looked for new directions from this much younger, more dynamic man. At first the promises seemed to be on their way to fulfilment; by the end of 1965, however, and with very little change to be seen in the political or social profile of the country, it had become obvious to the people themselves, as well as to outside friends and observers, that Sierra Leone too was in agony and must sooner or later take her turn at the altar of catharsis-through-revolution.

The tragedy of Albert Margai's regime began to take final shape at the end of 1965. By this date the great Ghanaian Paradigm was in full flower: to worshippers ready for the vision, as well as to little African Hitlers and Mussolinis hungry for the bitch-goddess of power, Kwame Nkrumah was providing the answer. By this time the joint-names of Nkrumah and Ghana were a world phenomenon—in whichever light you cared to look at it—and Margai was avid to follow in the footsteps of the man he had decided to emulate. With the material evidence of Akosombo before everyone, of "Job 600", the "Kwame Nkrumah Motorway", and other items of construction busily going on and up daily in Ghana, and with Nkrumah creating alarm or admiration abroad and achieving "unity" and drive at home, it seemed impossible for anyone to go wrong by choosing him and Ghana as models.

This Margai did. By the end of 1965 and the

beginning of 1966 he was taking "his soundings on the idea of adopting a similar system"—that is, the one-party state—"for Sierra Leone", as Patrick Keatley put it (in the *Guardian* of March 25, 1967, p. 7). In March of '66 Margai published a Government White Paper setting out his one-party state proposals, to the accompaniment of mounting alarm and anger among the growing number of malcontents and dissidents in the country. Nor was this disturbance restricted to the non-members of the Sierra Leone People's Party; some even in the Margai organisation were in open alarm or covert rebellion.

The Rest of the Story

The rest of the story is well documented and widely remembered. The main summary points concerned: how at the beginning of the final phase Albert Margai had the army commander, Brigadier Lansana, lined up behind him; how with the promulgation of his one-party proposals (even after the collapse of the paradigm in Ghana the preceding month) relations between him and great numbers of the people had completely broken down, especially in the Freetown area;** how, progressively during 1966, Sierra Leone's parlous economic condition was brought home to the people through a series of humiliating shocks (such as withdrawal of recognition of credit-worthiness by Britain, humiliating loan conditions imposed by the World Bank, high prices plus scarcity of basic supplies, etc); how in February 1967, in the midst of the dangerous tensions of election preparations, Sir Albert suddenly announced the discovery of a plot to overthrow his Government and assassinate him and most of his principal Ministers; how he had on this account had seven army officers and an army chauffeur arrested and detained; and how, worst of all, it was learnt that the country's Head of Government had a secret agreement with the head of a foreign neighbour-state, namely Sekou Toure of Guinea, to come to the military aid of Margai in his own country, in case of just such emergency within Sierra Leone; how in fact Guinean soldiers had already been moved up to the borders between the two states; and how, finally, the general election of March 1967 had ended in the extraordinary non-coups of the few hours following the polling.

The developments since then provide another example of variables in political organisation,

* 1787 was the year of first settlement or colonisation.

**The situation deteriorated to the actual point where deplorable stories are still being told of the ex-Prime Minister exchanging vile insults with schoolboys from his car, openly in the streets.

disorganisation, and possibilities in rationalization. The unexpected twists which fortune gave to the outcome of the election, and some of the consequences of these twists are of the utmost importance to students of the contemporary history of African politics—the politics of independence and of development. No. 2 in this present series of articles will therefore continue the study, and will examine the facts and the implications of the election itself, with complete documentation.

Politics

ARE THE ABBOTT CRITICISMS REALLY SINCERE?

By

P. T. K. Aidam

(Lecturer, School of Administration)

THE PUBLIC debates generated ostensibly by the Abbott-Ghana agreement have been received in some quarters as truly reflecting the desired spirit in which the cherished freedom of expression should thrive in this country. The critics themselves have been at pains to preface their utterances with unnecessary disclaimers regarding motives other than what they choose to label their concern, in principle, over the national interest. To agree completely with these appraisals one has to ignore the manner of address of certain of the critics, the distortious interpretations of some of the provisions of the agreement and the transparently superficial treatment that has been accorded the entirety of the Abbott arrangements. It is also remarkable that very many salient features of the agreement have been side-tracked, clearly because they would help deflate the more pompous and flamboyant parts of the criticisms.

Doctrinaire Objections

Certainly the decision to invite private participation into some of the state enterprises is a competent one and is justified on practical grounds, given the facts surrounding the operations of a number of state enterprises. Objections merely on impractical doctrinaire grounds have no place in an intelligent and purposeful discourse. To suggest blandly that there are alternative approaches to private participation, without further elaborations spelling out the superiority of those methods in relation to the particular case, is the typical stance of the gadfly more inclined to stirring up controversy and caring little for practical solutions to present and pressing problems. Surely it cannot have

been forgotten that criteria that may be appropriate during the planning stages of a project may be significantly unsuited to decision in respect of completed projects or, as in the case of the Kwabena pharmaceutical production facilities, a salvage situation. It cannot be denied that there may be alternatives, inferior as well as superior, to private participation in a state business enterprise; it is not enough, however, to casually allude to these possibilities and then proceed airily to reject participation out hand.

The objections to the decision to concede control to the private participant, i.e. Abbott, do not appear to take into account the still-fresh history of public business enterprises in this country. The concession is particularly desirable if the right type of participant is to be attracted. In any case are we to say that the state should never invest in business unless it holds controlling interests? Let it be further submitted that conceding control to the private participant in an industry in which there is no backlog of the relevant experience and skills locally is a wise step. We have here a built-in protection against government itself, or its unwitting agents, from interfering with the operations of the firm to the mutual detriment of both sides. As our past and present commercial and industrial experience clearly shows, this step effectively insures against those of our beloved nationals who look upon state undertakings as venues of livelihood without the exertion of commensurate effort.

No Sell-out

There is no sell-out involved in Abbott controlling the new company, and such suggestions only portray a serious lack of appreciation of the nature of joint stock enterprises. For how is the part owner of common property to jeopardise the interest of the co-owner of that property without endangering his own equity therein? Or do we hold that "Abbott Pharmaceuticals Limited" is just so concerned with undermining Ghana's economy that it would openly invest NC450,000 in that cause? That would be a ridiculous supposition in the absence of evidence to this effect. In the present circumstances, it should not be too hard for anybody to acknowledge that allowing the "know-how" partner a fairly free hand in the organization and control of the business is calculated to ensure benefits to both parties.

There is no incongruity in conceding control to Abbott while Ghana contributes the major portion of the capital. On this score the critics do not appear to have made even a passing reference to the registered Regulations of "Abbott-

Ghana Limited" or to the general law regarding the operation of companies in this country or elsewhere. This is a most disappointing and regrettable omission. It may be stated for the benefit of the uninitiated that this sort of arrangement is not an unusual business practice, as even the slightest acquaintance with business organizations (sole proprietorships, partnerships, or incorporated joint-stock companies) would show.

Formal Regulations

In the Abbott case there is no difficulty in reconciling the desire of the government side to receive the larger share of the accrued earnings of the undertaking with the need to concede control to Abbott. The formal Regulations of the new company enable Ghana to receive NC55 of dividend in respect of her holding of 40,000 voting shares, as against every NC45 receivable by Abbott on its holding of 45,000 voting shares. In addition, Ghana will receive prior dividends on her holding of 15,000 preferred shares, which have to be remunerated before dividends can issue to the holders of the ordinary voting shares. In effect Ghana will always get more than 55 per cent of the total divisible profits of the company. The holding by Ghana of all of the company's preferred shares will also mean that until the company has accumulated losses in excess of NC850,000 the losses of the company will be borne in the ratio of 45 to Abbott and 40 to Ghana. It is only beyond this level of losses that Ghana even stands to lose any part of its equity that is stated in preferred shares. It must, therefore, be submitted that an arrangement under which Ghana collects more than 55 per cent of the divisible profits and picks up only 47 per cent of the initial losses up to NC850,000 does not stink—certainly not from Ghana's point of view.

The references to the NC450,000 debentures as part of Ghana's capital is somewhat misleading. In respect of this amount Ghana stands in relation to Abbott-Ghana Ltd. as a creditor whose claim to both loan capital and fixed interest has priority over shareholders' interests. Such claims have to be provided for before allowing for dividends or return of equity capital. The concurrent arrangement postponing payments in respect of this loan is natural and legitimate, if there must be initially assured to the company the required working capital the lack of which has been the bane of many a state enterprise.

In other respects as well the national interest continue to be safeguarded. The questions raised

about the renewable 99-year lease of the land on which the facilities stand are quite irrelevant. The terms are normal for the sort of project involved. The mutual valuation of the government investment at Kwabenya, including the land, appears to have been agreed for present utility purposes at NCI million. The leasehold then appears as a convenient device to facilitate the reversion of the title to the land should same become free in the future. The notional low rental cannot be the subject of further controversy, once it is realized that the present capital value of the land has already been incorporated in the total valuation of the Kwabenya facilities.

With regard to the seeming monopoly rights, it seems quite clear now that, by the indenture of August 22, 1967, the government has reaffirmed its right to regulate and direct trade and commerce generally, and any favoured treatment that Abbott-Ghana Ltd. receives could only properly be questioned if it turns out to be inordinately excessive as compared with the treatment of other producers who have to compete against imported goods. This is not the occasion for a full discussion of the merits of protecting infant industries.

The claim that Abbott will use its controlling position to Ghana's detriment is unjustified and tendentious. Abbott-Ghana Ltd. is subject to all our commercial laws, particularly the protective Sections 217 and 218, or the fiduciary provisions in Sections 203 through 207 of the Companies Code. Furthermore, there are certain company steps which can only be taken on the passage of a special resolution requiring 75 per cent consenting votes, which Abbott cannot muster unless Ghana agrees to the action. With these provisions, even a single dutiful and knowledgeable Ghana representative on the Board of Directors of the company can adequately protect our interests; indeed, in Dr. Tackie and Dr. Bluckoo Allotey, I would say that we have two such representatives on the Board.

Superficial Criticisms

The criticisms of the Abbott-Ghana agreement to date have been too superficial to be reflecting a sincere and honest concern, and it is believed by many that in certain cases we are witnesses to an unashamed promotion of personal desires to get ahead politically, socially, professionally or otherwise, without caring who gets hurt in the process, what brazen distortions are fed the public or how nauseating it all sounds. Perhaps only time will tell why the Abbott agreement was the occasion and the Commissioner for Industries the principal target.

Observer Notebook

Resignations, Dismissals and the Information World

IT HAS been an open secret that certain editors and editors-in-chief of State owned newspapers have been dismissed for some days now. The B.B.C. has carried it and the Pioneer has, in an editorial, raised a query as to its truth or falsity. But so far there has been no official confirmation or denial. It is also reliably learnt that the Commissioner for Information has tended his letter of resignation on the issue involving the dismissal of the editors. In the interests of the government and the public we believe that this issue should be clarified.

Import Licences

WE LEARN from reliable sources that although applications for 1968 import licences were invited in August this year, yet not a single import licence has been issued. The gravity of the situation need not be emphasized. The question is why this delay? It is alleged from sources close to the Ministry of Trade that this delay is due to the fact that the Bank of Ghana has been unable to allocate the requisite foreign exchange to the Ministry of Trade to enable the latter to act on the applications received. And we learn further that the Bank has not been able to allocate the necessary funds because they are still negotiating with the Ministry of Trade about whether or not they should have a hand in the issue of import licences as they used to do under the old regime. Could the Commissioner for Trade and the Governor of the Ghana Bank tell the public what the situation is, why the delay, and when importers should expect their licences. And we would also like to know whether the system of the "letter of intent" introduced by the Bank of Ghana during the old regime worked in the best interest of the country.

Measuring Public Opinion in Ghana

LIKE a bolt out of the blue "an independent foreign firm of consultants", Messrs. Jeafan Limited, has suddenly started polling public opinion to determine the extent of the popularity of the N.L.C. in the country and, ostensibly, when Ghanaians want a return to civilian rule. In themselves opinion polls are not objectionable. Certain dangers, however, inhere in them. All opinion polls, therefore, must be viewed critically.

This is necessary if they are not to be used to pull wool over people's eyes.

Thus a few questions must be asked about this particular poll. Who asked for it and why? Do some people suspect that the people of this country do not want a return to civilian rule? Who is paying for the poll? Who are the interviewers? Do the interviewers speak the indigenous languages of the areas they poll well, since illiterates are also polled? How do they choose the people they interview? Are the people interviewed representative of the country? Can the opinions of those who are interviewed be properly said to be typical of public opinion at the time the interviews take place?

The above questions need convincing answers by Messrs Jeafan Limited. The few answers that have so far been extracted out of the firm's representatives, as on television, have been unsatisfactory. It is difficult to believe that the firm itself is spending N1,000.00 per week on this poll. If it is, then it is irresponsible to advertise the firm through an opinion poll. To poll public opinion merely as a means of advertising a firm, as has been claimed by the firm's spokesman, is to put truth and accuracy at a discount and a premium on gimmickry. When it is return to civilian rule that is involved then the future of the country is being made to hang on the private interest of a foreign firm.

But the details of the poll make one frankly suspicious. How is a man to answer such a question as "Do you like the N.L.C.?" And how is the answer tested? Who does not want a return to civilian regime? Is it being seriously suggested that some people want a military-cum-police government to continue indefinitely? Was the question "Do you want a civilian government?" properly explained to those interviewed, with all its implications? The question about the year of civil rule is so tendentious that one is apt to suspect that it lets the cat out of the bag. Why choose this year when less than one month is left of it? What significance is being attached to this curious fact that out of seven-hundred and twenty-five people asked this question at the second interview one hundred were prepared to have an immediate return to civilian regime despite the attendant dangers of such a precipitate, "de-militarization"? Lastly, why leave out the two years of 1968 and 1969 for return to civilian rule? After all 1968 would appear to be ideal, neither too far to compromise the army nor too early. On the outside surely 1969 should be the limit? Why jump over these two years? Why, Messrs Jeafan Limited?

Lufthansa at the Airport

ON 9TH December, a day before Human Rights Day, an incident at the airport made a prominent Ghanaian lady's blood boil—with very good reason. There has been a tendency to play down the incident, but it is an incident that should engage the serious attention of all Ghanaians.

Mrs. Annie Jiagge, a High Court Judge whose husband was involved has issued a detailed account of what took place. In a nutshell, her husband and one Miss Asubonteng, weeks before the 9th, booked places on Lufthansa, the German Airline, to travel to West Germany. On the day before the incident their bookings were confirmed and on the day of the flight they checked in well before flight time. When the plane arrived, for some reason that was not immediately clear Mr. Jiagge and Miss Asubonteng who were 7th and 8th respectively on the passenger manifest were jumped over in favour of five Europeans who were 9th to 13th on the manifest. This, when those who were 1st to 4th on the manifest did not turn up and Mr. Jiagge and Miss Asubonteng had checked in before some of the Europeans who were allowed on the plane.

On the surface of it this was flagrant discrimination against the only two Ghanaians who were booked on the plane. It is not unnatural that since the plane was known to be full of South Africans Mrs. Jiagge should have concluded that Lufthansa had given in to their wishes and discriminated against Ghanaians on grounds of colour. South African whites are sworn to treat Blacks with contempt. This is the official view of the South African government, a government which has been repeatedly elected by an all-white oligarchy since 1948. It is true that Mrs. Jiagge cannot "prove" that what happened was racial discrimination. But surely Lufthansa should have given a more convincing explanation than its statement of December 11 did. To say that it was all due to "a technical mistake in the booking system which caused an over booking of the seating capacity" is inadequate, for it fails to explain why Europeans who booked and checked in after the two Ghanaians were preferred to the Ghanaians. Until that is sufficiently explained one will continue to wonder what Lufthansa is up to.

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Letters

Assets Commission

SIR—Attention has been drawn to the article entitled "Savundra allegations and Commissions of Enquiry" in the *Legon Observer* dated 8 December, 1967.

I have been instructed by the Jiagge Assets Commission to state that the assets of Messrs K. A. Gbedemah, Krobo Edusei and H. S. T. Provencal had been investigated by the Commission. The cases of the three gentlemen in question were re-opened in accordance with the stated policy of the Commission, that whenever new issues arise they will be investigated whether or not a case has been closed.

Allegations made before the Manyo-Plange Commission cannot be accepted as evidence before the Jiagge Commission and Mr. Idrissu was therefore invited to give evidence. Each of the three gentlemen had the chance to cross-examine Mr. Idrissu and then state his case. It is incorrect that Mr. Gbedemah alone appeared before the Jiagge Commission on the Savundra issue.

It was the Jiagge Assets Commission that investigated the assets of the three gentlemen and the Commission has a duty under N.L.C.D. 72 to recommend that assets that were unlawfully acquired be confiscated. It has a duty to investigate any allegation that assets in the possession of these gentlemen were unlawfully acquired. Whether the witnesses appear before the Manyo-Plange Commission or not, they still have to satisfy the Jiagge Commission why they should not be estopped from denying an allegation of corruption made in public against them.

It is for the Manyo-Plange Commission or the Sowah Commission for that matter to subpoena Mr. K. A. Gbedemah or any other witness to give evidence on any issue before it if it considers it necessary.

Jiagge Assets Commission
Supreme Court Buildings
P.O. Box 119,
Accra.

Q. K. K. Bruce
(Secretary)

Undercurrents and Abbott

SIR—In an editorial in Vol II No. 25 you attempted to analyse the factors which generated and created interest in the debate. You mentioned opposition to foreign domination of our economy as one. You went further to point out the divergent views held about political leadership, policies to be pursued, etc. and above all regional/ethnic representation in public appointments. It is true the ban on political activity can hardly allow these divisions in opinions to be clearly discerned, much more to be grouped under one category.

But surprisingly enough, your editorial argued that the agreement provided a useful peg—ethnic. How come when you immediately suggest that these views 'criss-cross'. I personally have no quarrel with the critics of the Abbott Agreement. But I wholly disagree with your conclusions of the undercurrents of the debate. How did your paper come to the conclusion that the defenders of the Agreement feel the criticisms were motivated by the desire to destroy

the 'dominant' position held by one ethnic group in the Civil Service, Commissions of Enquiry, and in Government? Furthermore how did you come to know that students in this university are divided on this ethnic basis? There is division in fact not based on ethnicity but on the appropriate means by which to persuade the Government to realise the deficiencies of the Agreement and amend them, if possible. I invite your learned team to conduct an opinion poll on this campus and you will find how miserably your conclusions fall. I venture to point out that any person who sees tribalistic tendencies in another person is himself a tribalist. Your conclusion lacks objectivity and smacks of emotionalism.

In this era we are deceiving ourselves into believing that we are in a world of rationality. I wish to maintain that we are only attempting to cling to rationality even without reason. I wish your learned team creates a true consciousness which is a pre-condition for becoming responsibly involved in the transformation of our society. It is only when we acquire this true consciousness that we can act on the basis of our moral centre.

Commonwealth Hall,
Legon.

Ernest Dumor

Abbott-Ghana Ltd.

SIR—Since the "ABBOTT" affair came to light I have had the opportunity of studying the original agreement and the "Final" agreement signed by the Government of Ghana for, and on behalf of, the people of Ghana with a firm called ABBOTT from Illinois, United States of America.

Both documents i.e. the original and the so-called revised version remind me of "Neo-Colonialism", a concept which unfortunately only very few people can easily identify. To say the least, those who negotiated such an agreement must bow their heads in shame rather than appear in public to show us that their hands are not stained as the Commissioner of Industries would make us believe.

Ghanaians have had enough of experts who are steering the Nation clear from the economic mess and mismanagement of the former government. But the ABBOTT-GHANA agreement casts a very serious doubt on the efforts by those people presently responsible for our economic destiny. In fact if the ABBOTT-GHANA agreement represents the manner in which we are repairing such economic mess then I would say without hesitation that there is a greater doom ahead of Ghana.

Mr. Editor, it is a palpable national disgrace for any Government to allow a foreign firm which is a minority share holder to have such an absolute control in a concern in which the Nation is the majority share holder.

The explanation by the Commissioner for Industries that the agreement was the best that Ghana could batter for was so unconvincing that further comment on it will be unnecessary.

The ABBOTT-GHANA agreement is one of the many agreements signed by Ghana since the February 1966 'exercise'. I believe the people of Ghana would want to know what the other agreements are like. It is possible others are worse.

P.O. Box 46,
Tema

Kwame Agbeli

Neo-colonialism and the future of Ghana

SIR—Perhaps one of the most hated words in post-coup Ghana is SOCIALISM. In a sense this is understandable because it brings to our memory, a regime which had some honourable ideals but which lacked the necessary capable men to implement these ideals.

It is not Socialism which we must repudiate but rather those people who have in one way or the other demonstrated their unsuitability for the implementation of socialist programmes. After all socialism can rightly be regarded as the Economic counterpart of democracy. There is nothing wrong with creating conditions under which all men who are able and willing to work are assured of jobs for which they are best suited, and also conditions in which it is not too difficult for the son of a common labourer to become a University Professor provided he has the ability.

In our enthusiasm to criticize Nkrumah's regime, we have to be a bit more circumspect and generous. We can never brush aside the bright side of Nkrumah, who must be given credit for at least two qualities of his—his earlier but later insincere efforts to help the poor and the unprivileged, and also his uncompromising stand against those foreign powers who enter into unfair economic and political bargains with the developing countries. It is regrettable, however, that Nkrumah failed to see that neo-colonialism, as he termed this economic and political phenomenon, is not an exclusive characteristic of the Western Powers, but a quality which is evident in the Communist countries as well.

The Abbott-Ghana affair underscores to the cynics what neo-colonialism is. Recent articles in our papers about the affair show that our "intellectuals" are now waking up from their deep political slumber. The Congo mercenary affair also shows that the colonial powers and capitalist interests may be deprived of their political power in Africa but they will go to any extent to maintain, or at least share, economic power. The Rhodesian affair should make us ask whether Westminster Constitutional niceties and the much vaunted British sense of fair play really stand up to the test of crisis. The alliance between Britain and Russia in the Nigerian Crisis also shows that in the last analysis, the Capitalists and the Communists use equally deplorable methods to achieve their objectives.

After relieving Nkrumah of his great responsibilities, what we have to do is to supplement his good ideas with a set of theories which are strictly Ghanaian in character and then implement these with zeal and sincerity. "Theory without practice is empty and practice without theory is blind". Those who hold ultimate political power today, will be failing this nation if they impose on us those so-called technocrats who because of lack of the mandate to rule, show utter disregard for the interests of the nation and the sufferings of the common man. Theirs in his "History of the French Revolution" said that "God gave justice to men only at the price of struggle". Let us not sow seeds which will sooner or later germinate and create social unrest and revolution.

Institute of Statistics,
University of Ghana, Legon.

H. D. Arthur

The O.A.U. and the Mercenaries

SIR—If reports which have circulated in these parts for the past few days are true then they represent a most disturbing state of affairs for Africa. The reports have it that the OAU Special Committee on Mercenaries has asked all the Mercenaries, now disarmed in Rwanda, to sign a Declaration that they will not return to Africa again. Apparently the implication is that once they have signed this Declaration, they are free men.

To put it mildly, this is an unpardonable act of folly on the part of the OAU. One seriously suspects that this is the outcome of diplomatic pressure from the Western world and the International Red Cross Movement. The white mercenaries, by themselves, have caused more chaos and bloodshed in the Congo than any other single group of foreigners, and what they deserve is nothing short of the severest punishment demanded by Congolese law for treason.

How can Africa forgive and forget so easily? It is seriously submitted that the Declaration signed by the mercenaries is worthless and it is worthless for the following reasons:

1. There is a manifest contradiction between the OAU's role as defined by its Charter and the practical implementation of this Declaration. By the OAU Charter, its chief concern is with international matters but the regulation of immigration is a domestic matter for every state—a subject over which the OAU has no jurisdiction normally. If any member country chose to invite mercenaries into its territory, it could plead that the matter was wholly within its domestic jurisdiction. Malawi, for example, did not take part in the last OAU meeting and presumably does not consider herself bound by any such Declaration. Besides, having regard to Banda's recent mad-drive to flirt with South Africa under the guise of "Realism", nothing prevents him from inviting mercenaries to help put down resistance movements in Southern Africa. Technically, she would be within her Sovereign rights to choose who shall be harboured within her boundaries. And Malawi is in Africa!
 2. South Africa is also in Africa and not a member of the OAU. She has in fact, been the source of recruitment of several of these mercenaries. Are we to believe that because of this Declaration expelling mercenaries from Africa, South Africa will comply? It will be fainthearted to think so.
 3. On past performance African countries agree on questions of policy but not in their implementation. When the OAU decided to break off diplomatic relations with Britain over Rhodesia only a handful had the courage to respect that decision to the full. How can the OAU ensure that, this time, this Declaration will be honoured by all its members?
 4. In the unfortunate civil war that has plagued Nigeria since June there have been conflicting reports of the presence of mercenaries on the battle-front. If these reports should be true, it means that some mercenaries are still active in Africa. What prevents those rounded up in Rwanda from teaming up with their "Colleagues" elsewhere on the African continent to carry on the war of destruction?
- The painful truth is that the OAU is impotent and powerless to ensure that the Declaration is honoured and carried out fully. In realistic terms, any country

which chooses to flout the Declaration can do so with impunity. It is indeed a tragedy that these mercenaries have been left to their freedom and that justice has not been done to those countless. What has happened in the Congo is a real and painful lesson to Africa. It can happen anywhere else tomorrow. That is why it is wrong to exchange these mercenaries for a mere Declaration on paper. There are too many mercenaries ready and willing to take advantage of the collective generosity of Africans expressed through this Declaration.

546 Lillian Penson Hall,
Talbot Square,
Freetown, Sierra Leone.

Albert Fiadjoe

School Curricula

SIR—There was a note in *West Africa*, Nov. 25, No. 2634, that the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ghana has called for a revision in schools curricula in Ghana. It is very interesting to read this; equally it is a healthy sign at this point in our development to re-examine our modes of thought and the methods used to socialize the young in order that they may be prepared adequately to meet the challenge of nation building.

In this direction, there are certain basic assumptions to be kept in mind: (a) traditional-oriented outlook (b) modern technological oriented outlook and (c) a hybrid of the traditional and the modern. One of these assumptions or models, if kept in the forefront, will give direction to the planners of the schools' curricula. The

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planners must be conversant with the direction the state is moving towards. If they are aware of the ideological as well as the structural outlook of the nation then a move is made in a purposeful direction.

Apparently we are modernizing. When a nation asks for technological implements and when it builds bureaucratic institutions in and around the system, one asks for modernity. We need a value system which will meet with the demands of the day. Often we read the comments of people in your reputable **Legon Observer** that some people, in the normal work situation, behave dysfunctionally. At a deeper level of analysis, the rationale behind this behaviour may be sought from the conflicting values. A person may be alternating between two poles, rural behaviour and urban behaviour. It becomes more confusing when one is in such a dual framework. Therefore, in planning curricula one must take the needs of the nation into consideration. It would be futile to ignore the family as it is the most important institution in the whole social structure.

What benefit will the nation get, from the point of view of development, if there is no continuity of equal experience between the home and the school, for example if after school, the child goes home to find a different set of codes, norms and values operating.

My basic submission therefore is that the planners of curricula must be in such a position that they are able to take many factors into consideration vis-a-vis the social institutions operating within the system, as the school is part of the system.

So often one reads from the Sociological literature the complexity of norms and values co-existing in the urban milieu. Often one comes across people who are "in town", but for all practical purposes, are "of the town". To bridge this gap will be the job of the curriculum planners, a difficult but useful assignment for the nation. If urban centre is the civilizing agent, the broker of what is desirable as well as the ideological pathfinder need to set standards throughout the length and breath of the country.

3622, Durocher St.,
Montreal, P.Q.
Canada.

A. P. Twumasi

The Study of Ghanaian Languages

SIR—With the establishment of Universities in the country, a start should be made by the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon for the study of Ghanaian languages. If it is essential for educated persons to learn foreign languages, ancient and modern, then it is equally necessary that chairs should be established for the study of Fante, Asante, Ewe, Hausa dialects, in the Institutes of higher learning.

Great scholars as the late Dr. Akrofi and Rev. G. Acquah contributed immensely to the spoken and written Akan languages which were to become the standard type in our vernacular language. In some European Universities, there are strong and powerful faculties which specialise in African and Oriental studies. These Universities attract students who specialize in native languages, religion and anthropology. You cannot live and work with the inhabitants of any region without some knowledge of their way of life.

I look forward to the day when Institutes for the study of Ghanaian languages will be established all over the world for the dissemination of Ghanaian

languages and culture, as is being done by some foreign governments in the country.

University College of Cape Coast,
Cape Coast.

E. Boateng

Black Africa

SIR—In his exposition of recent political history of Ghana, Mr. Howe, in his **Black Africa**, states inter alia: "Other leading members of the U.G.C.C. (United Gold Coast Convention) were William Ofori Atta... and Ako Adjei, a young barrister who, with Ofori-Atta, later joined the successful breakaway movement of Kwame Nkrumah" (p. 232).

As far as we know, William Ofori-Atta never for a moment, either privately or publicly, "joined" the Nkrumah group. In spite of humiliation, threats and arbitrary arrest and detention, William Ofori-Atta never wavered from his original political beliefs and convictions. From June 1949, when Kwame Nkrumah founded his now discredited Convention People's Party, to February 1966, when both the Party and its leader were happily overthrown, Willie and his illustrious uncle, J. B. Danquah of blessed memory, fearlessly and stoically opposed Kwame Nkrumah and his small 'gods'. The only Ofori Atta who "joined the breakaway movement" of Kwame Nkrumah, much to the disappointment of the progressive opinion of the Abuakwa state, was Aaron Ofori-Atta, later to be known as Kofi Asante Ofori-Atta. It was he who, after feeding fat on state funds while in Britain, returned to form a despicable 'triumvirate' in the Abuakwa state with Nkrumah's leading 'gaping sychophant', Kwaku Boateng, and Akwasi Amoako Atta, to destroy one by one almost all the cherished values and traditions of the state.

There is another statement in Mr. Howe's book which should be clarified. Writing on the same subject, Mr. Howe maintains that the United Gold Coast Convention functioned "under the leadership of Dr. J. B. Danquah and Samuel R. Wood, former Secretary of the Aborigines (Rights) Protection Society" (p. 232).

Here too, it must be corrected that, although S. R. Wood was a very influential member of the A.R.P.S., he was never a leading member of the U.G.C.C. One wonders whether S. R. Wood was even an active politician in the late 1940's. Perhaps the only public action taken together by S. R. Wood and Dr. J. B. Danquah was their common expression of alarm and indignation at Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia, in 1935. Dr. Danquah was at this time Secretary of the Gold Coast delegation to England led by his brother, Nana Sir Ofori Atta. There was also another political mission to England during this very period consisting of two officers of the A.R.P.S., George Moore and Samuel R. Wood, who came to protest to the Secretary of State for Colonies against certain "obnoxious laws" enacted by the Governor, Sir Shenton Thomas, and to demand a reform of the constitution. Both Dr. Danquah and Mr. Wood took the opportunity of their presence in London at the time to join the Committee of the International African Friends of Abyssinia which aimed at the maintenance of the territorial integrity and the political independence of Abyssinia. As far as the post-war political movements are concerned, Mr. Wood was neither a leader nor an influential member of any of the political parties of the period.

Other minor mistakes may be observed: first, the history of Ghana has never known Aborigines Protection Society (p. 232) but ABORIGINES' RIGHTS PROTECTION SOCIETY second, the Aggrey referred to at page 237 was Dr. James Emmanuel Kwegyir Aggrey and NOT Dr. Rudolf Aggrey.

It is hoped that Mr. Russell Howe would immediately rectify these minor errors in his subsequent publication of "Black Africa" in order to straighten up our historical records.

Gilbert Murray Hall,
University of Leicester,
Leicester, U.K.

S. K. B. Asante

That Expensive Day

SIR—On 8 February, 1964, the proscribed C.P.P., led by Mr. Kwaku Akwei and the other socialist boys, organised a huge demonstration in the University of Ghana, "a neo-colonialist and anti-C.P.P. institution". During this demonstration, the demonstrators entered the halls of residence and looted valuable articles.

On the next day, when members of the Students' Representative Council, accompanied by Professor W. E. Abraham, assessed the cost of damage done, it was said that about N1,500 worth of university property had been damaged or stolen.

Now that the assets and conduct of these nation-wreckers are being probed, I appeal to the Chairmen of the various Commissions of Inquiry to compel Mr. Kwaku Akwei and the other organisers of the demonstration (appearing before them) to refund to government chest or to the university the cost of the damage caused by their obviously irresponsible and capricious venture.

Oda Secondary School
P.O. Box 200
Akim Oda.

G. A. Frempong

National Union of Seamen

SIR—Since the Seamen Union was formed in 1966, the Union has failed miserably to fulfil her objectives. The constant dismissal of both officers and Executive members has contributed greatly to the instability of the Union. About eighty-five per cent of the members are illiterate; this fact enables the executive to manipulate the Union in their personal interests. Hardly would they consult or invite views from the members before reaching a decision, nor do they implement what is written in the Bye-laws. For example, Offence No. 13 states that: "Theft of Union property or misappropriation of Union Funds—calls for the expulsion of the offender from the Union"; yet Mr. A. Kayi Essien, the ex-General Secretary of N.U.S., who violated this law was not expelled from the Union but rather removed from office and put aboard m.v. "Korle Lagoon".

It is well known that our officers are embezzling funds with impunity. There are other oddities like the use of "Operation One Year".

It would be highly appreciated if Mr. B. A. Bentum, General Secretary of Ghana Trades Union Congress would use his good offices to look into the affairs of this particular Union:

- By calling upon the Auditor General to audit the Union's accounts
- Briefing the officers of N.U.S. about distribution

of Labour and Trade Unionism.

(c) Drawing up a Constitution

(d) Appointing an economist or labour expert experienced in shipping to advise the Union

Black Star Line,
P.O. Box 259,
Takoradi.

G. O. McClean

Lack of Courtesy in a Public Officer

SIR—I went to the Accra International Air Terminal on the 11th instant to buy some stamps and some air letter cards as well as to post some letters. Some of the letters I wanted to post were air letter cards so there was no problem in posting those. Others were, however, inland letters with no stamps on them.

I first checked up at the post office to see if it was open and found that the door was shut. I therefor walked round to the pillar post box and dropped the fully prepaid air letter cards and came back into the building to await the opening of the Post Office. While at the kiosk or newspaper stand I read a notice pasted on the door of the Post Office. Among other bits of information the notice announced that on week days the office opens from 7.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. and from 2 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. I checked up on the time from my wrist watch which was 3 minutes to 8 a.m. Thinking that the door was shut because it was chilly or windy or both, I worked on the handle slightly to see if it was locked. The door opened at this but I was immediately ordered, in a stern voice, to "close the door" I did not obey. The order was repeated several times but it all sounded strange to me. I was then asked, "have you knocked! when you want to enter your father's room don't you knock!" I said nothing. "Why do you do things like that, big man?" I was asked. I then said that I did not see how one knocks to enter a post office. "Then come in and stand! when an office is closed don't you knock!" In reply I asked, "have you closed?" and the answer was, "yes we have closed. Don't talk to me this morning". I then remarked, "you sound rather queer to me this morning". I then shut the door and returned to the kiosk and eventually went away without buying any stamps or posting my unprepaid letters.

Sir, what is the use of the notice on the door? Has it been stuck there in order to lure people in at the wrong times to receive such reprimands? How could the officer possibly liken the post office to my "father's room" or indeed, to any private room? Why could he not tell me that the counter was not yet open to the public? In any case, what was wrong in my opening the door of the airport post office and at a time it was announced to have been opened for the past 27 minutes? Why could the officer behave like that when all over the world, it is permissible to queue up in a post office or a bank and wait to be served? Why is that officer not heeding all the campaigns and national calls for courtesy in public officers and greater output of work? How could such discourtesy and arrogance be allowed at our post offices and, moreover, at one of the entry points into our country? When some post office employees complain of "poor pay and poor service" what exactly do they mean when they exhibit such signs of poor services themselves?

Ministry of External Affairs,
P.O. Box M53,
Accra.

Dr. H. Limann

Community Centre in Bawku Town

SIR—Letters have been sent to all Canton Chiefs in the Kusasi area requesting them to bring their subjects to Bawku Town to build a Community Centre through communal labour. Though the Bawku town needs a community centre, it is never the duty of the poor villagers to labour for towns-men to enjoy.

I am rather very sorry that the organiser seems not to be interested in the well-being of these poor villagers. How can the Chief of Sapeliga and his subjects take part in building a community centre through communal labour in Bawku town when these people stay almost 30 miles away from the town. How many times in a year do you think a peasant farmer from Sapeliga would visit Bawku town to take part in the enjoyment of this centre? Rate payers in Sapeliga range from 5,000 to 7,000 persons. Owing to bad roads food can hardly get to this village. Worikambo and Bugri are also villages almost 28 miles each away from Bawku town.

The roads that were existing between these places and Bawku are now unusable, and the market trucks have to pass through bush paths on market days to enable the poor villagers get their day-to-day essential goods. It is also apparently clear that there are no good drinking wells in all these villages.

If the Organiser of the above-mentioned project is a good citizen, he must call the villagers to:—

- (a) Build market-sheds in their respective village markets to protect themselves from sun and rains.
- (b) Sink good drinking wells in order to escape germs.
- (c) Build good roads to ensure quick food supplies and other commodities that cannot be obtained in villages.

P.O. Box 8, Anicks Dinko
Bawku

The Prah Report

SIR—One finds, on a visit to Aecra or any other urban area in Ghana, that workers queue for a considerably long time for bus rides home and to their offices and factories. In desperation and anger many workers go by "tro-tro" lorries, and the relatively well-off go by taxis.

It is well-known that our bus system is shabbily organized and operated. It was with considerable relief that the public welcomed the appointment of the Prah Committee to look into our bus service. Even though the Committee has submitted its Report to the NLC nothing has been heard of it. In the public interest can this Report be published soon?

Community 2, Augustus Mensah.
Tema.

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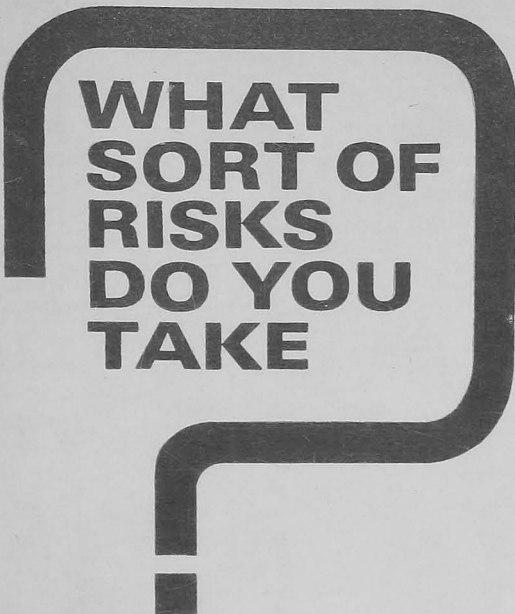
We would like to remind our prospective contributors about some of the rules governing contributions:—

The MAXIMUM length of articles is 4 pages quarto, typed double-space; letters should not exceed 1½ pages quarto, and should be exclusive to the "Legon Observer".

Lengthy contributions are likely to be delayed or not published at all. Contributions not exclusive to the L.O. will not be published.—Editor.

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Book Review

THE UNFINISHED REVOLUTION: RUSSIA 1917-67

(By Isaac Deutscher, N.Y. Oxford Univ. Press
1967 115 pp.)
Reviewed by
S. Ryan

THIS exciting little book must surely be one of the most important to appear on the Soviet Union in the last few years. In it, Deutscher, perhaps the most outstanding historian of the Russian Revolution, attempts to evaluate the performance of the Soviet regime over the past fifty years. As the title suggests, Deutscher believes that the Revolution is still far from being complete, but he does give credit to the Bolsheviks for having transformed Russia from a savage and backward oriental despotism into one of the world's great industrial and military powers, notwithstanding the extraordinary losses that that country sustained during two world wars, civil strife and foreign intervention. Although outspokenly critical of the Soviets, Deutscher does not agree that a modified Tsarism might have achieved the same results, and that the Revolution was therefore unnecessary. Russia, he asserts, could only have made the strides it has by drawing on her agricultural resources and the extraordinary exertions of her workers. The Tsarists, he believes, were too dependent on Western finance capital to attempt such a revolutionary development strategy and were too feudal in their orientation to release farming from the paralysing grip of the aristocracy which such a strategy would have called for. Moreover, they lacked the political strength and moral authority that would have been needed to extract from the workers the kind of sacrifices that the programme demanded.

Deutscher nevertheless believes that the same results could have been achieved with more order and rationality, and without the terror, blood, tears and moral degradation that Stalin inflicted on the Russian people. But Deutscher studiously avoids telling us what these alternative strategies might have been, though at one point he seemed to have found the answer in "voluntary co-operation." He nevertheless expresses uncertainty as to how meaningful that alternative really was.

Again, without really attempting to define its elements, Deutscher tells us that a Leninist "strategy" might have been less counter-productive than Stalin's. Stalin, he says, was the grave-

digger of the Revolution, the one who betrayed its conscience by holding on to bureaucratic state power long after the Bolshevik trusteeship had been rendered unnecessary by the recovery of the working class.

Deutscher does realise, as a good Marxist should, that it was not the personality of Stalin that was solely responsible for the aberrations of the Revolution. Quoting Khrushchev, he asserts that Stalin was no mere 'giddy despot' but an uneasy symbiosis of Marxism and the savage and backward Russian environment. Much of the seeming irrationality of Stalinism and indeed Leninism was occasioned by the manner in which the Revolution took place. The telescoping of the bourgeois and proletarian revolutions "produced a long series of crises which could not be managed by normal methods of statecraft, political accommodation or manoeuvre." As is the case with many new nations today, the pre-conditions of genuine socialism were totally lacking in Russia. Against the stark backwardness of Tsarist Russia the democratic aspirations of the Leninists were powerless. "Scarcity inexorably breeds inequality where there is not enough food, clothing and housing for all, a minority will grasp what it can while the rest go hungry, clothed in rags and crowded in slums". The same tragedy is now being enacted all over the **tiers monde**.

Deutscher is also fiercely critical about the deficiencies of contemporary Soviet society. He complains about the continuing inequality in the distribution of wealth and social benefits, about the lack of decent housing—the **average** room space per person is still only 6 square yards—and about the Machiavellian trade union policies (i.e. socialist competition) that are still being used to turn worker against worker and prevent the formation of working class identity and solidarity. Deutscher also claims that a deliberate attempt is still being made to isolate the enterprising workers from their less competent colleagues, and that this manipulated "brain-drain" has condemned the latter to social and political debility.

The monopoly of political, economic and cultural power that the "new class" exercise over Soviet citizens is also roundly condemned. Soviet bureaucrats, he says, exercise power greater than that wielded by any possessing class in modern times. But Deutscher's use of the term "new class" is somewhat different from that of Djilas. Although he is unsure of its actual size, he believes that the "new class" is much smaller than Djilas suggests. It does not include all the 12 million or so members of the bureaucracy, specialists, intelligentsia etc., many of whom he

says enjoys standards of living no higher than the British lower middle class. Some earn even less than highly skilled Soviet workers. Only the upper reaches of the bureaucracy, part hierarchy and military personnel constitute a genuine **nouveaux riches** strata, and even then, these lack some of the basic attributes of an exploiting class. For one thing, the group lacks self confidence and feels continuously driven by guilt feelings to conceal its identity and share of the national cake. As much as is possible, it avoids conspicuous expenditure and dares not flaunt its anti-egalitarianism too nakedly as could a capitalist ruling class, which did not have to depend on an egalitarian ideology for its legitimacy and survival. Moreover, the upper strata has not succeeded in isolating itself as a caste since ideology and the needs of an expanding economy have resulted in massive and rapid social mobility.

Despite this open class system, the privation of the masses remain real as does the smouldering antagonism between town and country. Soviet citizens are said to be angry that a super-power such as Russia cannot provide a better standard of living for its people. In the sphere of civil liberties frustration is also evident despite the

disappearance of concentration camps and the cruder forms of police terror. The nation is beginning to recover its mind and speech, but is thwarted by the slow pace and the hypocrisy of de-Stalinisation. "The half freedom the Soviet Union has won since Stalin's days can indeed be even more excruciating than a complete and hermetic tyranny". The Soviet people are also hungering for the full story of the revolution and for information about some of the men who helped to make it, but who in this anniversary year still remain nameless.

For all his criticism of the Soviet elite whom he dismisses as an "arrogant bureaucratic oligarchy, incorrigible in their national narrow mindedness and egoism", Deutscher still has an abiding faith in the Marxism eschatology and continues to believe that a Marxist apocalyptic "happening" is imminent in the West. Indeed, he explicitly rejects the neo-Bernsteinian "myth" of secular prosperity and argues instead that it was the unfortunate isolationist policy of Stalin rather than the inherent strength of capitalism that has been responsible for the "colossal myth of the so-called failure of socialism". In pursuit of the mirage of Socialism in one country, Stalin, and

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now his successors, have caused the defeat of Socialism in many countries, and have exposed the Soviet Union itself to mortal peril.

There is no doubt that Deutscher's book will be widely read and that it will provoke discussion for some time to come. For this reason, it is something of a pity that Deutscher did not take the time to spell out what he believes the real alternatives to Stalinism ought to have been. Indeed he has left largely unanswered the age-old question as to whether or not Stalin was a necessary evil.

Matters Arising

LIBERIA'S ROLE IN AFRICA

By

J. Christopher Ricks

(Second Secretary and Consul, Liberia Embassy, Accra)

I WRITE to emphasize, *inter alia*, the fact that no one can change a people's true history—let alone by mere myths and blatant absurdities or slanders and bigotry—in reply to the libellous article entitled "Liberia's Role In Africa" which appeared in Vol. II No. 22, 27 October—9 November, 1967 issue of the "Legon Observer" by one Mr. Yaw Saffu, whose journalistic standard and taste can do very little to enhance the reputation of any paper. It is amusing, to say the least, that an article so entirely devoid of the elementary scruples of scholarship was accorded such a prominence and space by editors who are also professors of so outstanding an institution of learning as the University of Ghana, regardless of their professional and ethical responsibility to determine the policy and content of their paper. This reinforces the Embassy's reason for finding it difficult to dissociate Mr. K. A. B. Jones-Quartey, Chairman of the Editorial Committee, from the scurrilous attacks upon the Government and People of Liberia, in view of his sarcastic television remarks which preceded said article.

The Embassy has already described the article as "slanderous and couched in crude and unscrupulous language" and has rejected it as "puerile recitation of uncorrelated and inaccurate distortions of foreign propaganda and half-truths of old colonial days, without the slightest objectivity or realism."

Doubtless, these foreign agents and their masters had one obvious motivation:— to see an end to Liberia's existence as an autonomous African

Republic which was, to them, an undesirable manifestation of African aspirations and ability for self-government. This was, naturally, contrary to their teachings and dangerous to their interest as a source of inspiration for African nationalists and peoples elsewhere, at the time, under suppression in their so-called "colonial territories and protectorates."

It is, therefore, not merely the question of Liberia's century of survival but equally an appreciation of Liberia's struggle and success in these circumstances that these African nationalists and leaders who eventually led their countries and peoples to independence (Dr. Azikiwe, outstanding African intellectual and nationalist, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's heralded "Osagyefo" of yesterday, President Sekou Toure of Guinea and several African leaders) have variously given utterance to. And President Toure once gave eloquent expression to these historical facts when, as Mr. Saffu, complains, he said:

"In the history of this new Africa which has just come to the world, Liberia has a pre-eminent place because she has been for each one of our peoples, the living proof that our liberty was possible and nobody can ignore the fact that the Star which marks the Liberian National Emblem has been hanging more than a century—the sole star which illuminated our night as dominated peoples."

This is a history upon which the Government and people of Liberia have never been satisfied to rest their national future nor to take undue pride in. And to refer to this as mere intense emotional effusion or imagine that, by turning a blind eye to the history of his own country and glossing over historical facts and tangible achievements in other people's country, he can either change their history, or, for that matter, belittle "Liberia's role in Africa", only reveals Mr. Yaw Saffu's gross misconception as to the subjective aspect of any human struggle and his pitiable lack of objectivity and intellectual honesty.

The nature of the article: to give an idea of the jumble of facts, host of inconsistencies and baseless conclusions which characterised his article, let us refer to one or two typical examples:

First, his sources of information: without any sign of critical analysis—not to mention synthesis and realistic interpretation—of his facts, Mr. Saffu also failed to state anything within his own experience or to cite anyone he was able to interview on the spot in Liberia. This fact is substantiated by his own words here:—

"I passed through Liberia in July 1964 from one end of the country to the other. However,

I cannot pretend to know the country at first hand. But one book, R. L. Buell's *Liberia: A century of Survival*, (Penn. Univ. Press, 1947) and two articles, one by George Dalton, *History, Politics and Economic Development in Liberia* (Northwestern Univ. Progr. of African Studies, Reprint Series No. 3) and the other by J. Gus Liebenow, "Liberia" in Guendolen Carter, (ed. *African One Party States*, (Chicago University Press) seem to me a fairly adequate basis for a modest indictment against Liberia; for a reconsideration of her allegedly inspiring role in Africa's history.

"I find it particularly significant that all the three Authors I have cited are Americans. This is because it is America, her Governments and a large Finance Corporation shielding itself under the umbrella provided by American Governments, that has been in the uncommendable position of a Patron State to Liberia. American arms helped Liberia to preserve her territorial integrity. But they also helped the small Americo-Liberian oligarchy put down Native revolts, for instance the Kru rebellions of 1915, and 1931-32 and, consequently, Liberia has not enjoyed a single day of a democratically-elected government."

In addition to this glaring confusion of data, arbitrarily collected from various authors of whose backgrounds Mr. Saffu obviously has no idea, except perhaps, their nationality, the **whole foundation and nature of his reasoning** can be seen here; his own logic seems to be based on what he calls, "a fairly adequate basis for a modest indictment against Liberia" on the ground that the authors are Americans; that America and her governments shield a large Finance Corporation; and are in the position of a "Patron State to Liberia".

To take this ludicrous argument seriously is to accept the principle that any criticism, however maliciously designed to slander and discredit any African independent State—English or French-speaking, including Ghana—is an "adequate basis for a modest indictment" simply because it was written either by an Englishman or a Frenchman—even though Liberia was never a colony of the United States of America as such. And furthermore, if by the terms "Patron or Client Status" Mr. Saffu refers to international loans or traditional relations and economic ties between independent nations, then, let him point to any developing nation or even a developed country that does not maintain traditional rela-

tionship or mutual economic ties with other friendly countries.

Inaccuracy and confusion of facts: An example of the inaccuracy and confusion of facts typical of his article is, again, revealed by these suggestions about a "1922 loan". And I quote:

"In 1922, for instance, Liberia had to accept 22 American officials, in whose hands she agreed to place the collection of all Liberian revenue, the administration of native and military affairs and the control of virtually all government expenditures in return for a \$5 million loan. When Liberia showed signs of resisting this thrust at her independence, the U.S. threatened that it might be necessary for her "to reconsider her objections to the establishment of a mandate over Liberia".

Admittedly, the loan cited was requested by the Liberian Government and sponsored by President Woodrow Wilson in 1919, but never materialised as a result of protracted negotiation, to modify certain stipulations of the agreement, which eventually broke down. In addition to this, never in her history has Liberia ever surrendered the administration of native and military affairs to any foreign power for cash. What is still more amusing is the confusion of this 1919 event with events of 1930-31, flowing from an idea of international commission to control Liberia—usual big power intrigues—implicit in a discussion by Sir Ronald Lindsay, British Ambassador, Washington, with the United States Secretary of State, Mr. Henry L. Stimson (Memoirs, C. L. Simpson, former Liberian Secretary of State, Vice President and Ambassador to Washington). This again evince the arbitrariness of Mr. Yaw Saffu in linking up events which have no relevance to one another.

Moreover, this would-be intellectual and critic of Liberia who said he had visited the country "in 1964 from one end to the other" surely demonstrated his utterly unconscionable disregard for the value and merits of what he says when he compared relationship between any groups of Liberians with that existing between the racist minority white settlers or Afrikaaners and the Africans of apartheid South Africa. This, indeed, seems to belie the seriousness of Mr. Saffu's suggestion that he "travelled from one end of Liberia to the other in 1964". For it would not be improbable that he should have discovered or, at least, learned

a) that the traditional chiefs that he referred to as "humiliated and degraded go-in-between. . . ." were (as many of them are still) in the National Legislature as Senators and Mem-

bers of the House of Representatives, unlike their counterparts in Ghana. Also to be found as party leaders and officials are some of these chiefs; and their women and children are likewise represented in the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial branches of the Government of Liberia; in such top posts as Chief Justice, Vice Presidents, Cabinet Ministers, Ambassadors and Consuls General, Chief of Staff and Generals of the Army.

Some of these old foreign and new African critics and particularly of the standards of Mr. Saffu and some of his mentors at Legon, who indulge in abstract thinking and false obsessions, sometimes fall in crass errors in their assessment of most questions on Liberia for these simple reasons:

- i) that they do not consider the peculiar situation and differences in background between Liberia and other African countries when drawing their comparison and sweeping conclusions;
- ii) they invariably ignore in their assessment, either conveniently or otherwise, the universal aspects and proper historical perspectives of some of the facts and questions on which their charges and invectives against Liberia are largely based.
- iii) that they show very little or no scruples in drawing sweeping conclusions on questions in or about Liberia when they know, really and truly, that they are not conversant with the realities and facts involved; and moreover,
- iv) they, sometimes, maliciously close their eyes to such facts or achievements as would reflect credit on the Government and People of Liberia;
- v) they often fail to take into account all the changes which have taken place in the past as well as the revolutionary character of the social, political and economic transformation which have taken place as a result of the Unification Programme and other policies of the Tubman Administration in recent years.

I wish, finally, to assure Mr. Yaw Saffu and critics of his mentality that no section of the Liberian citizenry welcomes his patronage or impudence in assuming the role of champion for democracy in Liberia; he would do well in discussing economic, social and political matters pertaining to the history of Liberia or in comparing Liberia with other countries or in pretending to lament the political fate of chiefs in other countries to remember that "charity begins at home"; and that he would have done well to recall that it was the same world-wide economic

depression which resulted from World War I and forced Sir Gordon Guggisberg, then Governor of the Gold Coast, to raise loans for his "Ten Year Development Plan" to the tune of £4 million at 6 per cent interest in 1920; and again in 1925 for £4,628,000 at 4½ per cent interest for water works, railway and harbour development, that compelled Liberia to make loans for development projects in the same period. Let Liberia's critics in their comparison, out of fairness, also take into account that Liberia, unlike all of her sister African States, never had any legacy, in the form of development, from the colonial past, but had to rise at her own instance from the very scratch. This is a statement of historical fact, in no way intended to cast aspersion upon, or belittle the achievement of our Sister African States after independence.

This is published unedited —Ed.

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Opinion

INTELLECTUAL NON-ALIGNMENT—WHO WANTS IT?

By

J. Oppong-Agyare

READING and listening to other people's criticisms, one gets the impression that there is nothing by which the whole world sets more store than fairness and objectivity. Journalists, who wield tremendous power in the society, are constantly admonished to be fair and objective in criticism. Thus, it is easy to take this appeal for fairness and objectivity to be a call for intellectual non-alignment or intellectual detachment or liberalism. Some people have taken the call seriously and have consequently tried to be scrupulously fair and objective, intellectually detached, as it were, in their appraisal of personalities and comments on events. But somewhat ironically, public reaction to their points of view has always been emotionally distorted and as heatedly attacked. More often than not, these intellectual liberals end by alienating all sorts of people, being blamed on all sides, because their stand is never an unqualified support for or a full-blooded attack on any one particular point of view. Such is the danger inherent in intellectual non-alignment.

Victim of Intellectual Detachment

A recent victim of intellectual detachment is Professor Ali Mazrui of Makerere University. His crime lies solely in the fact that he regards Nkrumah both as a "hero of Africa" and a "villain of Ghana". His article, "Nkrumah, the Leninist Czar" (*Transition* No. 28) evoked virulence from protagonists of both views on Nkrumah. Interestingly enough, those who regard Nkrumah as the "hero of Africa" are mostly those who know Ghana only by description. To these people it is his foreign policy alone on which Nkrumah falls or rises and, so far as they are concerned, he towers above all contemporary African leaders. Never, or scarcely, does it occur to these admirers that there is such a thing as a person's domestic policy, by which, more than by his foreign policy, his people judge him.

As Professor Mazrui writes (*Transition* No. 32), "There is a certain species of African 'patriot' that regards it as obscene that any African should object to imprisonment without trial, to enforced hero-worship, or to the liquidation of choice in the political system. To protest against African dictatorship is to be obscenely liberal:

and what is liberalism but disguised capitalistic colonialism?" It is easy to see why such one-sided critics exclude all forms of oppression against the people at home. On their scale of values freedom from the degradation of colonialism occupies an honoured pedestal, beside which all other forms of domestic inequality and dictatorship must pale into insignificance. The other group of critics, mainly from the home front, are convinced that charity begins at home, and that however laudable a foreign policy is, it must not be allowed to lead the people to despair and want. Because Nkrumah permitted this to happen, he is, and will continue to be, a villain of Ghana.

But an insuperable difficulty arises when neither side is prepared to concede to the just claims of the other. And the person who advocates for both views straightway ends by being, in the words of Professor Mazrui, "despised or blamed by partisans on both sides"—a veritable victim of intellectual non-alignment. It is not difficult to trace the source of this mental attitude. Ever since the Great Galilean said, "He that is not for us is against us," politicians have accepted this dictum and used it to justify their gross intolerance. Nor is the converse, "he that is not against us is for us" necessarily true. For all we know, it is possible that a person may not be for you and yet NOT be against you. Similarly, he may not be against you and yet not be FOR you. Both situations are logically possible. But we are apt to exclude these perfectly conceivable alternatives. And by this attitude we show our emotional immaturity. Worse, it makes us see saboteurs, nation-wreckers, subversionists and fifth columnists in many an innocent and fiercely nationalistic person. Hence we smell of sabotage where there is none.

New Experiment

And no wonder. People have questioned the possibility of there ever being that freak of nature described as the neutral person. By implication these people deny the existence of such a phenomenon as the intellectually detached person. Ghana is now on a threshold of a new experiment into political tolerance. But if what has already taken place in the so-called post-revolutionary free atmosphere is anything to go by, then there is every substance in the pessimist's view of stormy events ahead.

Already, there is a perceptible division in the Ghanaian press and public. On the one side is the new crop of super-nationalists and super-patriots. They give the impression that they only suffered under Nkrumah. They make it clear

that anybody who was not detained by Nkrumah or was not in any way forced to flee from the happiness, pleasure, comfort and abundance under Nkrumah has no right to open his mouth. If he should be permitted to breathe some of the wholesome air pervading liberated Ghana, he must use it in singing ONLY the fulsome praises of "our glorious revolution" and of those "gallant soldiers and policemen." The stock phrases of such journalists are: "Where were you during Nkrumah's time"? or "at this late hour of the day and place..." The implication is clear: "Coward, you kept quiet under Nkrumah's tyrannical rule; shut your big mouth now". These people have their supporters and admirers. But fortunately, for Ghana, they are not many. On the other hand, we have pragmatists, the realists. Their hatred of the past regime may not be less total. **But they hated it simply because it was corrupt, intolerant of dissent, and highly oppressive and tyrannical. When such people welcomed the revolution they did so in the firmest conviction that an end had come to corruption and bribery, intolerance, oppression and tyranny.** Thus, their surprise that, in spite of the revolution there can be, and, in fact, still are, traces of some of these bad things, if not all of them. Have these people no right, as free citizens of Ghana, to speak their minds on any of these evils?

Perhaps, the more surprising thing is that there are many people now who hailed the revolution at first but are quite disenchanted, disillusioned and disappointed.

Need For Third Force

Have they no reason to be so? Well, their salvation may be in the new type of politician and public figure who may not be a slave to the cant, humbug, and intolerance of the past. That is why there is need for a third force in Ghana. Members are likely to be mainly the youthful educated people who will resolutely refuse to be cowed by people's past achievements. They would not like to live under the shadow of any person. Indeed, they would not like to feel gratitude towards any person or any group of persons for this or for that. Free they are determined to remain and think for themselves. Luckily, they are not going to keep quiet, having seen the most likely consequences of apathy and lack of interest in national affairs. They would sooner die or be imprisoned.

But the struggle will not be easy. Nobody in Ghana wants intellectual non-alignment. Most people want all Ghanaians to declare their stand this way or that. They scorn the person who

wants to keep his balance, giving praise where praise is due and blame where that is necessary. Pity the man with a bent for intellectual detachment. Ghana has no place for him. This is the reason why some people do not place much reliance on the much-vaunted freedom of the Press in the country. What is this freedom if one cannot publish his views because some editor thinks his views will not meet with official approval? What is this freedom if a journalist can be sacked by one paper for his views and can't find employment with any of the government-owned papers, because he is made a *persona non grata* in his own country? At any rate, it speaks ill for our brand of the freedom of the Press when official permission has to be granted before anybody can publish a magazine in the country. Gains there have been. But they do not measure up to true freedom of the Press. We still have a long way to go. And we shall not reach our destination without casualties, if we do not make strenuous efforts to make room in our society for that paradoxical entity—the intellectually detached person.

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