

# The Legon Observer

Fortnightly Organ of the Legon Society on National Affairs (Established July 1966; Published Every Other Friday)

VOL: XII NO: 12

31 OCTOBER — 13 NOV: 1980

PRICE G2.00

3 DEC 1980

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## Editorial

### EDUCATION - WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY?

A well-educated population is a national asset. The immediate post-independence Government must have known this when it launched its compulsory fee-free educational programme and a mass education campaign for the benefit of both young and old. The heavy pressure of these programmes on the national budget over the years caused the Government of the Second Republic to limit the scope of Government's financial obligations by asking for other contributions in the form of Students' Loans Scheme, for example. The attempt to make savings in education proved short-lived, for SMC I not only abolished the Loans Scheme but indeed increased public expenditure by making boarding fees in secondary schools a charge on the Government. From SMC I and II through AFRC to the threshold of the Third Republic, therefore, the position regarding educational expenditure on Government was as follows:

Tuition	—	All levels
Board & Lodge	—	Secondary schools, Training Colleges, Universities
Termly Book Allowance	—	Universities
Miscellaneous Allowances	—	Universities

The Limann Administration has since the beginning of this academic year declared that it will no longer provide subsidies in respect of board for secondary schools because it cannot afford it. In his Sessional Address to Parliament on Tuesday 28th October, the President provided the further explanation that it is "morally wrong" to require parents whose own children attend day schools to contribute to the support of other people's children in boarding schools.

We are not at all sure that a bland statement that the Government cannot afford boarding costs is enough for a decision which is bound to affect the careers of many young people. If the Government wants public sympathy it has to demonstrate that there are more urgent claims. The argument of "morality" is as careless as it is absurd. We are all required to contribute for the upkeep of prisoners although not all of us have relations in the prisons. Indeed, whether or not we have relations is not the point at all. Is it in the overall national interest to send people to prison and maintain them? If prisoners, why not secondary school children? Board and lodge in the universities continue to be a charge on Government. If the universities, why not secondary schools?

We are persuaded, however, that Government cannot continue to support education at the levels as it has done in the past. There must be "cut-backs" on educational expenditure. The question is: which areas should attract "cuts"? If the decision were ours, we would not apply any "cuts" at all at the primary and secondary sectors. On the contrary we would

pump more money thither. We say this because we are attracted to the view that the Government owes the citizen not only education in the basic skills of reading and writing but also such education as would enable him to earn a living. We take this opportunity to urge Government to seek more expert advice from a National Commission on Education, as suggested in the Note Book of this volume. Such a Commission might even review the recommendation for a fourth University in the light of overall educational needs and costs to the nation.

We cannot write on this subject without reference to the existence of a special educational facility enjoyed solely by the Northern and Upper Regions. For the benefit of those who have just "tuned in," as it were, the facility is one which provides "gratis" to students of the Northern and Upper Regions tuition, board, lodge, books, and in some cases, even clothing. The facility was introduced by the CPP government to make up for educational deficiencies in the north. At that time the number of people in the north who had had any level of education at all could be counted on one's finger-tips. It took a long time for secondary level education to arrive in the north, and when it did, it was for a long time confined to one solitary place, the Government Secondary School, at Tamale. It is not easy to persuade people who have no schooling tradition to pay school fees, the benefits not being that obvious. The majority could not have paid anyway from their subsistence farming. It was a wise decision, indeed, to have introduced entirely fee-free education in the north. Alongside fee-free education, other special measures were applied to get some northerners into the Administrative Service, for example. The intention behind the special education programme as with the special recruitment into the Administrative Service was to make up for under-representation of the people of the north in Government and Public Services.

All those special devices for the north were appropriate in the context of the times and they have yielded remarkable dividends, some would say. Maybe the time has come to terminate the facility; maybe not. Two opposing views have been contributed in the debate so far. Surely we cannot proceed in either direction without taking stock of what has been achieved thus far: what is the proportion per population that has now received education? What is the income per capita? Is there enough momentum for the north to take off on its own or would education receive a set-back if the facility was withdrawn? All these could be answered if a National Commission on Education were set up.

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## Economy

### CHOOSING ECONOMIC POLICIES FOR GHANA: THE STATUS QUO, GRADUALIST AND SHOCK TREATMENT APPROACHES

#### PART I

By

A Special Correspondent

Dr. Hahnemann, born in Saxony in 1755 and buried in Paris in 1843, is taken to be the populariser of the theory that, in order to cure an illness, one must use medicines that can reproduce the symptoms of that illness in a healthy organism. He had noted in particular that quinine gave a healthy man the fever for which it was the remedy; that many of the medicines, massages and baths needed by a patient suffering from lumbago gave lumbago to people without it.

Our economy is sick and ailing. One approach to curing it is Dr. Hahnemann's one of feeding it with more of the same economic policies. Another is to make an about-turn and attempt new policies. In our choices, shall we be sophists or scientists?

There is, in our recent history as well as in that of other developing countries, much experience with U-turns in economic policies. By U-turns, I refer of course to far reaching and fundamental changes in the climate and content of economic policies. In our own past, the most recent examples were observed in 1966-67, following the NLC coup, and in 1972, following the NRC coup. U-turns, when they take place, often do so after changes in governments. The recent experiences in Britain and Turkey are obvious instances of this phenomenon, although there are counter examples such as the turn to socialism under Nkrumah in 1960-61.

The subject of this article is a difficult one. It is to explore the case in favour of and to discuss the limits to the possible in the arena of U-turns in economic policies, in Ghana today. The fundamental premise, perhaps an obvious one, is that economic policies have always to be tailored to the institutional context they are meant for. As such, although textbook solutions may be suggestive, they cannot be definitive, and although the experiences of other countries are instructive, they cannot be sufficient. In the final analysis, there is no substitute for an informed analysis of the actual economy for which policies are to be designed.

A second premise is that I approach the problem at hand from a meliorist not a radical perspective. The attraction as well as the danger of a radical approach is that possible objections to it melt away in the cauldron of ideology. Modesty compels me to be ameliorative. I cannot pretend to be capable of exploring any more than patches at a time. In the debate between orthodox (i.e. monetarist), structuralist and radical economists,

my stance is the hybrid one of a 'historical-structuralist' (i.e. a structuralist who is willing to learn from the lessons of history). To be historical in this sense, it is necessary to be neither "infected" nor "sterile", but just "immunised" vis-à-vis market policies. In particular, I make the argument that the time is ripe for a greater market-orientation in our economy, in full recognition of the implications of this for Ghana's role in the present international economic order. While I recognise the limitations of an approach that continues to lock us into this order, I can only see us breaking away from it through a significant reliance on efficiency and growth in the first instance.

As the title of the article suggests, I do not exclude the *status quo* as a possibility. Certainly the PNP government has, over the past months, not initiated any turn in economic policies, let alone a U-turn. The 1979/80 budget was essentially a continuation of restrictive policies initiated in the 1978/79 budget, with a few other hastily added, somewhat inconsistent, wrinkles. It was most definitely in the vein of the government's other economic statements. These together lead one to conclude, with little doubt, that the government has so far been wedded to a *status quo* approach to economic policies. Certainly the supreme vocal emphasis on "better management" of all organizations and the country generally, is testimony to this bias. As we shall see, this may after all be very rational. Notwithstanding this, this article asks: what are the alternatives? have they been analysed? can a case be made for a U-turn in economic policies? if so, what are the prospects for gradualism in making a U-turn, as opposed to shock treatment? and finally, if the real choice is between the *status quo* and a somewhat uncertain gradualist approach which is preferable? But many bridges must be crossed before I can offer answers to these questions.

The next section distinguishes between pure market policies, a controlled - economy approach and a hybrid market-oriented approach. Section III describes the institutional context and how it constrains changes in economic policies. The following three sections deal, sequentially, with the economic policy options of shock treatment, *status quo* and gradualism. Section VII summarizes and interprets the international evidence on the three options and their feasibility in our context. And Section VIII concludes with the view that the time is ripe for a changed approach to economic policies.

#### The Case for Market-Oriented Policies

To argue in detail the case for market-oriented policies in Ghana is a task I can do little justice to in a short section. Earlier discussions of this subject may be found in 'The Economic Consequences of Rawlings' (L.O., 16th November 1979) and in 'A New Economic Strategy for Ghana' (by T. Killick, L.O. Vol. XI, Nos. 8 and 9, May/June 1979). Although I have differences with some of the prescriptions offered by Killick, I have little disagreement with his diagnosis.

Let me at the outset distinguish clearly between pure market policies (which I am not advocating) and 'market-oriented policies' (which I advocate). The difference lies in my acceptance of socio-political objectives and constraints that must be protected while allowing the market to function alongside these. In a nutshell, I subscribe to the conscious use of private interests for public goals, to the extent compatible with protecting a minimum set of socio-political objectives. I arrive at this point of departure not for ideological reasons - I would not hesitate to express my own ideological preferences as anti-market in nature. My reasons for choosing a market-orientation are simply that Ghana has tried the anti-market route since 1961 (perhaps excluding 1967-71, although some would contest this exception), and has achieved little that is of a sustainable nature. We have seen the 'promised land' and it does not work. It seems time to consider alternatives, and then to make a new start.

It is only fair that I pose myself the question: is this one more false start, thought through only for the first two years or so, and likely to be abandoned when the riding gets rough? In particular, what longer run model of growth and development underlies such an approach, and similarly, what kind of social class structure does it require for its sustenance? These are extremely difficult questions to answer. I will answer them in a roundabout fashion by first asking what would be implied by pure market policies, and then suggesting that market-oriented policies will result in economic and social outcomes that are in between what we have at present and the pure market ones.

With pure market policies, the underlying long-run economic and social policies are clear. Market efficiency considerations dominate, market profits are the guiding criterion. Growth of GNP tends to be high but so does the dependence of the economy on the present international division of labor. Employment tends to be higher under a no-growth case, but perhaps less than other alternatives. Relative income distribution either does not change or worsens although the absolute levels of income among the employed may increase. The social basis for supporting such a system comes from having a strong capitalist class which gives political support to the government, and vice versa. In short, the underlying socio-economic model is a capitalist one tied into the international capitalist system and its division of labor. This is of course an oversimplified characterization. Countries that have followed this route include: Hong Kong (which fits the characterization well); Korea (which fits it less well in that it had the advantage of a thorough land reform and of high labor skills before a change in strategy, received massive foreign aid, and ironically is now being forced by the advanced capitalist countries not to export too vigorously); and Singapore (which seems to have distributed a fair share of the benefits of growth to her workers).

Our own control-dominated system has produced a low-growth economy, still dependent on the existing international division of labor, with a highly unequal distribution of income and low

absolute incomes for the **working** poor. Socially, our economic system has spawned a class of rentiers (parasites whose access to wealth and incomes depends on their access to decision-makers, to licences, to quotas) who do not produce but get rich at the expense of the productive elements in the economy. There are other economies which have adopted similar strategies: Zaire and Zambia (both of which are buoyed, though hardly, by their mineral incomes rather than other productive activity); Tanzania (which, in spite of its ideology of self-reliance is not carrying its economic weight and continues to have 50 percent of its investment financed from foreign sources); Jamaica (also buoyed by its mineral wealth), and to some extent India (which however is different from the others because it has a large domestic market and depends less on the international economy).

The crucial question is: is there a middle way? Is it possible to aim for a socially just economic system in the future, and yet exploit some of the advantages of the market approach? In principle one can certainly see a way of doing so. It is to have market-oriented policies, subject to a minimum set of socio-political objectives and constraints. This minimum set is, of course, not pre-defined - the government has the tools (and I explicitly exclude **repression**) to forge a social contract. This requires, as a starting point however, that the government win the confidence of the people, by deservng and courting it. In addition, we must assimilate one more wide-ranging fact. What is it?

It is the realization that the government has many instruments for attempting to control economic outcomes, and that, we have over-extended some and neglected one of them. In a few words, we have overused direct controls and not used indirect controls. Indirect controls are defined by their making public use of private interests. Both direct and indirect controls call for important roles for the state, but very different ones. In direct controls, each decision is typically made anew by a bureaucrat and this mode of control endows the political and bureaucratic elite with tremendous power. It is this mode of control which has given rise to a rentier class so deeply enmeshed in our economic system. With indirect controls, overall decisions are made by the bureaucratic and political elite, but very infrequently, because they utilise rigid qualifications and mechanical rules, openly known to the public. Thus under direct controls there are no open rules for import-license allocations. An example of indirect controls would be variable surcharges payable on different kinds of import-licenses, with anyone free to purchase any quantity he/she wishes.

Another example of a direct control instrument is the entire set of price controls that exist on most commodities. For those commodities whose prices must be kept low for social or political reasons, direct controls are necessary, but the power of decision-makers to be corrupt can be constrained if the spirit of indirect controls is borrowed by adopting some form of overt rationing.

In short, I see a need for all economic activities

to be divided into three groups: first, those whose prices are entirely market determined; second, those whose prices are indirectly and consciously determined by the government imposing variable taxes or subsidies on them (e.g. import licences as in the above example); and third, those whose prices are directly controlled, but whose distribution is also overtly rationed according to known rules.

The motivation for this tripartite division of economic activities has to do with the important distribution between increased production on the one hand, and better distribution of existing production on the other hand. Very briefly, the argument of the rest of this section is that a greater market-orientation will foster increased production in our stagnant economy, and induce a better distribution of available supplies either through pure price-rationing or overt quantity rationing.

A few words on the mode and rationale for rationing are in order. We have some experience with the rationing scheme for petrol, and although its execution is not flawless, it was easy to launch because vehicles are normally required to be registered. The problem with rationing in general is that the registration exercise for households is a difficult one. But it can be done. The best known example is that of Sri Lanka, which recently converted its general rice rationing program to one that is meant only for lower income groups. Also relatively successful have been the Indian and Pakistani food rationing schemes. I would imagine that the Government Statistician can suggest how best we can achieve such a structure in Ghana. In the first instance, it perhaps would have to be urban in its coverage. Certainly the Registration of Voters and the Population Census, when undertaken can be designed to aid this process.

Let us be clear on one thing: there will undoubtedly be leakages from the rationing system. But a rationing scheme with some leakages is preferable to unrealistic price controls. The main problem with the present rationing method in Ghana is that it is, in effect, a scheme of rationing by shortages (and contacts), which means that the distribution of goods has been largely arbitrary. Rationing by price implies a distribution of goods by income-level and wealth. Rationing **quantities** by income groups is clearly more equitable and not arbitrary. And unlike rationing by shortages, the implications for smuggling are different. The incentive to smuggle rationed goods abroad will exist if prices are below their market-levels. However, as long as leakages in the rationing system are kept in check, even if smuggling takes place the returns will go to the recipients of the rationed goods (the lower-income groups) and not entirely to the traders! In a distributional sense this is more acceptable than what happens presently. It is also less likely to occur unless the rationing scheme provides luxuries - for otherwise, the recipients are most likely to consume their rations than to sell them to traders for onward smuggling.

Let us assume then that we have in place a rationing system for what we may call basic

goods. The prices of basic goods are kept under control for social and political reasons. This means that these prices are below market prices. This implies that demand will exceed supply, or that there will be shortages. To ensure that available supplies are equitably distributed, the rationing system is used. What then are the problems with such an arrangement, if no other changes are made? The answer is simple: rationing available supplies takes care of part of the distribution problem, but does not attack the production problem. Many of our economic problems have arisen from the failure of the production system to deliver the goods. What characteristics of the production system are responsible for this poor performance?

The production system in Ghana is part subsistence part public and part private. The subsistence sector is by definition self-contained and is unaffected by government policy (except that its marketization may be discouraged if government policy is not conducive to the growth of private economic activity). The public production system consists of the state enterprises, government departments and the civil service. This subsystem has dominated economic activity in the years since the NRC coup, and some would argue, since 1961. Given the poverty of Ghana's growth record, it is not unfair to lay some of the blame on our over-extension of the role of the public sector. Of course, the public sector has indispensable roles to play in the process of economic development. In addition to the usual functions of providing law and order and public goods, three kinds of roles come to mind: (i) the state's role as **entrepreneur**, (state enterprises); (ii) as **controller/regulator** (import licensor, investment licensor, etc.); and (iii) as **calibrator** (indirect control of private activity through setting of taxes, import duties, export subsidies, etc.). It is difficult to dispute taxes, import duties, export subsidies, etc. It is difficult to dispute the arguments that the government has overextended its role as controller that it needs either to improve its role as entrepreneur or diminish it; and that it has underutilized its role as calibrator of the private production system.

☐ The private production system comprises the market-oriented activity of non-subsistence farmers, the self-employed (e.g. bakers, tailors, etc.), private industrial enterprises (small-scale and large) and the part-time private products (e.g. civil servants who breed poultry for sale, or who run taxis, etc.). Our remarks about the role of the state easily translate, in reverse, to the private sector: state's overextension of its role as controller and under utilization of its role as calibrator has reduced and prevented the growth of private productive activity. This has happened because of price controls, which have kept the return on private activity low, and controls and red-tape, which have increased the costs of private activity. Of course, to the extent that price controls do not work, black markets flourish and private activity is not thwarted. (But this is often in socially wrong lines of production). And to the extent

that controls generate rents (surplus returns that accrue to people who get access to the item in short supply - typically, import licenses), private activity shifts from production to rent-seeking.

To state the main argument of this section again: there is a need to move towards more market-oriented policies without generating social and political upheaval. The reason for this is now clear: we have stifled private activity and must now release it to the extent compatible with our socio-political constraints.

What then are the answers to the two basic questions raised earlier as they apply to this third middle route in which a greater degree of market orientation and fewer controls are to be tried? What is the underlying model of growth and accumulation? What social bases will foster and sustain it? It is clear that I am bridging the gap between the orthodox and the structuralist schools. The former has the capitalist class as its driving force; the latter has the state and its politicians and bureaucrats. Although we lack a satisfactory theory of the state, it is clear that the State is not necessarily a benevolent institution. However, an alliance of the two groups (capitalists and bureaucrats-politicians) can fire the engine of economic growth if market-oriented policies are in place and if socio-political objectives and constraints are kept at the fore. This alliance can provide the savings, productivity and efforts for growth, and an equitable process of growth can ensue if the political process works to keep the state in check. The crucial question is: is there a way to avoid a polarisation between the capitalist and political classes on the one hand, and the rest of society on the other?

The most important requirement for the success of such a development strategy is a politically conscious people. If the post-1972 period has brought us much economic suffering, it has also brought about a high degree of political maturity among Ghanaians. Even Rawlings, who epitomised populism, talked of fair returns to fair efforts. And of course his clamour for equity in consumption and for the political awakening of the people will not be easily forgotten.

In addition there is the need for an economic measure, namely a far-reaching expenditure tax which will tax all purchases of non-basic consumption goods and all saving/investment in non-productive asset (such as housing), but exempt all saving/investment in productive or financial assets. This will, of course, not prevent great inequalities of wealth over time. But it will discourage great inequalities of consumption, and encourage investments instead. If it is possible to add on a workable inheritance and gift tax, then even intergenerational transfers of wealth can be smoothed out somewhat.

To summarise the argument of this section: one may distinguish between the pure capitalist market approach, the controlled economy approach and market-oriented hybrid of the two; the market-oriented approach offers a way of attaining the benefits of the market while meeting socio-political objectives through a selective

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role for the state; the state's selective role must emphasize a greater use of indirect controls and diminished use of direct controls; in some cases, direct controls will need to be buffered by an overt rationing scheme, which despite potential leakages is preferable to rationing by shortages and contacts; with the exception of a small set of economic activities directly or indirectly controlled by the government, all others should be market determined, except where collusion is a danger. In contrast to the socio-economic basis of the market approach (which relies on a profit-motivated capitalist class) and the highly controlled-economy approach (which rests on an uncontrolled and corruptible bureaucracy and a similar political elite), the market-oriented approach rests on an amalgam of the two. The case for such an approach in Ghana is strong because of the aroused political consciousness of the people, which ought to constrain behaviour of the political and bureaucratic elite. To reinforce this, it is necessary to institute a selective expenditure tax and an inheritance and gift tax.

But too much of the above analysis has been carried out in an institutional vacuum. What does the institutional context imply for the choice of economic policies?

#### The Institutional Context for Economic Policy making

The word "institutions" unless clearly defined, is perhaps one of the finest examples of social science jargon. By institutions I mean two things: (i) structural features of economy: in particular, the distribution of economic resources, and hence of wealth and income, and in addition, the entrenched elements of the economic policy framework such as price controls, import licenses, etc., because any turns in economic policies will affect and will be affected by these structures; (ii) structural features of the polity, i.e. the distribution of political power; this is important because turns in economic policies always harm some groups and aid others, and the success of turns in economic policies depends on the potential responses of the groups affected.

These two structures are deeply enmeshed in one another but not entirely so. Thus, in many instances economic power begets political influence and political power translates, albeit in an underhanded fashion, into economic influence. However, there are exceptions: the power of religious organizations is neither economic nor political in the first instance; and the same is true of an army in its barracks, and of the media generally.

What may we say about the economic and political institutions in Ghana, as they relate to economic policy making for the 1980s, given our argument that the Ghana economy must now be steered away from an over-abundance of controls towards more market-oriented policies. (This is not a plea for *laissez-faire*. It is a recognition of the limits of the possible in our context.) Granted this premise what may we say about the limits imposed by our economic and political institutions?

Much of the following description is conjectural in that it is based on casual empiricism rather than hard data. But it is a start, and is preferable to the naivete underlying some other analysis. The Ghanaian economic structure is best sliced along urban-rural lines. Within each of these sectors, there seem to be socio-economic classes. The urban classes are much more easily discerned: at the top are the elite, comprising the politicians, senior civil servants, managers and the big businessmen. They comprise perhaps 4 percent of the urban population. The urban middle class comprises about 12 percent of the urban population and consist of middle level managers and civil servants, most of the professionals, and middle-level businessmen and the business-women. The working class comprises all other employed persons petty traders and the unemployed. The rural sector is much less — the distribution of wealth (and income) is much less uneven — but there is an upper class comprising absentee landlords and large-scale farmers and a lower class of medium and small farmers. There is little evidence that landless labor is a phenomenon of any significance in Ghana.

It is difficult, and perhaps unnecessary, to analytically merge these sectors. It is sufficient to note that they are linked and that economic conflicts and/or alliances could, under the right circumstances, build up along these links. In order to set the stage for a choice of policies, it is useful to ask, as a mental experiment, what changes would pure market policies (as opposed to impure market-oriented ones) imply for these classes. Pure market policies would lead to the following changes: (i) an increase in the official prices of most products — including, in particular, cocoa and food; (ii) lower real wages and salaries, higher profits, and an elimination of all "rents" (income based on access to licenses, quotas, contacts); (iii) higher interest rates; (iv) a higher cedi cost of foreign exchange. Who would the beneficiaries be, and who would lose? Identifying these, and then following their consequences through the structure of political institutions is indispensable to the process of choosing economic policies.

In the urban sector, all salaried persons and wage-earners would lose, as would the unemployed, because prices would rise. The farmers would gain. Businessmen will tend to gain or break even, although there are likely to be losers here too, to the extent that the closing of the gap between official and market price squeezes out unnecessary middlemen (as during the Rawlings period). Also the devaluation would take away the rents (or super-profits) that were accruing to importers, in particular traders as well as producers using imported inputs. Users of domestic raw materials would benefit from the scarcity rents of such materials, and exporters would benefit from the higher incentive-prices for exports.

In short, pure market-policies would benefit the rural sector (cocoa and food farmers); and, in urban sector, would benefit the exporters and users of domestic inputs (including small-scale enterprises). The losers would be the salaried and the wage earners and the unemployed — a group

that clearly slices through all three urban classes. The higher interest rates would benefit high savers—the relatively rich in both urban and rural sectors—and penalise the investors—also in both sectors. In spite of this, we would expect more investment in productive activities than in distributive ones, and this would, in the medium run, increase employment. Investment will be encouraged by the removal of price-controls. In short, to a large extent, the rural sector benefits at the expense of the urban, since the rural sector has about 75% of the population, why doesn't this happen?

The answer, of course, lies in the structure of political power. Political power resides in the first instance with the politicians. But they are as much leaders as followers. Equally important is the political power that resides with: students (public opinion); the unions, professionals and other workers (strikes and public opinion); the market women (hoarding and public opinion); the churches (public opinion); and the media (public opinion). What is characteristic of these loci of power is that they are all largely urban. The rural sector is not unknown to have demonstrated its power—witness the cocoa hold-ups of the 1930s. But that was against a foreign government. Historically, the bases of revolt against domestic elites have largely been absent among the rural folk.

Given this configuration of institutions, it is not difficult to see why economic policies in Ghana have been characteristically urban-biased, even during the Nkrumah (socialist) period. The 1971 Budget was an attempt at turning the tables. But it was not convincing. Many urban residents favoured the National Development Levy and

its aim of rural development, but objected to it not being progressive, and to the apparent high living of the urban elite, in particular, of the leadership. And although the 1971 Railway Workers strike was called off within days, the Acheampong coup was soon to follow.

What are the implications of these institutional constraints? They simply imply that even market-oriented policies, let alone pure market ones, cannot be pursued unless care is taken to court and win over the urban political power that is almost certain to be exercised in response to them. The Latin American option of 'technocrats backed by tanks' is fortunately not in the cards: under a civilian government technocrats are gracefully handicapped—they must work with velvet gloves, lest they cause chaos. There is only one way out. **Any sacrifices implied by changes in economic policies have to be seen to be shared by all classes.**

But I am getting ahead in my story. Faced with an economic scenario such as ours the traditional economist's usual advice is to usher pure market policies in one fell swoop. Why is such shock treatment so often advocated for developing countries contemplating economic policy U-turns? And does the argument make sense?

#### **Shock Treatment: Political Naivete, Erroneous Models and False Expectations**

The preceding discussion is perhaps sufficient to infer that shock-treatment to the Ghanaian economy is tantamount to political naivete. There are examples from our own experience to buttress this inference. Thus, the 1971 devaluation led, in a fortnight, to a coup. The response of the railway workers' union to the 1961 and 1971 budgets which improved the Compulsory Savings Scheme and the National Development Levy, respectively, are also suggestive of the political limits to economic policies. There is however one qualification to be made here. This relates to the notion of **shared sacrifices**. Given some degree of awareness on the part of the working class regarding the urban class structure, it is not surprising that their reaction to partisan shifts in economic policies has been extreme. Shock treatment if it can work under a civilian regime must not be partisan—i.e. the shock must not be directed primarily at the low income classes, but rather across all classes.

These arguments are valid, but only up to a point. They make the case for a strong initial shift that transmits the signal that a change has been made, combined with a gradual shifting over time to complete the process. Thus, if the aim is to remove all price controls, this should not be done over-night; rather, controls should be removed from say 25 percent of all commodities (carefully chosen), with the others being removed gradually. The argument that shock treatment is preferable to gradualism in view of the political difficulties likely to arise if there is a long time period during which adjustment is taking place with few visible signs of success, emphasizes the

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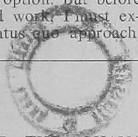
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benefits of the former and neglects its costs. Shock treatment is often more likely to lead to a change of government, and to a total reversion of policies. Instead of the hoped-for U-turn in policies, policies will soon reverse themselves, continuing after a change in government, as before the attempted change!

To summarise then, the argument that shock treatment is the best political approach for steering the economy in a U-turn is not water-tight: political naivete and erroneous models belie its prudence, and rigid expectations are not strong enough an argument. Gradualism, following on a significant but not overwhelming change of signals seems a far preferable option. But before asking how gradualism would work, I must explore the implications of a status quo approach.



## Politics

### THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE GHANA TRADES UNION CONGRESS IN POLITICS

By

P. B. Arthiabah

"No man undertakes a trade he has not learned, even the meanest; yet everyone thinks himself sufficiently qualified for the hardest of all trades - that of government."

Socrates.

The continued participation of trade unions in political activity depends upon the goals set for themselves; their ability to realise those goals or their inability to do so. But in the main, their political objectives are socialist in outlook and content because union members belong to a class of wage-earning people, the proletariat. Generally, trade unions led by 'labour aristocrats' have little to do with political activity let alone with the formation of a political party. Although the interests of working people the world over are basically the same, namely, decent standards of living, including good education for themselves and their children and the recognition by the government of the importance of their role in society. Some like political action, others show disdain for political participation, still others wish to steer a middle course. Such union political stances are taken by western-oriented trade unions. In the socialist states the political stand of the workers is never in question. The workers' organisations have very strong links with the Communist Parties; in fact, they are integral wings of the parties.

#### Trade Unions and Politics

As organisations and institutions, trade unions follow several political paths. At one extreme, they may repudiate the existing political system and seek some radical reconstruction of society by revolutionary means; such as the trade union movements of Ghana and Guinea did under Dr. Kwame Nkrumah who fired the imagination of the people

with "we prefer selfgovernment with danger to servitude in tranquility"; and Sekou Toure who echoed "we prefer poverty in liberty to riches in slavery". Short of revolutionary means, unions may accept the existing political framework but work actively to promote a labour party committed to sweeping social and economic reforms. Finally, unions may minimise political action and concentrate on such actions as strikes and negotiations to win greater benefits for their members. The latter strategy cannot rule out political activity entirely because "who gets what, when, how" is a political issue, but it does imply that unions will limit this activity to lobbying for legislative goals and supporting sympathetic candidates put forward by the existing political parties. Of the several political paths open to the Ghana Trades Union Congress (TUC), why did it decide to co-sponsor a political party, that is, to take to direct political action, when political activities resumed in Ghana at the beginning of 1979, after seven years of military rule. The answer to this question, according to the TUC, dates back from the era of the Convention People's Party (CPP) regime. It was felt among some of the union leaders and members that the marriage between the CPP and the TUC was a sell-out for the TUC because it thwarted the independence of the trade union movement; the TUC became the political wing of the CPP consequent upon the co-operation which existed between them during the struggle for the independence of Ghana. Prior to the return to civilian rule in October, 1969 after the first three-year military rule when the PP assumed office, the TUC resolved at an Extraordinary Congress in June 1969 in Kumasi that it would not involve itself in party politics. Notwithstanding this decision, the TUC was dissolved in September, 1971 when it came into confrontation with the PP regime over certain demands, including an increase in the minimum wage from 75p to 1.50 and a rejection of the National Development Levy imposed on workers by the regime. In the light of this experience, the TUC resolved at its Second Quadrennial Congress in September, 1978 at Winneba that at the appropriate time it would take steps to direct political action. This political initiative resulted in the co-sponsoring of the Social Democratic Front (SDF).

It is fallacious to maintain that the trade union movement lost a great deal under the CPP regime and thus the loss provided a reason for direct political action; it is however proper for workers to belong to political parties or form one of their own choice provided that they are taught the business of government. Under the CPP regime the trade union movement won recognition and secured its present structure through legislation: the Industrial Relations Act, 1958 subsequently amended as the Industrial Relations Act, 1965; achieved dues check-off; appointed paid full-time personnel to deal with its administrative, financial and organisational functions; achieved increased union membership; achieved systematic, permanent collective bargaining; etc. These gains have since then been consolidated. The total membership of unionised workers was about, 500,000 in 1964-65. Since then there have been fluctuations in union membership. It should be recalled that when the PP regime

sought to control the TUC, it did so by decentralising the structure of the TUC by means of the Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act, 1971. On assumption of office in January, 1972, the National Redemption Council repealed the Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act, 1971 with the result that the Industrial Relations Act, 1965 has continued to be in force, leaving the structure of the TUC virtually intact.

Is it wrong or improper for the TUC to co-sponsor a political party, if it is granted that the achievements of the TUC during the CPP government were perceived by the leaders as satisfactory?

### Diversity In Political Inclinations

From the examination of the types of political action open to trade unions, one could easily conclude that it is proper for the TUC to co-sponsor the S.D.F. This writer is of the view that it is proper but it is inopportune because there are many reasons for the diversity and disunity in the political activities of the TUC. First, the union leaders differ, in a large measure, in their political philosophies. A few are socialist-oriented, others are nationalists, some are petty-bourgeois, but most are ideologically neutral. This diversity in political inclinations is not confined to the union leaders alone but characterise the beliefs of the rank and file members. To fuse all these political inclinations into one ideological position demands persistent political education in several forms, such as agitation, propaganda, protests, including everything which moves people into action, or which creates disruption, controversy and chaos. This type of education is dismally lacking among Ghanaian workers, an obstacle in mobilising the trade union movement for political action.

Secondly, there is the question of political party affiliations of union leaders and members alike, and their own personal ambitions. This has to be settled in the course of political education. Thirdly, some unions are affected much more than others by legislation and other government policies. A case in point is that whereas employees of the private sector and of the public boards and corporations have been enjoying the benefits of collective bargaining agreements for a long time, the employees of the Ghana Civil Service are just about to benefit from collective bargaining agreements. As a result of improper planning and lack of foresight, the political stance of the trade union movement became a confusing mixture of activity and inertia, endorsement and counter-endorsement, and lobbying and counter-lobbying that defies any precise generalisation.

### Shouting Socialist Slogans

Everything was wrong with the TUC's political initiative of co-sponsoring the SDF at the time it did, for it had all the resources for taking the lead in organising a political party but it failed to do so. Experience in this country with the trade union movement has shown that the organisation has performed better under military regimes than under civilian governments, in terms of winning conces-

sions. The main reason is that it is one of the best organised permanent bodies in the Ghanaian society that appeals to, and articulates the demands of, a large number of people. As a result of the loose co-operation that usually exists between the trade unions and military governments, the union movement enjoys a considerable degree of autonomy and direct power. It is this degree of autonomy that should have been fully exploited by the trade union movement to lay the political foundation that would be needed for future political action. It should have occurred to the leadership that a stitch in time saves nine.

Given the experience of the trade union movement in the CPP and the PP eras and its high degree of autonomy under the military, the leaders should have been in a better position to decide what kind of effective political action to take. At the time when intensive political education of the rank and file should have engaged the attention of the TUC, it was engaged in shouting socialist rhetorics, forgetting that time and tide wait for no man.

It was understood in some circles that the political action of the trade union movement would be unsuccessful except to the extent that it would prevent the emergence of the old alliance between the CPP and workers. The manifesto of the SDF, which was basically not different from those of the parties with left leanings, had the achievement of a socialist state of Ghana as its ultimate goal. The postponement of the achievement of socialism to a future date is in the best interest of the older generation of the party, some of whom are skeptical about socialism. In the end, the SDF won only three Parliamentary seats out of the 140 in the General and Presidential Elections held on 18th June, 1979. The three seats were won in the Northern Region as a result of the personal standing of the party's Presidential candidate in that region.

### Old Affiliations At Play

The fact that the SDF was unable to win seats in the unionised worker-concentrated constituencies such as Accra, Tema, Sekondi-Takoradi, Tarkwa and Obuasi shows that in party politics the workers have not yet forsaken their party affiliations although in trade unionism their solidarity with their organisation can be proved. It is this exhibition of the Ghanaian workers' solidarity with their organisation that has given the false impression that a party of their organisation would receive total support. Nonetheless, if the appropriate institutional and organisational foundations had been solidly laid prior to the re-emergence of the political parties, the labour party would not certainly have won the elections, but would surely have won more seats to make it a political power to reckon with.

What are or would be the consequences of direct political action of the TUC in the present political and socio-economic setting in the country? The consequences of the TUC's direct political action which may make or mar the organisation are many, some of which are hereby detailed. The first move, which has not been well received by the TUC, was made at the Constituent Assembly when, delibera-

ting on the Draft Constitution for the Third Republic, it adopted a provision for the exclusion of the TUC from being represented on the Press Commission on the grounds that the TUC would no longer be regarded as an independent organisation having regard to its open link with a political party. The second move, also made at the Constituent Assembly, is the inclusion, of course, not for a bad cause, in the basic law of Ghana of the freedom of assembly and association provision which encourages individuals to assemble and associate freely "with other persons and in particular to form or belong to trade unions or other associations" for the protection of their interests. Although this provision is not in contravention of the Industrial Relations Act, 1965, it gives room for the formation of splinter unions or splinter national trade union centres. Thirdly, the officials, officers and members of the trade unions, who are supporters of the SDF, may, implicitly or explicitly, encourage industrial action with a view to discrediting the administration of the party in power. Finally, as a corollary of the third consequence, trade unionists who are supporters of the PNP would be less enthusiastic about the demands of the rank and file and, in consequence, play down their genuine and legitimate grievances, thus causing frustration leading to despondency among the TUC rank and file.

#### Some Consequences of Direct Political Action

It must be stressed here that trade unions are strong, but they are neither invincible nor omnipotent. And it is well that they are not so, for whatever wisdom they have shown has been due to the need to appeal to a wider public whose support they need. Prior to and since the assumption of office of the PNP government in September, 1979 there has been a spate of strikes caused partly by the harsh economic conditions in the country and partly by the exhibition of resentment towards the leadership of the trade unions. Most local union leaders resent the national leaders because they believe they are not promoting their interests.

It is good for the leadership and not for the membership that the TUC at this time has a low profile. If it should agitate as it has done before, the consequences might be disastrous. The organisation can no longer articulate the feelings of the membership because this may lead to splits in the ranks of the TUC. For example, in the past, it was able to issue out protests in response to government policies which workers perceived as inimical to their interests. Today, it hasn't the courage to do so for fear of reprisals from the government. This is understood by the union leadership to mean co-operation with the authorities whilst it is understood by the rank and file to mean incompetent performance. All this is happening because of the organisation's direct involvement in politics.

After the union movement's alliance with the CPP government in the First Republic, its non-involvement in party politics during the PP government in the Second Republic, and its direct political action in co-sponsoring a party in the Third Republic with little success initially, one may ask what will the organisation do next? Three political direc-

tions have been taken in the trade union movement in its quest for the best way to serve its members and the larger community. The lessons learnt in these three situations will be a guide to subsequent political action. However, what is to be done is for the SDF to be well organised so that it can withstand the stormy political weathers ahead in its struggle to bring under its canopy all shades of leftist opinion, and to achieve ultimately the goal of the 1979 SDF Manifesto: the Socialist State of Ghana.

## Education

### LEGON LECTURERS LEAVE FOR GREENER PASTURES

By

S. K. Otobil

The premier University of Ghana, Legon, faces an imminent closure in the future or at best, a reduction in status to that of an advanced second rate university, if the current rate at which it is losing its academic staff is not halted immediately. Already the difficulty the authorities encounter in recruiting lecturers has put a question mark on its long standing reputation as a University of international standing.

One lecturer described the brain drain from the University as "a real exodus of lecturers indeed." Another put it frankly as "a justifiable race of lecturers for their means of survival." The Vice-Chancellor of the University, Prof. Adzei Bekoe, in his address at a recent graduation ceremony dubbed the phenomenon as 'a cascade'. From whatever angle one looks at it, the inescapable fact still remains that the past three years have seen the University losing its lecturers and research fellows with disturbing frequency. And the problem certainly deserves the attention of all and sundry.

#### Unprecedented Exodus

The seeming unprecedented stampede of lecturers out of the University began in late 1977 following the confrontation between the University community and the then Head of State, the late Mr. I. K. Acheampong. Between November 1977 and November 1978, the University lost 45 full time lecturers through resignation of appointment and vacation of posts alone. The addition of staff lost in the period through sabbatical leave, leave of absence, study leave and resignation of research fellows pushes the number up to 114. In the last academic year, 1978/79, the University lost 88 Senior members while it could recruit only 47 for the period. And between January, 1 and 18 this year, the University has lost 9 lecturers while it has been able to employ only 6, a net loss of 3 senior members.

According to the Appointments Board, up to 50% of prospective lecturers offered appointments in the past four years have failed to report for duty, and such people have failed to give any reasons.

But it requires no stretch of the imagination to guess the destination of the lecturers leaving the University. Many have branched to various local areas especially politics and business where prospects are better. The current ruling People's National Party, led by President Hilla Limann, has lured no less than six eminent lecturers into politics. Dr. Isaac Chibueba, formerly Dean of Arts, is now Minister of Foreign Affairs, while Dr. J. S. Nabila, formerly of Geography Department, is now Minister of Information, Presidential Affairs and Special Duties. Dr. Ekow Daniels, formerly Dean of the Law Faculty, is now the Interior Minister while Dr. K. G. Erbynn, formerly the only lecturer of econometrics at the Economics Department with a doctorate degree, is now one of the three members of the committee managing the affairs of the dissolved Cocoa Marketing Board. Dr. George Benneh and Dr. E. K. Andah, formerly of the Geography and Agriculture Departments respectively are now Cabinet Ministers. Finally, Dr. Jones Ofori Atta, former Dean of Social Sciences, is now a full time parliamentarian.

#### Why The Exodus?

It is also well known that many of the former lecturers of the School of Administration are now well-paid employees of the various banks and business consultancies. But that does not end the story. Many lecturers have found their way back to the advanced countries where they obtained their Ph. Ds and other qualifications. Most significantly, however, it is reliably learnt that many of the lecturers have left for the nearby sister West African countries, especially Nigeria. The obvious and pertinent question that comes to the mind of any concerned person is why this unusual exodus. The causes are not far to seek. They consist essentially of certain distasteful working conditions in the University that tend to PUSH the lecturers away on one hand, and better service conditions outside the University and the country as a whole that PULL the lecturers away on the other. Mr. Ato K. Ahwoi, a writer in the Legon Observer of November 30 - December 13, 1979 issue, attempted an analysis of the local 'pull' factors when he compared the lot of the senior lecturer with that of a Managing Director in the public sector who possesses basically the same qualification and working experience. According to the writer, while a Senior Lecturer in the University receives a basic salary plus statutory entitlements of around C11,250 and an annual rented house allowance of C4,200, the managing director receives a basic salary plus statutory entitlements of C18,375 and a rented house allowance of C18,000. Over and above this the Managing Director is entitled to a chain of fringe benefits ranging from the use of official cars, entertainment allowance, duty allowance, utilities and telephone allowances as well as a whole array of household helpers like a driver, two watchmen, a garden boy, a cook and a house-boy, all paid by the government. Perhaps the 'push'

factors forcing lecturers out of the University were picturesquely explained by Professor G. K. Folson, Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ghana. Prof. Folson expressed deep concern over the University's persistent loss of staff and warned that unless the government positively steps in to arrest the situation "the consequences would be grim."

According to him, "inadequate salary and absence of job satisfaction, the direct consequence of the general economic malaise of the Ghanaian economy" are the two internal factors responsible for pushing lecturers out of the University. "The average University lecturer, Professor Folson said, 'receives a take home pay of C400.00 or just a little more.' It is out of this meagre salary that he is expected to meet the cost of feeding and clothing himself and his family. If we add the cost of monthly petrol consumption of his car which is about C200.00, then the lecturer is below what Professor Folson described as the "safety level."

'Left with a scanty salary to spend, the poor lecturer wastes most of his time making contacts and hunting for food in government agencies so that he can buy at control prices', the Pro-Vice-Chancellor lamented.

Secondly, the University lecturer of today, according to Prof. Folson, has no job satisfaction. In the midst of his struggle for survival, the lecturer has practically no time left to do research or publish, two activities which measure his true worth as a lecturer. Thus, unable to play his traditional role, the lecturer is always assailed by a feeling of insufficiency as well as lack of opportunity for promotion. These two internal 'push' factors together conspire to make the lecturer an easy prey to the pull factors which may come either locally outside the University or externally outside the country. Here, an analogy drawn by Prof. Folson between the fortunes of a lecturer in Ghana and the life of the same lecturer in Nigeria is worth mentioning.

#### Ghanaian and Nigerian Lecturers Compared

According to Prof. Folson, an average Ghanaian lecturer in any of the Ghanaian Universities earns in terms of the British pound £2000 while the same lecturer earns about £8,500 per annum in Nigeria. While in Ghana the lecturer pays about one-third of his salary as income tax, in Nigeria income tax takes only one-eighth. Besides, the Ghanaian lecturer in Nigeria is entitled to 25% of his salary as bonus annually. Even more significant, he can save in Britain half of his substantive annual salary as personal remittance while he can save all the 25% annual bonus in Britain. In sum, the foregoing analysis implies that the Ghanaian lecturer working in Nigeria can in a year save about £6,000 in Britain. While in Nigeria he can purchase a Peugeot 504 car within the first half of the year. He needs four years, living at the highest level of frugality, to afford the same car in Ghana, if he can get it.

#### Effect on Academic Life

But undoubtedly more distressing and significant are the crippling consequences this crisis over lecturers and staff is having on the academic life of

the University. Many departments of the University are now a shadow of themselves and some may sooner than later have to close down. The Economics Department and the School of Administration where the lecturers by all indications appear more marketable, immediately come into sharp focus. According to Mr. J. B. Abban, Acting Head of the Economics Department, "The Economics Department is gradually grinding to a halt."

Mr. Abban said the department now has only 6 instead of the 17 lecturers it is supposed to have. "This makes it impossible to organize any meaningful and useful tutorials since normally a tutorial group should not, for effectiveness, exceed 20 students" he said. Perhaps the plight of the Economics Department was better summed up in a letter dated 30th January, 1980 sent to the Vice-Chancellor for the purpose of his Annual Report for the 1978/79 academic year, which read inter alia:

"The staffing position in the department is becoming critical with every passing year. We have lost Dr. Abu Ahmad, Dr. Jones Ofori Atta and Dr. K. G. Erbynn. Mr. J. E. A. Manu who went on sabbatical leave hasn't come back and there are no prospects of Messers A. Kwarteng and Baa Nuakoh who are currently on study leave, returning to the department in the nearest possible future."

On student intake, the letter further noted, "The Department manages to keep down student intake into F.U.E. for the current academic year. If the present staffing position persists into the next academic year, the result would be even more drastic reduction in student intake of the department." The Head of the Department lastly observed with great concern that currently there are not enough lecturers for graduate studies and the department may be forced to stop intake of graduate students next year. At the School of Administration the picture is no less gloomy. A second year Master's of Business Administration (MBA II) student lamented that at present there are only about 4 lecturers doing full time teaching at the Masters level. The rest are part-time lecturers some of whom, he said, "had diluted the content of the course to suit their convenience." For example, he said students offering Finance option have to attend most of their lectures in the night just to suit the convenience of the part-times lecturer.

The MBA II student further alleged that many options, including Production Management and certain papers in Marketing, are not offered owing to lack of lecturers. He said that currently, contrary to normal practice, the final MBA students have not chosen topics for their thesis owing to shortage of lecturers. And the indications are that they may have to stay in the University for between three and four years or more instead of two years.

#### Research Activity

At the Agricultural Administration Department of the Faculty of Agriculture, a highly disillusioned post-graduate student said, "The Department has virtually tottered to its knees with the departure of Dr. E. K. Andah." He said only one of the six lecturers who are supposed to teach in the depart-

ment is left at base. And only recently, they were told by the Dean of the Faculty that either the Post Graduate Diploma course in Agricultural Administration would be suspended in the face of absence of lecturers to supervise their diploma thesis, or that the students stay in for extra three months after the normal academic year in order to complete the writing of their theses.

The academic work aside, research activity in the University is also fast registering the impact of the exodus of staff of the University. According to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, a special grant voted by the University for research work has for the past three years not been fully utilized. Similarly, a fund voted by the Cocoa Research Project at Tafo for research has been lying idle for want of use.

In sum, it would be sheer pretence for anybody to assume that all is well with the University of Ghana. Legon is certainly in a crisis over an unprecedented brain drain. And since the University lecturer is marketable both locally and internationally, we earnestly entreat the government to come in and arrest the situation-infact to strike while the iron is hot - before it assumes unwieldy dimensions. Certainly Ghana cannot at this stage of its national reconstruction afford the luxury of sitting over the collapse of its premier University.

## Notebook

### FINANCING EDUCATION

AS at the middle of October the majority of secondary schools had not re-opened for the 1980-81 academic year when session should have begun by the middle of September. Heads of secondary schools were not in the least anxious to re-open while the level of subvention per head remained indeterminate; and food supply remained uncertain. For a while the Ghana Education Service looked on helpless: subvention per head was to be determined by the respective Boards of Governors; as far as food supply was concerned the schools should aim at self-sufficiency by cultivating farms. Nobody was impressed. Towards the end of September, however, the Service finally announced a uniform increase in subvention, a large part of which was to be contributed by parents.

In a television discussion subsequently, a panel which included the General Secretary of the P.N.P. was unanimous in the view that the additional payment required of parents was rather steep. Other views that were canvassed included the following: further increases could be staved if heads of secondary schools learnt to manage better; parents could save themselves a lot of money if they could wean themselves from an unreasonable attachment to boarding school; for the moment there was nothing Government could do; parents should therefore pay the prescribed fees. The Secretary General contributed also the view that the Northern and Upper Regions, exempted from fee-payment for the past 20 years, should also begin to pay, a view which evidently does not

please the Northern and Upper Regions, naturally. As far as the Northern Regional Minister is concerned, the concession of non-payment was compensation for past deprivation; non-payment should therefore continue to be the case for eighty years more, at least.

Interesting as these various views and utterances are, they do not constitute a national policy which should reflect the national conception of the purposes of education. Towards such a national policy we could not do better than to proceed on the basis of propositions on which there is reasonable agreement. First of all, a proposition that all nationals should be enabled to acquire basic skills can hardly be challenged. A long time ago primary school education was enough to impart basic skills. Few would dispute that these days education beyond primary school is necessary for the acquisition of those skills. As to who pays, it will hardly raise any controversy to posit that the beneficiaries of education should pay.

And all too soon, alas, we have arrived at controversy; who are the beneficiaries? There is no doubt about benefits of education to the individual. The 'O' Level Mathematics gained enables employment at one of the financial institutions, perhaps; so does the 'O' Level in shorthand and typewriting bring the little girl to the Ministry as a stenographer. But what if he or she refuses to go to school? All those agencies which depend on those little services would be denied those services, of course. Ultimately the state suffers. This is all the argument for state support for education. The state can hardly survive if there aren't all those little girls who type letters for business and administration or those junior accounting personnel who can post ledgers. The state more than the individual owes it to its own survival to ensure that those basic skills are present in society.

How does the state organise itself to assure itself of those skills? Most countries in the developed world have decided that those skills are best guaranteed by the state's under-writing of the costs. We clearly have to decide how crucial basic education is to us as a nation. If we should decide that it is a number one priority, for instance, we can then discuss meaningfully sources of funding.

We are persuaded that there are enough cedis which could be channelled away from dubious activities to make free and compulsory education in basic skills possible, if we want to. For instance, we should decide whether all those corporations which serve meals at heavily subsidised costs to their numerous workers deserve those subsidies more than secondary school attendants. All those lunches and sitting allowances payable to Directors of Boards and Corporations - would anyone miss them? Would anyone's pride suffer irreparable damage if we decide that state functionaries, including Ministers, travel economy class? The world knows we are broke, so whom are we trying to impress at the expense of more basic things? Considerable savings could also be made in higher education by addressing ourselves to just a few questions: Nearly everywhere the duration of a Bachelor's degree is four years after 'O' Level. Why does it take 5-6 years in this country? As a

preparation for self-government, it was necessary to support fully everyone who showed aptitude for higher education. Is total support for education beyond the basic still defensible?

Individual utterances which focus on parental ability or otherwise to pay are irrelevant when we are seeking to contrive the continuing availability of skills that are essential for the apparatus of state. Utterances of the kind that all would be well if we were not so enamoured of boarding schools are not helpful either, because it is simply not true that there are enough neighbourhood schools.

Instead of abolishing non-payment anywhere we may well have to extend the concession to all the other regions. Certainly, whatever the sense of injury, that is the only way any region could in strict conformity with the law continue to enjoy a facility that has been available for two decades already. We should know by now that the Constitution of the Third Republic forbids us to discriminate against or in anyone's favour on grounds of origin, sex, religion or political persuasion. We need advice as to how crucial education is to our development as a nation. Who pays is easily determined when we have an answer to how crucial. A national commission on education is needed.

#### THE BLACK STAR LINE IMPASSE

For nearly six months now, the national shipping line, Black Star Line, has been virtually at a standstill. It all started when some of the staff of the Black Star Line threatened to withdraw services to back up demands for improved conditions of service. Management could meet those demands only partially, apparently. Further negotiation seemed to have broken down amidst recriminations between the Minister of Transport and Communication on one hand and representatives of the staff on the other hand. The threat of withdrawal duly became a reality. The dispute culminated in the dramatic announcement of the assumption of the powers of the management by the President, and the dismissal of the staff of the corporation who were withholding service. New officers have since been recruited, we learn, but Black Star Line ships are still not much in evidence where they should be, on the high seas.

Certain facts stand out clearly in this episode. First of all, the staff of the Black Star Line were not doing anything unusual in demanding better conditions of service. Who has not lately: teachers, nurses, civil servants, mediamen, everybody! The withdrawal of service to back up demands was also not unusual. Government's inability or unwillingness to meet the demands in their entirety was not unexpected, either. Government hardly ever meets anyone's demands fully. Besides, given their record of performance, losses all over, Government probably felt the demands were cheeky. Some of us on the sidelines were not overly enthused about demands by people whose life style is already enviable? And the means thereto are not particularly "legit". Everybody connected with Black Star Line is some kind of trader. Those

who work on board ships buy in bulk stuff which is transported on state ships without payment. The staff ashore compete with others to buy the stuff for retail and the prices are not exactly low considering the savings on transportation. We look on without murmur because everybody does it. Workers of various other state enterprises insist on serving themselves first from the fruits of their labour and there is hardly anything left when the staff has had its fill. The workers can then sell their booty to the general public — well beyond "control". The nonsense had to stop and the President's "Enough is enough" broadcast was timely and understandable.

What is not understandable is the President's assumption of the functions of the management of the Black Star Line in addition to an already heavy load. Why do we have a Minister in charge of the Corporation? And why even the Minister rather than a new management? It is not too late to return the management to hands that are not overly full.

We have lost good business because our ships have been standing idle; good money too! But there are important lessons to be learnt: first of all it is clear that state functionaries like the staff of Black Star Line cannot go on behaving as if they owned state property which is only temporarily in their charge without somebody telling them off sooner or later. On this occasion the telling-off has not been without costs to the nation but it has not been without pain to the BSL staff either. Secondly, it should be obvious to the Government that dismissal of staff is effective only where replacements are easy to come by. In the recent past Government has resorted too easily to dismissal which should be an instrument of the last resort. We are not too sure that the dismissals were all justifiable. The dismissal of junior civil servants, for instance, was too hasty, in our judgement. But the Government could get away with it because clerical officers come at two a pesewa. You cannot set up tables at the Accra Stadium to recruit sea captains. Government should bear that in mind in its handling of the staff of that corporation. Management and staff of the Black Star Line have nothing to lose by returning to the negotiating table and we would urge them to do just that.

## Letters

### O Come All Ye Widows

SIR - The peculiar history of Ghana seems to be leaving in its trail peculiar events. A parliamentary committee has decided to revise upwards the remuneration given to the widow of a former Head of State, to take care of the rising cost of living - the old remuneration, fixed by the SMC I being C34,000.00. There is no need going into the logic or illogic of importing a "state widow" and taking care of her and her family; let alone arguing about the amount involved since it was fixed by a past regime,

and payment has been effective for some year now.

But will our parliamentarians please resist the temptation of creating more problems for the nation. Assuming even that we as a nation endorse the idea of extravagance (of course we don't) can we easily swallow proposals which would seem to put remunerations of our "widows-of-state" above the salary or allowance of our Head of State?

And to think that another "widow of-state" has been recommended for remuneration by the state! Honourable Dr. Amoah and his committee members, would you not rather introduce a bill in parliament that seeks to say, come all ye "Widows-of-state?", for Ghana has at least 6 widows-of-state, be they from civilian or military regimes. Has anybody bothered to find out under what conditions our "military widows-of-state" are living? Why should the committee be interested in the sad fate of one "widow-of-state"? Or is it merely to maintain a balance of power? And what about the wife of the late President Akuffo-Addo and her children?

Hon. Dr. Amoah and his committee members, our problems are already too many. The tax payer cannot afford any extra perspiration, particularly under the heat of the politics of widowhood.

Language Centre,  
Legon.

Kwesi Yankah

### From Kumasi with Feelings

SIR - Kojo Yankah's report on the above topic in the L.O. of 27 June, 1980, was read with much interest.

I wish to inform Kojo that we now read the newspapers daily, sometimes in the afternoons. Furthermore, the Ejisu Border Guard barrier has now been moved further up on the Kumasi-Accra road for obvious reasons.

The latest in town, Kojo, is that the water we drink in Kumasi now is more coloured than the Gulder bottles you saw at the party near the Ambassador Records factory.

All the white bottles in my fridge are turning brown. My white shirts, underwear, bedsheets etc. have all turned brown.

What really frightens me is that I drink coloured water. When I urinate only to find my urine colourless then I begin to shiver. Unless I am told that there is some 'ALUM' in my body or that I carry around some human filter, I shall continue panicking.

Kojo, when I drink my beer and find my urine coloured, I immediately know the cause of it!

When I put coloured water into the white bottle to find the bottom part coloured later on, I know why it happened so!

When I wash my white shirt, sheets etc. with coloured water to find them coloured when dried, I know why?

But when I drink the coloured water to find my urine COLOURLESS, why should I not panic.

Where has the 'Stuff' I find deposited under the bottom of the white bottle in the fridge gone to? INSIDE ME?? !!

Will Prof. Quarcoopome come to my aid or will someone at the Ghana Water and Sewerage Corporation tell me.

Let them be advised to stop the noise about the water being harmless. At least I have observed its harmful effects on my white dress.

Mr. Yankah, this is the Ghana we wish to see "Live Long!"

Long Live Ghana! Indeed, Not the people in it.

P. O. Box 3266,  
Kumasi.

Yaw Sam,

### Exchange Rate System In Ghana

SIR - In your issue (XII 9) the correspondent who contributed the article on the Exchange Rate System in Ghana expressed the wish that article will initiate "a clear-headed unemotional debate" This contribution should therefore be welcome to him.

I will concentrate on just one aspect: devaluation. The I.M.F. looks upon devaluation as the panacea for any monetary malaise wherever it may occur. The fact that I.M.F. governing body is dominated by economists from the developed countries and that the United States has a great say in evolving its policies largely explains this stance of the I.M.F. The recent demand for a reorganization of I.M.F. is a pointer to the unsatisfactory way in which the Fund has been functioning. The reason why devaluation is so popular with the I.M.F. is apparent: devaluation enables the industrialized developed countries to get the products of the country forced into devaluation cheaper. But at the same time, the latter country has to pay through its nose for its imports.

Devaluation only helps if the country is not dependent on imports to a considerable extent, and/or the country has greater export potential in the shape of commodities whose demand is comparatively elastic. Ghana unfortunately does not satisfy either of the conditions. Ghana is dependent on imports not only for the so-called 'essential commodities,' but also for several other goods. Even its industries to an unduly large extent are import-based, i.e., raw materials have to be imported. The plight of the majority of industries at the moment is a sorry reminder of this. The demand for Ghana's main foreign-exchange earner, cocoa, is relatively inelastic. Three devaluations in the space of 12 years has not had a salvaging effect. If a country is to be helped by devaluation, it shows in the first instance. India devalued in 1966-67, and the improvement in India's foreign exchange situation can be traced to it. Of course devaluation has to be accompanied by other measures, like strict restriction on foreign travel, cut back in government overseas expenditure like missions abroad, attendance at conferences (e.g. recent decision of Senegal to close a number of its missions abroad), genuine restrictions on imports enforced by an efficient bureaucracy, and other financial measures to serve the dual purpose

of earning more foreign exchange and reducing its spending, anything in the nature of OGL, SUL, SL is detrimental to such an objective. It is surprising, to say the least, that having publicly stated he is against any such measures, as he is convinced that the source of finance for these is illegal, the Finance Minister should be a party to the introduction of these very harmful policies.

Ghana can also follow the lead given by Jamaica and Tanzania in resisting the I.M.F. pressure to devalue their currencies.

Dept of History  
Legon

C. N. Wadia

### VRA Tariff To Valco

SIR - Mr. K. S. Manu's letter which appeared in your issue dated October 10 quotes in his comments upon the Bonneville Power Administration rates from publications dated more than a year ahead of the actual rate change; these do not reflect what Bonneville in fact did. Mr. Manu's quotations are accurate statements of what was published in 1978 and those were the proposals made at that time by Bonneville. By the time the rate change was actually made in December of 1979, Bonneville had reduced the increase well below its original proposal. As I previously stated the Bonneville rate to the aluminium industry for 1980 is estimated at about 5.6 mills.

With respect to rates being based upon cost of production, this very principle is being followed by Bonneville Power Administration and Tennessee Valley Authority, both federal agencies in the U.S. Since the bulk of its power comes from higher cost thermal units, the TVA charges significantly more for power than Bonneville, with most of its power coming from lower cost hydroelectric sources.

The New Zealand power situation is somewhat different. The power rate was increased by negotiated agreement and it is far closer to 10 mills than 15 mills but there are other aspects of the New Zealand situation which make a straight comparison of power rates misleading.

I did not intend to convey the impression that an increase in power rate does not affect Valco's shareholders. It clearly does. I did want to point out that as long as Valco is profitable, any increase in power bill affects both Valco's income tax payments and Valco's payment to the Valco Fund as well as its shareholders.

Mr. Manu's contention that any increase in power costs can be directly passed on to the final consumer of the metal does not reflect the realities in the market place. Aluminium from any one producer is in competition with that from many other producers and is also in competition with the producers of many other products such as steel, wood, copper, plastics, zinc, etc.

I believe the purpose of this exchange of views should not be to "win" or "lose" debating points but to develop a clearer understanding of the facts.

Valco  
Tema.

Ward B. Saunders, Jr.  
Managing Director

## The President And The Electoral Commissioner

SIR - If there is one individual in this land who should bend over backwards to ensure the success of the electoral process and constitutional rule, it should be the President. Yet in less than a year of coming into office, Dr. Limann has found it necessary, on two occasions, to use a public platform to show a belated disagreement with the Electoral Commissioner. Last time, we were given the impression that the Electoral Commission had failed to alert Government on its plans.

On this occasion, however, we are assured that not only was Government put in the picture, but all political parties had been given the opportunity to have their say on the issue of whether the Electoral Register should be re-compiled. Yet at this seemingly late hour, the President tells us he cannot allow the exercise to take off because:

- (1) it would be too expensive; and
- (2) it will interfere with the Government's Agricultural Programme.

True, ten million cedis is a lot of money for a nation such as ours. But so also is the money paid to sustain the Presidential Office, the Council of State, the Cabinet and Parliament itself. Those of us who ardently believe in the democratic process have no doubt that democracy is in the long run much much cheaper than arbitrary rule - the type which has precipitated the nation's fall from grace to grass.

As for the second reason given by Dr. Limann, one may concede that it is possible that the farming season is at its peak in a couple of regions. If so, couldn't the President have suggested that the exercise should be postponed in these areas alone?

Another curious aspect of Dr. Limann's announcement is that in spite of his own Government's agricultural programme, it was at one of the many PNP victory rallies that he made his statement. Are we to understand that the order of precedence should be victory rallies, then agricultural programmes, then reliable voter's register?

This writer wishes to inform the President that there are individuals who, for obvious reasons, preferred the bogus Unigov type of government to true representative government. They may have succeeded in infiltrating political parties but that is no reason why we should allow them to use their influence to destroy the Third Republic. One hopes Dr. Limann will appreciate that his best friends could easily be those who are prepared to criticise him now.

Biochemistry Department      K. K. Oduro  
Legon.

This letter was advertised as published in L.O. No. 10, but did not appear in the letters column of that issue. Even though it is slightly out of date, the Editorial committee believes that it should be published. (Editor.)

## Miscellaneous Reports

### SECOND ANNUAL DELEGATES CONFERENCE OF THE POPULAR FRONT PARTY

(P.F.P.)

By

Our Correspondent

THE Second Annual Delegates Conference of the P.F.P. opened at about 8.00 p.m. on Thursday, 25th September and ended at about 4.00 p.m. on Saturday, 27th September, 1980. The conference opened amid speculation that leadership changes within the party were imminent. This speculation was fed by what Mr. J. H. Owusu-Acheampong, then P.F.P. Member of Berekum, said at a press conference in Parliament House just before the opening of the conference.

Mr. Owusu-Acheampong told the press that a committee of the party had recommended certain amendments to the party's constitution. Among these were: (i) The abolition of the office of Leader of the Party; (ii) the appointment of an Executive Chairman of the party who will have no right to compete for the position of a Presidential candidate; (iii) the appointment of a full-time General Secretary, and (iv) the appointment of a Council of Elders. He also noted that if these recommendations were accepted by the Second Annual Delegates Conference then the party's constitution will consequently be amended to reflect these recommendations.

The truth seems to be that since the P.F.P. lost the 1979 Presidential and Parliamentary elections, there have been demands for changes in the top leadership of the party, demands which have taken the form of resolutions for changes in the party's constitution. Such reports and resolutions as came to the notice of the National Executive were referred to a special committee (chaired by Mr. J. H. Mensah and including Messrs S. Odoi-Sykes, Oheneba Kow Richardson, Appia Menkah, Dr. Jones Ofori Atta etc.) to consider and make recommendations to the National Executive which, in turn, would decide what step to recommend to the conference. The Mensah Committee produced a draft of a completely new Constitution which was presented to the National Executive a week before the Delegates Conference. The new draft constitution was not included as an item on the agenda for the conference, and it was probably to force a debate on this that Mr. Owusu Acheampong held the press conference.

The conference was attended by over 600 delegates and observers. Each of the 140 constituencies sent three delegates, and the Youth, Women's and universities' wings of the party sent observers. The theme of the conference was spelt out by the Chairman of the party, Alhaji Yakubu Fali, Tolon-Na: Discipline, Loyalty and Work. The chairman summed up the theme of the conference in the words: 'A conference bedevilled by petty jealousy'

and squabbles and one in which the main theme is the satisfaction of personal ambition expressing itself in a struggle for power can inspire no one in these hard times. The citizens of this country are politically sophisticated enough to know that men and women who are preoccupied with their own ambitions and are battling for position and privilege can have little time for any genuine devotion to the welfare of the people. In a generally mild and conciliatory speech the Chairman told the delegates that the main value of the conference was to enable the delegates to know each other as colleagues and to affirm their solidarity as party members who are struggling in a multi-party system for power. He ended on this peroration: 'We must be seen to be an active alternative to the ruling party and this we can achieve by placing the unity of the party above all our considerations. This is the challenge to all.'

The conference was held in the Auditorium of the School of Administration, University of Ghana, and the delegates stayed in Akufo Hall of the same university. The Auditorium was packed full on the opening day for the public was invited, but on the second day when the conference settled down to business, only accredited delegates and observers were allowed to participate in the discussions. Fraternal greetings were exchanged, and Naa Morkor Busia, the wife of the late leader of the P.P., briefly thanked the delegates who not only helped to give her late husband a fitting burial; but who also have supported her morally since the death of her husband.

On the second day, the Leader, Mr. Victor Owusu, delivered what was generally considered by the delegates to be a fighting speech. He began the speech by denouncing the P.N.P. government as an incompetent government: 'When President Limann assumed office one year ago, neither he nor any other Ghanaian could have harboured any illusions about the magnitude of competently administering a country reduced to bankruptcy and in which there was hardly any discipline. But difficult though the job was it could be done and had to be done. Dr. Limann offered himself to the nation to do the job and he was entrusted with it. He has to do it and do it well and it is no excuse whatever to plead a difficulty of which he must have been aware before he offered himself. Then he went on to state that 'there is a general feeling of disappointment with the performance of Dr. Limann's administration. There has been a general incompetence and lack of clear direction in the handling of the country's social and economic problems. I consider this a great pity because the whole concept of civilian administration may be endangered if the government continues to perform as badly as it is doing now, and I believe that it is necessary for the survival of democracy that a government elected under our constitution should serve its term.' He then went on to affirm the faith of his party in democratic constitutional rule by a popularly elected civilian administration. Having called on the other minority parties to work together to ensure that the 'P.N.P. does not bring back to this country the tradition of intolerance and oppression', he

turned to the thorny question of discipline within his own party. It was clear here that he was engaged in an undeclared debate with his opponents in the party. He noted: 'Every member of this Party however high his position is subject to the constitution and the authority of the party.'

It was clear in the speech that the Leader was as aware as other party members that there are still demands for a change in the leadership of the party. This agitation has been organized around some of those who contested for the leadership of the party in 1979. Mr. Owusu had these strong words for his rivals: 'If a person contests for any office in this party from leader right down and loses it is not open to him if he believes in democracy to immediately turn round to seek an alteration of the rules to enable him to have a second bite at the cherry long before the appointed time. Let me say at once, he gravely intoned amidst applause, 'that no one has a divine right to be leader of this party ..... be not too sure of yourself for the game of politics is unpredictable. Spend your efforts at this stage to build the Party and its leadership so that when the time comes to select out standard bearer there will be a solid party foundation on which to rest his bid for power.'

Having spoken mainly on discipline, loyalty and work, Mr. Owusu ended by saying that copies of the new draft constitution would be sent to all the regions and constituencies, and that within six months the views of party members would be collated by the various regional secretariats for onward transmission to the National Secretariat. Finally he informed the delegates, that the National Executive would reconsider the draft constitution in the light of submissions received and prepare a final draft for consideration and adoption by another party conference.

The General Secretary immediately followed the leader with his Annual Report. In his Report it was made clear that the party needs money to transform the ad hoc organizations and arrangements set up for the elections into strong institutions run by full-time, qualified personnel. He discussed the main weaknesses of the party: lack of funds, party vans, office equipment, full-time party workers; lack of a research unit in which party members and MPs can rely for reliable data and material on the economy, state of public opinion etc; and a well-produced newspaper.

The General Secretary's Report provided a peg on which the delegates hanged on their dissatisfaction with the way the party had been run in the past Year. Discussion was frank and critical. A delegate from the Northern Region called for the appointment of a full-time General Secretary. Also, a delegate from Swedru, feeling that the National Secretariat had performed poorly in the past year, called for the appointment of a management committee to run the affairs of the Secretariat. He particularly called for a national Secretariat, which will actively liaise with the party's MPs and the minority parties. This stimulated a lively debate, and the Leader contributed to this by noting that the acceptance of such a motion would in effect mean a declaration by the conference of no confidence in the leadership of the party. There was no doubt

that the leadership question was being debated, even if delegates obliquely rather than directly made references to the leadership of the party. The debate occupied the whole afternoon session of the second day, and it was clear that overwhelming majority of the delegates supported the leader in his interpretation of the motion of the Swedru delegate. By the end of the debate, the Leader and his supporters clearly carried the day, but there was equally no doubt that a vocal minority of the delegates had expressed a demand for the leadership question to be raised again. From the second day onwards it was apparent that Mr. Owusu had strengthened his position as the Leader of the party.

When the conference resumed on the third and final day, a 51-page policy paper, covering various aspects of national life ranging from agriculture to national security, was fully debated. In this document, the party has outlined its ideas and proposals. It was resolved to refer the paper to a technical committee which will consider it in detail and have it edited and published. The Treasurer presented an uncontroversial report which echoed some of the General Secretary's Report on party finances. He called on the party members to devise ways for raising funds for the 1981 local government elections and the 1983-4 presidential and parliamentary elections. The conference ended with the leadership firmly in control of party affairs, and the following resolutions were passed: (1) That this conference herein assembled expresses its gratitude and appreciation to the leadership for the work done during the past year and that this conference resolves that the present leadership must continue in office. (2) That this conference views with great concern the serious situation that has arisen as a result of the confrontation between the Government and the officers of the Black Star Line and that this conference asks the Government to take immediate steps to resolve the issue

### THE UNITED NATIONAL CONVENTION (U.N.C.) CONGRESS

By  
Our Correspondent

Following the political alliance between the U.N.C. and the P.N.P. on 25th October 1979, many observers came to the conclusion, even at the grass-roots level, that the U.N.C. had ceased to exist as a political force. It was not uncommon to hear the cynical remark that the U.N.C. had 'vanished all the way into Limann's pockets.'

Within the Party itself, the non-implementation of the basic terms of the agreement had led to moves to have the alliance abrogated. Thus, in spite of the determined efforts of the U.N.C. leadership to preach the virtues of the alliance in a sincere effort to save it, it was becoming increasingly clear that opposition to the alliance had become quite vocal, and that it could no longer be ignored if the Party wanted to survive. It was in the light of these considerations that the Annual Conference of the U.N.C. was convened to resolve the issue at the

Baden Powell Memorial Hall from 25th-27th September 1980.

The first day's session was opened with a welcome address by the Leader and Chairman of the Party, Mr. William Ofori-Atta. He drew attention to the difficulties that beset the U.N.C. before the last General Elections, particularly the lack of funds to back up the campaigns of U.N.C. candidates in the rural areas and the fact that many of the candidates had to do their campaigns almost entirely on foot without the aid of a party van.' He re-affirmed the Party's faith in 'civilian, constitutional and democratic rule' and pointed out that although the U.N.C. knew there would be difficulties in the alliance, and that the Party might suffer in the process, the U.N.C. was however comforted 'by the fact that it was in the supreme interest of the nation and that it might encourage government by consensus.'

The General Secretary's report, which followed next elaborated on the successes and failures of the U.N.C.-P.N.P. Alliance. Dr. Obed Asamoah pointed out that the 'initiative for the alliance came from the P.N.P.' and the U.N.C. accepted the idea to ensure stability and also 'in the hope that the PNP would tap the great and abundant talents within the U.N.C. for the proper governance of the country.' As a 'stabilising factor' therefore the alliance was a success. Moreover, in compliance with clause 3 of the agreement which calls for 'the representation of either Party in Government' to reflect relative strengths in Parliament, the Government has since appointed one Deputy Minister and two Ambassadors from the U.N.C. Unfortunately, said the General Secretary, the National Executive Committee of the U.N.C. 'does not see the implementation of Clause 3 in terms of jobs for the boys but in terms of the obvious need to strengthen the administration by broadening its talent base, and to influence the formulation of government policies and programmes' at Cabinet level. In addition, although Clause 6 of the agreement stipulated that 'both Parties shall pursue a common programme and policy in Parliament a in so far as such programme and policy do not fundamentally conflict with the published manifesto and constitution of either Party,' there was a complete 'absence of prior consultation' and in this regard it was 'obviously absurd for the PNP to expect the UNC to rubber-stamp policies unilaterally adopted even if they offend (U.N.C.) values.' In the light of these shortcomings, the National Liaison Committee envisaged under the agreement became 'moribund' and its achievements limited.

The General Secretary's report was followed by two other reports, one from the Director of Operations and the other from the Finance Committee. By this time the mood of congress had changed. Most of the delegates had become restive: they wanted immediate discussion of the PNP-UNC Alliance. The Chairman of the Conference had to accede to the request, postpone discussions on Party organisation and Budget in order to table the issue of the alliance. At this point, the National Youth Leader, Dr. J. K. Agovi, moved for the abrogation of the alliance. He pointed out that the

resolution before congress was the result of a concerted effort of 'some concerned members of the UNC' who had become increasingly disillusioned with the alliance. The resolution was subsequently signed by twenty-nine people 'from various parts of the country'. The text of the resolution itself recounted the various reasons for the abrogation and asked Congress 'to acknowledge the fact that a formal alliance no longer exists between the P.N.P. and the U.N.C.' and that the National Executive Committee should 'take steps immediately to inform the PNP accordingly.' Finally, the resolution asked congress to resolve 'to continue to co-operate with all political parties to promote the welfare of all Ghanaians within the framework of constitutional and democratic rule.'

Mr. G. W. Amarteifio, the then Director of Operations of the Party, moved a counter motion to the effect that the alliance should be retained and its terms re-negotiated with the P.N.P. The debate that followed was far from being acrimonious or 'heated and tension-packed' as one national daily reported. It was quite obvious that people's minds had already been made up on the matter and this became obvious from the clear majority of 164 votes for the abrogation of the alliance and 44 votes for its continuation.

The spectre of the alliance also haunted the main agenda for the second day's deliberations - the election of new officers for the party. By a special Transitional Provision in the U.N.C. Constitution,

Mr. William Ofori-Atta and his running mate in the last presidential elections, Alhaji Ibrahim Mahama, were retained as Leader and Deputy Leader of the Party. Those in the old Executive who also retained their posts included Dr. Obed Asamoah as General Secretary, Dr. J. K. Agovi as the National Youth Leader and Mrs. Hawa Ayebo as the Women's Leader. New faces in the leadership included Mr. E. A. K. Akuoku as the Chairman of the Party, Dr. Joe Geker as the Director of Operations, Mr. G. K. O. Turkson as Treasurer and Mr. Kwabena Essem, a free-lance journalist for the Associated Press was elected as Director of Publicity. It was quite clear from the mood of Congress that Mr. G. W. Amarteifio who contested the post of Director of Publicity and Mr. David Lamptey who also contested the Youth Leadership lost because of their pro-alliance utterances and demonstrations.

However, before the election of officers, two resolutions were adopted by the Congress. The first one which dealt with general political matters expressed the grave concern of the U.N.C. on the P.N.P. Government's attitude 'in precipitating confrontations and constitutional crises'. It called for due regard for 'technical competence over and above party considerations' in appointments to Public Boards and Statutory Corporations, and deplored as improper the tendency 'for party functionaries to be appointed to more than one Board and also for Parliamentarians to be appointed to

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such Boards at all.' It drew attention to the 'political manipulation' in the distribution system and called for an urgent revision of the Voters' Register 'before any meaningful elections can be held in the future.' The Resolution on the Economy also called for measures to:

1. reduce the scope of economic controls and strengthen market forces;
2. create a package of incentives concentrated on the producer as the direct and foremost beneficiary of productive economic activity in agriculture, mining, timber and manufacturing;
3. make price policies consistent with money supply and the availability of commodities;
4. establish stable relationships between the Cedi and other currencies of ECOWAS so as to reduce harmful speculation and smuggling.

The resolution also made practical proposals concerning specific areas of the economy for immediate action. These include the rehabilitation of roads particularly in the rural areas in order to re-open the country's vital supply lines; the clarification of government policy on education at all levels; and assistance to private industry with foreign resources made available under foreign loan agreements to enable faster and better utilisation of these resources so as to lighten the budgetary and debt burden on the government.

Delegates came from all over the country to affirm their belief in the Party. Although the bus which carried the Brong Ahafo and Ashanti delegations to the congress was involved in a serious accident, it was sad but heartening to see many of them, some limping, others with bandaged arms and legs arriving in a group at the Congress Hall. All of them were determined to take active part and make intelligent contributions to the debates, discussions and resolutions initiated by the Congress. There was a strong impression of party unity and revivalism at this Congress; but above all, the delegates went away with a certain conviction that the U.N.C. can stand on its own feet as a viable political party.

## The Arts

### LIPSTICK

Film Review

by

Aba Hayford

For a consuming society like ours, Lipstick provides an insight into some of the questions we should be asking ourselves everytime a commodity is set before us as a consumption item, and each time we feel the urge to buy. Lipstick, Lipstick, indeed! A De Lorentis Film that opens with the largest possible portrait of a face you hardly take

in except the Lips, the Lips burning red. It's all going to be about Lipstick. Then the suggestive music synchronised into the world of fashion, models, swirling skirts, poses, cutting impossible and inane figures to the camera or to the photographer?! Again women symbolic of the banal, the irresponsible.

Surely all the articles being modelled are for sale but the question is which particular one is being advertised now? The Beauties, the Eyes, the Lips, the Clothes, the Poses. The Lips or the Lipstick. At this point the viewer can only gues. If you watch adverts carefully you may see for example photographs of a white woman or the other, half naked, astride the back of a camel by the Pyramids in the desert between two sand dunes, the female looking the dream stereotype of the white woman. At the bottom of the page you may find a bottle of some drink with ice cubes! All this would be an appeal, an extra effort to make consumers: out of you and me - to buy by compulsion, to suggest or force a need into our subconsciousness, into our inner sensitivities: A need that we may never have felt. And so is this film, "Lipstick", we are taken from the studios to the beach, where to the clicking of the cameras, a commodity is being prepared for the market. We are going to be manipulated into buying through the soft and supple flesh of Chris the model.

Meanwhile Kathy has permission to bring her music teacher, Gordon Stephen, a young and handsome composer along to the set, to his kind of music to big sister Chris, in between poses. Gordon Steven sits and watches the scene seemingly ruffled, overwhelmed and also disappointed because there was no time for the hearing. Chris is apologetic and feels obliged to invite her sister's music teacher to bring his tapes to the apartment where the sisters live. Gordon Stewart turns up for the appointment, the camera uses his eyes to introduce the apartment; and with the bits and pieces of furnishing, reveals the personality of Chris to us. In the background we even hear the kind of music that she normally listens to. Chris has had to hurry out of the bath and throws on some clothing to get ready to listen to the super. extra modern compositions of her sister's teacher. One senses more politeness on her part but the aspiring young composer has hopes. Maybe hopes of introduction into the right circles? Now was it jealousy at her obvious success and his own failure, was it the telephone call, was it anger at the interruption of his music, was it premeditated trust, desire or yearning to possess the body that haunted him from the beach scene?

Whatever it was, Gordon Stewart becomes violent, attacks her, lashes out insults at Chris. He forces her to paint on the Lipstick and flings her around very roughly indeed, and threatens her with a knife. She, surprised, shocked, overtaken by events and overpowered, implores him in vain. The aspiring composer rapes her to the sound of his own music. Kathy back home from school a little earlier than usual rings the doorbell in rain. She lets herself into the apartment and discovers to her shock that her music teachers in bed with her sister. Chris did not hear Kathy

ring the doorbell. He heard the bell ring and heard Kathy come into the flat and knew Kathy would see them and so held his victim very quietly at the given moment. To a third person the two heads which Kathy saw presented a pair making love in peace.

Until her big sister told her what had happened, all she really saw were their two heads together in bed at the sight of which she ran out of the house. Chris reports the rape to the police, the usual questions, and photographs are taken. She approaches her lawyer about taking the case to court. Anne Bancroft cast in the role of a hardened, cold, penetrating and wizened but attractive lawyer, knows what to expect in court in a delicate case of this nature. She tells her not to expect to win her case in court. Gordon Stephen can only be prosecuted if she (Chris) testified and "if you do testify the court is going to humiliate and abuse you". In Court, it was indeed a hopeless situation, a lost effort. Despite all the fight her lawyer put up, despite little Kathy's testimony Chris is painted as a petty woman who entices the young and handsome Gordon. The photographs of her body and her sexy poses in advertising Lipstick is an exaggeration that does not help her much. Her constant plea. "It's my work and I do what am told" sounds hollow and empty and loses its meaning on the jury. Facts are: she is advertising with sex, her body and the big issue here is, The onlooker is allowed to look, get worked up and to buy. But you are not allowed to touch. At the time when you begin to feel sorry for her disappointment, you wonder whether she ever will understand what is being done with her body and her own role in the game of manipulation. Stewart Gordon the Defendant is acquitted—NOT GUILTY. He is acclaimed by society, his music is "in". We see him in the company of a nun who obviously has him teaching music to a class of young girls.

Chris on the other hand is told that her agents want to cool it. She is virtually sacked. She and Kathy pack their belongings into their wagon and on their way out of town she stops at the Studio to finish a last modelling assignment. She sends Kathy off to while away the time looking in at the other studios. She makes a fatal discovery. Her former music teacher, Stewart Gordon, is experimenting with his music in one of the rooms in the Studio Complex. It seems for a while she forgot all the torture she had to go through at the trial because of him. He invites her over and puts her heartbeat through the amplifier. The noise her heartbeat makes seems to awaken the memories of fear of the man who ruined her sister and her security. She bolts away and tries to run away from him, but he catches up with her in the glass labyrinth of the studios and;

Gordon Stewart rapes Kathy. Chris goes mad with anger at the news and rushes out of the studio to the balcony to find Stewart moving into his car. With rage she races to collect her hunting rifle from the wagon, aims at Stewart and shoots to kill him.

Both her life and Kathy's life seem ruined in the whirl of the last skirts she modelled. Back in Court Broken and finished this time she accused, Chris,

is declared "NOT GUILTY". We are left with the wisdom of her Lawyer. "Crime used to be expected because we are human but the failure/denial of justice may be more damaging than crime itself." There are interesting aesthetical and technical details I would like to share with viewers: The source of light in the night scenes, the introduction of music to suggest environment; the details of characterisation and the casting of types to play the various roles. The salient question though remains: To what extent should we allow ourselves to be manipulated? The film sets out to expose the dexterous methods of advertising. But it ends up making victims of individuals who are themselves caught in a system that is left in tact to continue as if nothing was wrong.

## For The Record

### FARMERS STILL NOT PAID

21 October 1980.

Cocoa farmers in the Asiakwa-Kwabeng constituency have not been paid for the past two months for cocoa sold to the Cocoa Marketing Board. Owing to this farmers in this area cannot pay the school fees of their children. Mr. K. Y. Asante, Member of Parliament for Asiakwa-Kwabeng, after touring his constituency, has called on the government to ensure prompt payment for cocoa sold to the Board. Also the member of Parliament for Offinso, Mr. K. Takyi-Berko, has called on the government to say what he has called the 'relentless decline' in the cocoa industry. After visiting a number of farms in his constituency, Mr. Takyi-Berko told the Ghana News Agency in Kumasi that many cocoa farms had been abandoned owing to an acute shortage of labour and insecticides.

### OIL PALM PROJECT AT A STANDSTILL

23 October, 1980.

Work on the first phase of the Kwae Oil Palm Project, a World Bank project, has come to a standstill mainly because the government and the people of the area have not been able to agree on the question of resettlement and the payment of compensation for property affected by the project. Mr. B. Liacopoulos, the project manager, informed Mr. C. Y. Frimpong, the Deputy Eastern Regional Minister, about this when the latter visited the area on an inspection tour of on-going projects in the Eastern Region.

According to officials, the people of the area are claiming between £5.00 and £8.00 for any cocoa tree cut down instead of a token 50 pesewas being offered by the government. Also, the people are demanding that part of the forest reserve should be reallocated to them for farming. So far about 2,500 acres have been cleared and planted with oil palm. If the problems of compensation and resettlement

ment are solved, according to same official sources, machines will be installed immediately.

### NO WATER, NO POWER

24 October, 1980.

Hundreds of demonstrators marched through the streets of Tamale on 21 October to protest against the continued water shortage and electricity failure in the Tamale municipality. The offices of the Northern Regional Administration and the residence of the Regional Minister were looted and extensive damage caused to property.

The demonstration, organised by the elite of Tamale, started at about 8.00 a.m. Among the organizers and leaders were the Gulkpe-Na, Abdulai Bukari, Dakpema, Richard Alhassan, Dr. Abubakari Al-Hassan, M.P. for Tamale, R.I. Alhassan, M.P. for Tolon, O.S. Mahamoudou, M.P. for Mion-Nanton, Alhaji Shanni Mahama Yendi M.P. and Alhaji Ubrahim Mahamma, Presidential candidate for the S.D.F. in the 1979 elections. At the Residency, the demonstrators, mostly unemployed youths, uprooted flowers, broke windows, and stole large quantities of milk, sugar, rice, and toilet roll. Some who went into the Regional Ministers house took away 12 sheep, 15 ducks, 2 goats, 4 guinea fowls, bicycles, cooking utensils etc. In a nine-point resolution, the organizers informed the Regional Minister about the problem of frequent water shortages and electricity failures in the capital town of the Northern Region.

### PETROL SHORTAGE IN ASHANTI AND BEYOND

24 October, 1980.

Since 20 October Kumasi, other parts of Ashanti and Brong Ahafo have been hit by petrol shortage. This has almost paralysed transportation in the two regions. Since this date long queues of vehicles are seen at petrol filling stations. According to petrol station owners, the cause of the shortage may be traced to the irregular and inadequate supplies of petroleum products from the Tema refinery which, in turn, may be traced to the lack of tankers for transporting fuel from Tema to Ashanti and Brong Ahafo. Since 25 October, however, a total of 30 tankers and 16 rail-tank wagons have hauled petroleum products to Ashanti, Brong-Ahafo, Northern and Upper Regions.

### MYSTERY OVER AFRC ACCOUNTS

25 October, 1980

Special investigations carried out into monies collected by the dissolved Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) have failed to show how much was exactly collected by the AFRC and how much was paid by the AFRC to the P.N.P. administration. According to investigations carried out by the Ghanaian Times, it is clear that only a full scale probe can unravel the mystery; for example, it has been found out that fines were usually paid

in cash, but this was never properly accounted for. Also fines paid in foreign exchange cannot be traced in the Bank of Ghana. It is not clear that the AFRC formally handed over any monies to the P.N.P. government when it came into power on 24 September 1979. The present government knows of only about C23 million which was paid into government chest, though it was said that the AFRC had collected about C830 million and paid all into Government chest.

### BLOODY REVOLT NEXT TIME

27 October, 1980.

Flt.-Lt. J. J. Rawlings, Chairman of the erstwhile AFRC, has warned that the next revolution in Ghana would be a bloody one in which civilians including journalists of the *Daily Graphic* might lose their life. According to the Editor of the *Daily Graphic*, Mr. Addo Twum, on 23 October Flt.-Lt. Rawlings visited the offices of the daily, accompanied by Mr. Fui Tsikata, an Accra lawyer. Apparently, he had gone there to refute an official statement which had implicated the two of them in matters involving the arrest of a British Honduras national who was alleged to have been involved in certain endeavours aimed at overthrowing the government. He was received by the Editor who assured him that any comment he wished to make on the official statement would be faithfully reported. Rawlings on hearing this warned the Editor that if he has got his job as Editor back he should be very careful because in the next revolution, thousands of civilians would die including journalists of the *Graphic*. He later apologised to the Editor.

It will be recalled that on or around 18 October the police arrested a British Honduras citizen, Wilhelm Harrison, at the house of Flt.-Lt. Rawlings for overstaying his visa. According to the police, Buller arrived in the country on 2 February 1980 and continued to stay in the country after the expiry of his 10-day residence permit. He is alleged to have told the police that he is still in the country at the request of Rawlings who had apparently asked him to help organize, mobilize and train revolutionaries in the country. He has been working in close co-operation, according to the report, with ex-Captain Kojo Tsikata, Tsatsu Tsikata, Brigadier Arnold Quainoo (rtd) and ex-Corporal Alex Dawtey.

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