

The Legon Observer

EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

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CORRECTION

Vol. IX No. 13, p. 316 col. 2, 1st page:
The price of cement in the North is ₵5.66
and not ₵55.66 as printed.

Editorial

GOVERNMENT AND THE PRESS

THIS is the eighth anniversary issue of the **Legon Observer**, and with it we salute all our readers and well wishers. Eight years of continuous, unbroken publication of a paper such as ours is a matter of pride and satisfaction to us. But it has not been easy; and indeed in the past year or so, it has been especially difficult. On the occasion of our eighth anniversary, we pause to consider the source of anxiety that plagues us.

The **Legon Observer** was born in an atmosphere of freedom restored to Ghana by the military and police in the coup of February, 1966. Its continued existence and operation has always depended, and will continue to depend, on the maintenance of that freedom. Equally, the greatest threat to it, and to the development and operation of a free press in Ghana, is any attempt or act, covert or overt, to curtail or frustrate the exercise of press freedom in any way. There is evidence to suggest that press freedom, which has enjoyed some tolerably unhampered existence since 1966, is increasingly coming under strain and pressure these days, notwithstanding all the loud official proclamations in support of objective journalism.

In our own operations in the last 12 months or so, we have experienced interference and harassment of all kinds — sometimes direct, sometimes indirect; official and unofficial; subtle as well as crude. We have reason to believe that certain agents have used various base methods to disrupt the normal flow of this paper to our readers whenever sensitive issues have been discussed in particular numbers. It is hard to reconcile these happenings with the repeated calls by many a Commissioner for boldness, frankness, objectivity and a general improvement in the quality of the press.

We are distressed to note that much of this attitude of hostility towards us derives from a misconstruction of our motives and methods, as well as the persistent intolerance of public officers to criticism. On several occasions we have had to state that our aims in publishing the **Legon Observer** are, very simply, "to provide a forum for free, independent, critical and uncensored discussion of public affairs, bound by no rules except those of legality, objectivity, fairplay....." "We seek to bring to bear on public affairs our instructed judgement," and bring together all valuable views on matters of national concern. We do not wish to wait for the collapse of a government before we conduct a post-mortem. We do not wish ever again to be painted with the "what-went-wrong" brush.

Nirc

And for our part, as all honest readers know, our columns are open to all, including those who spare no decency in attacking us. We have absolutely no political ambition for ourselves. It is never our intention to incite anybody against anybody else, or subvert anybody. That is why we would like to continue to operate as if we were in a free, civilised and open society. We emphatically reject the charge sometimes made against us, even in official circles, that we would refuse to publish critical replies to our views in our paper. We stand by our record in this respect.

We believe that the greatest service the present government can render to this country is to eschew personal sensitiveness to public criticism, and to establish the practice of replying openly to comments they deem unfair and inaccurate. We do not share the view that the proper way to deal with dissenting views is to invite people to Burma Camp, or even the Ministry of Information, as a professional journalist suggested at a press conference with a military administrator. Those who are excessively sensitive to public criticism should not seek to serve their people in public office. Above all, those in authority should not begin to think that freedom of expression is **their** bounty to give or withhold from the citizens.

Human society has progressed through the ideas of the individuals in it. When they cease to express them, the society will stagnate. Those who do not wish to see this society stagnate, therefore, should resist the temptation to frustrate the freedom of expression.

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Politics

THE DILEMMA OF GHANAIAN JOURNALISTS

By
Kwabena Poku

At the inauguration of the reconstituted Ghana Journalists' Association on 29th June, 1974, the Chairman of the ruling military junta and Head of State, Col. I.K. Acheampong, made certain observations on the state of the Ghanaian press which should challenge journalists and all other Ghanaians who can read and write. Although the purpose of his observations was, among other things, to reveal the weaknesses in the daily performance of the journalists work with an eye on immediate remedial and corrective measures, the speech itself provided all the ammunition our journalists need for the defence of their difficult but thankless job.

Col. Acheampong said, among other things:

"As professional people, you should share with journalists throughout the world the supreme duty of gathering information objectively and carefully, and of disseminating it honestly. To tamper with the truth is treason to the human mind. By poisoning the wellsprings of public opinion with falsehood, you defeat in the long run, your own ends. Once a journal gains a reputation for even occasional unreliability or distortion, its value is destroyed".

This is a very powerful passage. Now, its necessary implications: Ghanaian journalists are not a different species; they are like journalists all over the world. Therefore, what journalists elsewhere are capable of doing, Ghanaian journalists must be able to do.

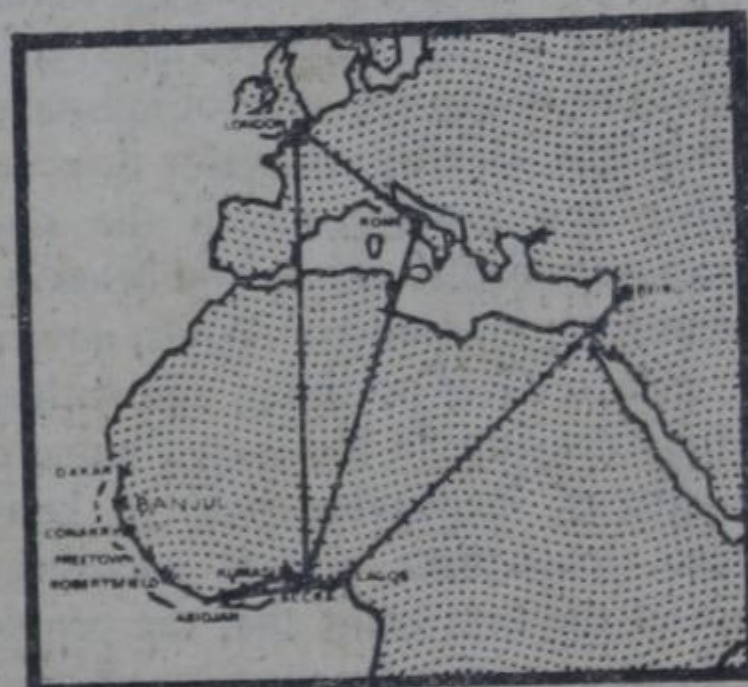
Consider Watergate! The America press corps consists of full-blooded Americans who are no less patriotic than any other Americans. Why is it, then, that they seem to be tearing President Nixon to pieces? Are they not aware of the tremendous impact of President Nixon's foreign policy, and its possibilities for a lasting peace in the world? Why, then, should they not leave Watergate alone, and allow the President to fulfil his noble objectives? In whose interests are the American journalists working, Communists and left-wing radicals, or something more sinister?

The American journalists, patriotic men all, are rigidly adhering to the imperative ethics of their profession: "the supreme duty of gathering information objectively and carefully, and of disseminating it honestly. They do not want to cover

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anything, or shield any body, whether he is a President or not. Theirs is to tell it as it is, because, "to tamper with the truth is treason to the human mind."

What is the position here? The Ghanaian journalist is asked (or commanded) to maintain a healthy relationship with the Government, not of gaping sycophancy, but of constructive partnership. To quote Col. Acheampong: "You with whom we are engaged in the fight against neo-colonialism, imperialism and racism and are seeking to create a just society in which the welfare of the people shall be the supreme law, must stand together with us against those who would seek to pervert society, sow seeds of dissension and breed social disunity".

Dilemma

There is need for a clear distinction to be made here. Is it the duty of journalists to maintain partnership of any sort with the government?

To say yes is to make journalists part of the government. But to do this is to obliterate the essential differences between the two bodies. It is true that the aim of any government is, ostensibly, to "create a just society in which the welfare of the people shall be the supreme law." It is equally true that this is also the aim of journalists everywhere. But this identity of views does not place journalists and government in the same group, because governments' actions and behaviour call for comment from journalists. Whilst governments always seek to cover up things and without information, thus denying, in the sacred name of security, the citizens' inalienable right to know or be informed, journalists aim at uncovering things, because of the firm belief that the people, to be able to form correct judgement, must know all the relevant facts.

These aims conflict sharply. And that is why independent journalists can never be the darlings of any government. It is impossible. For almost invariably, the demands of their duty place them (in official eyes, at least) in the company of "those who would seek to pervert society, sow seeds of dissension and breed social disunity".

It is often forgotten in many circles that the creation of a just society implies equal treatment of all citizens before the law. If a journalist asks for justice to be done in the Logistics Committee scandal, for instance, he is doing no more than his duty. It is the same duty which forces him to question unclear and equivocal official statements. It is not his aim to pervert or to sow seeds of dissension. The journalist is obviously in a very unenviable position. For him, it is always to be or

not to be. He is torn between two mutually exclusive positions. And this ambivalence undermines his effectiveness.

On one side is his realisation of the ever-present dangers posed by neo-colonialism, imperialism and racism. On the other too, is his duty to his own society, which demands of him a fearless exposure of bribery and other forms of malpractices which drag his society down and make quick improvement in the standard of living of his people impossible.

His strident denunciation of neo-colonialism, imperialism and racism is all too readily construed to be an automatic support for whatever the government does. Great impatience is displayed if he tries to point out the dichotomy between a government's open declarations of intent and its practice. But theory and practice are not often the best couples.

All this raises the question of the relevance of journalists to their societies. The impression seems to have been created that the journalist who is not committed to the ideals of his government is not useful. The transitory nature of these ideals does not appear to bother many people.

Contradictions

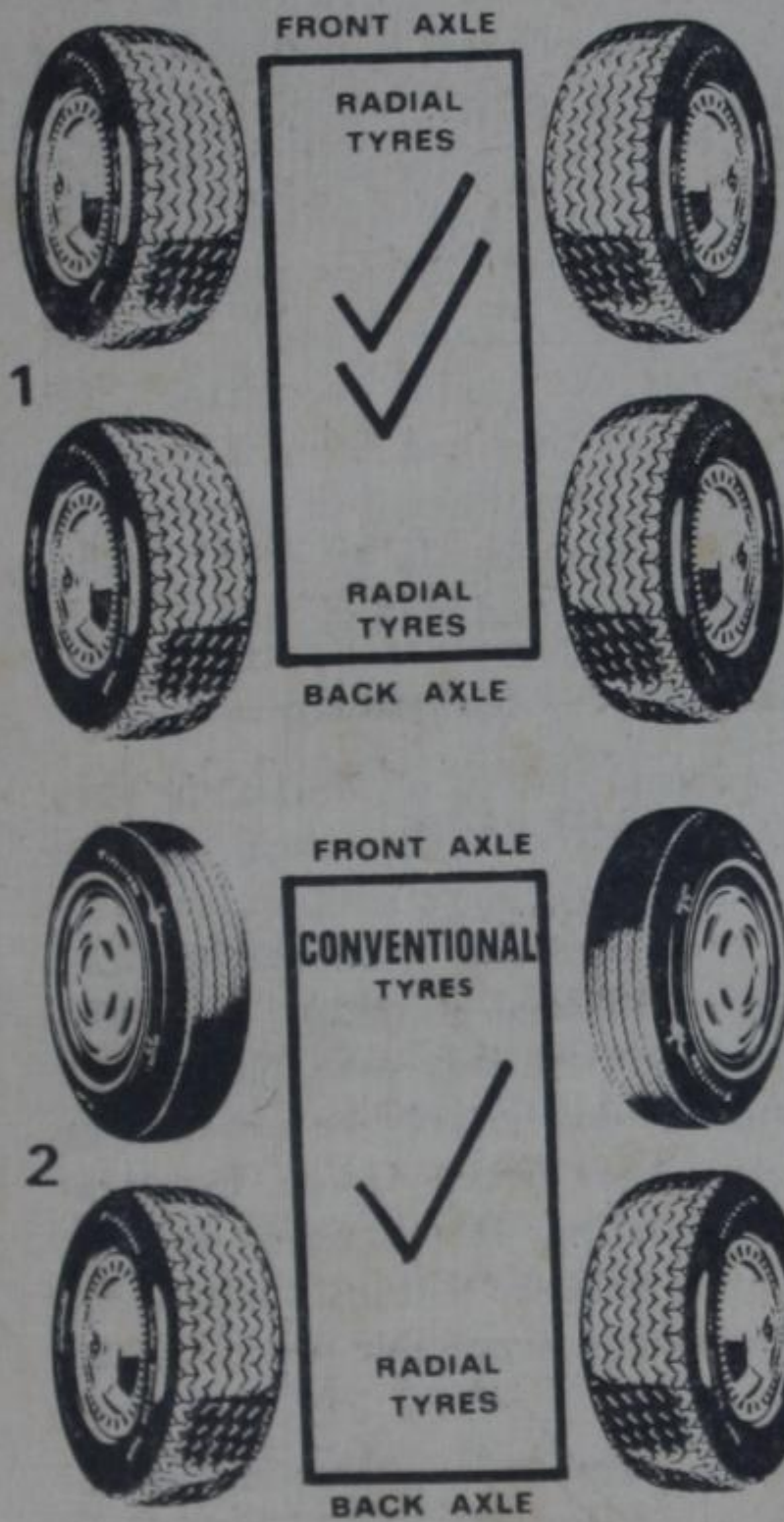
The Ghanaian journalist is urged to fully support and propagate the ideals of the government. His fate in the past is apparently of no consequence to anybody. What has been the cause of his frequent dismissal and humiliation but his identification with the aims and objectives of an ousted government? To demand the journalist's support for self-reliance now while having punished him in the past for supporting rural development as a *sine qua non* of self-reliance is to admit a confused mind. Why condemn an idea at one time and bless it in another period?

The main problem of the Ghanaian journalist is that the past is too much still with him. He lives in constant fear of instant dismissal. Or humiliation and detention after the overthrow of the government he is currently supporting. To take steps to ensure that he is spared future humiliation is to appear lukewarm to the current government. And yet, to show exuberant enthusiasm in his identification with the aims of the current government is to seal his fate irrevocably: he becomes a marked man.

It is plain that the only safe course for him is to listen to the advice of the Head of State: "To tamper with the truth is treason to the human mind." He must publish and be damned. He must not simply degenerate into a marionette. He must not act like a party activist doing propaganda for propaganda is the tool of politicians.

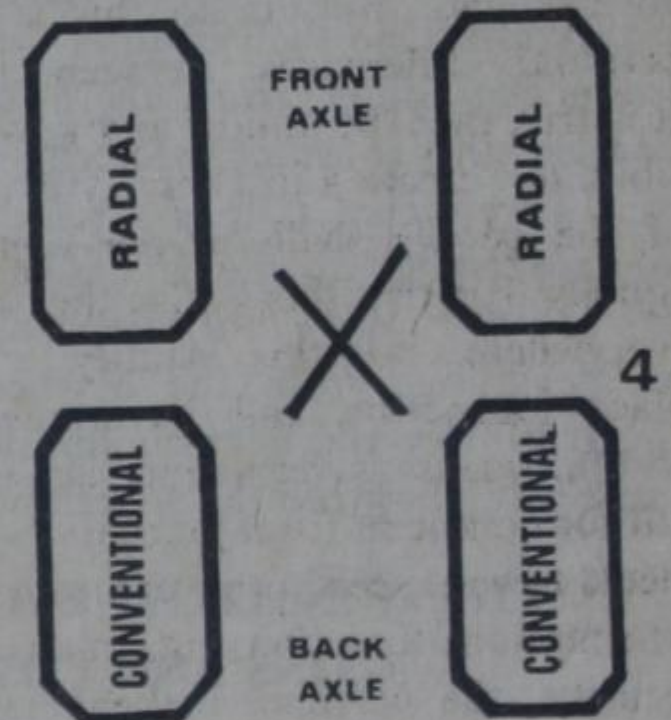
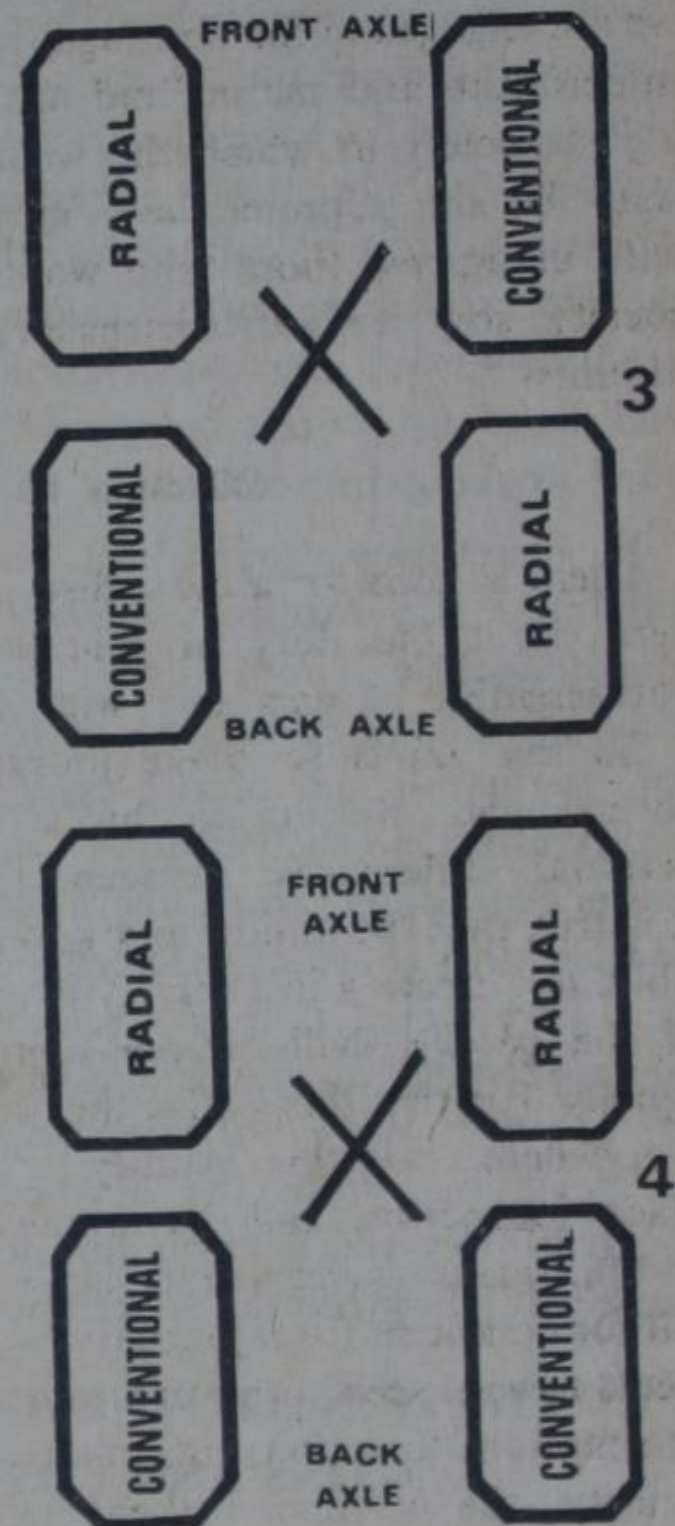
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It is a question of great marvel that the press in the colonial days, dedicated as it was to the open destruction of the colonial edifice, nonetheless enjoyed peace of mind and tranquility in which to perform its herculean duties. It is even more amazing to reflect that pressmen were never dubbed traitors then.

It is strongly hoped that the journalists of Ghana will take the Head of State at his own words and try to open a completely different and new page. This page should not be stained by blots of sycophancy and opportunism; it should be distinguished by impartiality, objectivity and close adherence to the canons of the profession. In the process the toes of officialdom will be gored—predictably but the Association must stand firm and fight to protect its members, particularly its hard working but constantly harassed editors.

In conclusion, journalism is a profession. If anything, the members thereof must be more knowledgeable about its "dos and don'ts". It is high time the members stirred themselves and told the nation one or two basic truths about the profession. One such truth is that the methods of journalism differ from those of a government, because the constant pre-occupation of members of a government is to protect their own interests while carrying on the affairs of the entire nation. It is the duty of journalism to expose all deviations from the avowed course. Doing this truthfully and honestly has nothing to do with partnership between the government and the Press.

INSTITUTIONALIZED SYCOPHANCY— GAINS AND COSTS

By
Kwame Arhin

Since in Ghana both 'big' and 'little' men question an ordinary adult's right to write on public affairs, and charge him with impertinence or jealousy or 'an axe to grind', when he does so, I must begin with an apology, and, I can do no better than quote the opening words of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Social Contract*. Rousseau writes:

..... I may be asked whether I am a prince or a legislator that I should be writing about politics. I answer not: and indeed that is my reason for doing so. If I were a prince or a legislator I should not waste my time saying what ought to be done; I should do it or keep silent.

Born as I was the citizen of a free state and a member of its sovereign body, the right to vote imposes on me the duty to instruct myself in public affairs, however little

influences my voice may have in them. (Penguin Classics p.49)

I intend to discuss here sycophancy in Ghana as an accepted pattern of behaviour between men in authority and those over whom they wield authority, suggest its gains and costs to the country as a whole, and, mention the possibility of a cure for it.

The *Shorter Oxford Dictionary* gives the modern meaning of sycophancy as 'mean or servile flattery; the character of a mean or servile flatterer', and of a sycophant as 'a mean, servile, cringing flatterer, a parasite, toady!' In Ghana, the word 'sycophant' first gained wide currency in 1966 when a former Convention People's Party minister described the attitude of his former colleagues and of himself to Nkrumah as that of 'gaping sycophants'. He meant, I suppose, that they had adopted the posture of clients to a patron instead of maintaining a relationship of colleagues. In practical terms, they did what they were told without questioning.

Nkrumah and Sycophancy

Nkrumah's ministers were, of course, in very good company. Chiefs did the same, sending congratulatory telegrams, sometimes in advance of events. The press excelled in 'unsober adulation' of Nkrumah, his words and his works. Since the Public Boards and Corporations were Nkrumah's creations, they could not possibly be expected to do anything else. The Trades Union Congress was in the same position. Broadcasting was the same. There is some evidence that institutionalized servility was becoming acceptable even in the universities.

Nkrumah had a purpose in attempting to reduce everybody to a client. He saw himself as a symbol of the new nation that he believed he had founded and was nurturing into enduring cohesion. He saw attacks on himself as attacks on 'Ghana', mistook flattery for genuine belief in his greatness, and considered the absence of spoken criticism as evidence of acquiescence in his doings. He was, of course, the leader in Africa of the advocates of the one-party state system; and it is a tendency in all believers in one-party systems to suppose that the maintenance of a one-party system is equivalent to the attainment of a national consensus on the ends and means of national progress.

It was Nkrumah who institutionalized sycophancy. Since his appointments, promotions and the job security of the appointed all depended on presumed personal loyalty, 'sycophancy' became a virtue and conventional wisdom identifiable with obsequiousness. Correspondingly, all in-



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clination to question men in authority was believed in public mind to be deviant behaviour, explicable in terms of a criminal tendency, which could be a product of a form of insanity or extreme folly. Non-conformity became positively dangerous.

I am aware that the generally obsequious character of the Ghanaian public is often attributed to 'tradition' and 'history'. Tradition because, it is said, an **omanhene** or **ohene** was treated as a sacrosanct figure who was not subject to criticism; history because it is said, colonial rule was authoritarian and by its practices encouraged and promoted servile attitude to authority.

I do not believe that these theories are well grounded. The chief was treated as 'sacrosanct' only in specified circumstances just as criticisms of him were patterned. The chief's pronouncements were in the best possible times the collective decisions of his councillors. Above all, he was subject to the final sanction of deposition which was achieved, if necessary through violent action. Anybody who thinks public sycophancy to authority in Ghana began in the colonial period should read of the destoolment movements in the inland Akan areas and also look at the Ghanaian press in the thirties and forties and contrast it with what we have today.

Uriah Heeps

Sycophancy is not inborn: in fact to call it institutionalized is to say that it has its roots in the social structure, like bribery and corruption. Why did Nkrumah succeed in converting presumably proud men to veritable Uriah Heeps? Nkrumah, remember, was no Caligula. The explanation, as it is commonly known, simply lies in the overwhelming economic power of the state. The modern Ghanaian state is a trustee of communal wealth in a more terrible sense than the **ohene** was a trustee of communal land. The **ohene** operated within a framework of recognized rules and conventions, of established rights, and of well-tried sanctions against abuse of trust. On the other hand, the modern state is untamed and Nkrumah is crucial in our history precisely because he began it all.

Nkrumah's government was in fact (though not in theory or according to profession) a government **not** of laws but **of** men, as the Americans would have it. Since, outside the civil service, the universities and the expatriate private sectors, (and even in the universities genuinely ambitious men were beginning to succumb to his blandishments), the mere capacity to survive (not to mention the opportunity to live well) could only be guaran-

teed by indulging the authorities' desire for both delicate and vulgar flattery men had perforce to oblige. It was a great national misfortune that proper procedures of making these appointments were not established and that appointments were made on the assumption that all men have the same capacities and qualities.

Nkrumah had the distinction of beginning it all. But, secondly, his example has since been followed, at the national level, and in most departments of public life. Now it happens that in all these areas, there may be an initial genuflection towards rational criteria for making appointments. But subsequently a man's progress becomes dependent on his ability to satisfy the following conditions.

Promotions through Sycophancy

First of all, he must accept, and conduct himself officially on the assumption that a corporate organization is nevertheless in the personal keeping of whoever happens to be at the head of it, and that he alone knows what is good for it and can pronounce on the factors of the growth of its well-being; others' part must be limited to hailing their proposals and behaving towards the supreme holders of authority as if they were divinities.

Then, secondly, it follows from the first that subordinates must follow the tracks beaten by the superordinates. A tendency to exhibit originality in thinking is taboo in most Ghanaian establishments.

Thirdly, a subordinate must not show or pretend to what may be called 'social conscience': to disturb the ease of mind of superordinates about their goings-on is fatal to one's personal chances of progress.

All this is to say that in Ghana headship of public organizations is truly personalised: in other words, the person is closely identified with the office so that the official and private person is one and the same thing. To criticise performance is to criticise the person. No one ever says it, but most holders of power and authority in Ghana could well say with Louis XIV, 'I am the state' or 'I am the organisation'.

The gains and costs of the widespread acceptance of this attitude have been obvious to us for a long time. An obvious gain is superficial unity, a semblance of public peace in the absence of public expression of dissent at the national level and in public organizations. The death of the institutions of self-government and the conspiracy (for the purposes of self presentation) of silence on the part of the public in regard to public matters was recently stated by a national daily as a sign of national unity. As self-delusion, like

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ignorance, is sometimes bliss, I call the absence of debate a 'gain'.

But the main gain of institutionalized conspiracy is for those who happen for the moment to be in positions of advantage. Their rights of disposal over public property are unlimited. They have the peace of mind in which to gratify both benign and malign wishes. They can, without let or hindrance, turn private enemies into public enemies. They can by a process of selective amnesia build for themselves a supposed paradise on earth. They can do their best to ensure that the rules of the game are twisted in their favour.

Mediocrity and Waste

The public at large suffer the costs. I do not exclude from the public the wielders of power and their followers at any moment since they sooner or later come to succumb to the effects of institutionalized sycophancy. Firstly, there is no real national progress, both material and spiritual, since a system of the sort we have in Ghana must ultimately feed on mediocrity; able men (particularly if they happen to insulate themselves against public prejudices in favour of rich men) even in the conditions in which we live, would manage to live on their own terms. What goes into making the nation then is mediocrity. Even where there are able men, they get sucked into the system: they become conformists, converted into toadies by the pressures of institutionalized sycophancy.

So, secondly, we waste talent. The exodus of talented civil servants in the Nkrumah days illustrates this point.

Thirdly, institutionalized sycophancy is a licence for wasting public assets. Superordinates and subordinates become enmeshed in a conspiracy to 'scratch my back, I scratch your back'. Here you have an explanation of the unlimited misuse of public property by both the high and the low.

Fourthly, nation building suffers, since there is no easily identifiable area of public interest. If 'national interest' is definable always in terms of the 'say so' of men in authority those who have not had a chance to join in arriving at the 'say so', normally regard themselves as outside of the nation. The definition of 'public enemy' becomes highly arbitrary and also costly (when acted upon) to the nation as a whole.

Fifthly, institutionalized sycophancy breeds 'dwarfs'. Nothing must diminish a man's moral stature in his own eyes and in other eyes than the consciousness of having to flatter other men,

to utter self-perceived untruths in public, or to keep silence over public wrongs just in order to be able to make progress in one's career, especially when the area of employment is a public one and belongs by definition to us all. Sometimes, I think no group of presumably self-respecting men can be more miserable than editorial writers who have had to accept and praise whatever men in authority happen to utter, as the truth.

But, of course, editorial writers are only the more obvious example. The death of the public expression of dissent and gratuitous deference to men in authority is everywhere; including what should be the bastions of rationality in Ghana, the universities.

But what are the possible cures? I am certain that readers would realize that what I have said here is anything but original. I have not seen the Minutes of the 1966 Constitutional Reform Commission. But I think the reasons why they wanted to free certain public offices from political control included a desire to break the draconian control by government over the means of employment in this country: whether they realized it or not, they were about to strike a blow at institutionalized sycophancy.

Changing Our Ways

The Busia government, I believe, violated the constitutional provisions relating to this matter on the ground that the Presidential Commission had delegated the powers of appointment to the positions in question to the Prime Minister. That government also aggravated the sense of insecurity of appointment and promoted institutionalized sycophancy with 'Apollo 568'. It was a pity. I think with the suspension of the Constitution we are back to the Nkrumah days. I recommend to our future Constitution makers to re-examine this matter seriously.

Secondly, as the preacher would say, let us change our ways.

But, thirdly, the real solution—and I can only state this briefly and hesitantly—lies in dismantling the state enterprises, and increasing the areas of private enterprise. My reasoning, briefly is as follows: scatter the sources of economic power and employment and you scatter the sources of political power, and so start the process of 'taming' the government. Interest in politics will diminish since government will cease to be big business to the pretenders to power and their followers. Then politics will become a matter of service rather than of economic enterprise.

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THE FOURTH YEAR ACCOUNTING COURSE AT LEGON

By

Ato Gharthey

IN the Vol. VIII No. 26 issue of *The Legon Observer* an attempt was made to outline the history and purpose of a Fourth Year Course that was introduced at the School of Administration at the beginning of the 1973-74 academic year and to raise some issues about the course that were unresolved at the time the article was published. In order to enable readers to understand and follow the discussions in this article, a brief summary of the purpose of the Course and the unresolved issues will be provided.

The primary purpose of the Fourth Year Course at the School of Administration is to facilitate the completion of all examinations of the Institute of Chartered Accountants while such candidates are still in full residence at the University. The final examination on completion of the course was to be administered jointly by the University of Ghana and the Institute of Chartered Accountants (hereinafter referred to as the Institute). A candidate who passed the examination would be granted a "Licentiate in Accounting" and might after two years working experience under the supervision of a qualified member of the Institute under conditions approved by the Institute, be considered for full membership of the Institute on application and the recommendation of his principal. The course would be expected to extend over not less than one academic year.

Among the issues that were unresolved at the time that article was published were: the duration of the course; eligibility for admission to pursue the course; and the status of those currently pursuing the course.

That article appeared to be very controversial. Vol. IX No. 1 and No. 3 of this journal published respectively an interesting rejoinder and a reply to the rejoinder on that article. Also, subsequent to the publication of that article there have been several proposals and questions on the status of the Fourth Year Course (hereinafter referred to as FYC) from members of the public, the Institute, and faculty and students of the School of Administration.

The writer believes that one interested in pursuing the FYC should be made to know what he is getting himself into and that it is necessary to generate public interest and discussion on developments on the training of accountants in the country. Thus, the writer has conducted a serious study on the progress of the FYC and would wish to:

1. Summarise his findings for the interest and information of those taking or are contemplating on taking the FYC, and all others who are interested in the development of accounting education in Ghana;
2. Evaluate the findings; and
3. Make proposals for the resolution of conflicts currently arising.

It is emphasised that the discussions that follow do not in any way represent the official views of any institution or organisation with which the writer is associated.

Summary of Findings

In the Vol. 6, No. 2 of *The Administrator* (official Journal of students of the School of Administration) the students' Academic Affairs Committee recommended that the FYC should serve as an intensive one in accounting for all accounting graduates who are desirous of taking it regardless of the class of their degree. In No. 3 of the same volume of *The Administrator* an anonymous writer mentioned that the FYC is still in its "dark stages" and that students were anxiously waiting for the appropriate authorities to clarify certain unresolved issues. He further suggested that if students are constantly informed about new developments in the School, they could at least "offer their widow's mite".

✓ In November 1973 the Institute expressed dissatisfaction at the manner in which the FYC was being ran. Among the points raised were:

1. According to the Institute's Regulations governing registration for their Intermediate, Final Part I and Part II examination only 6 out of the 14 candidates admitted for the FYC would qualify to sit the June 1974 examinations.
2. Those currently enrolled in the FYC do not qualify for admission to the course.
3. There were indications that the syllabi would be inadequately covered by June 1974.
4. The academic year of 26 weeks is inadequate to cover the syllabi.

These issues prompted the School of Administration to have further immediate discussions with the Institute on the FYC. By the end of January 1974, the Institute and the School of Administration (hereinafter referred to as the School) had reached the interim agreement that arrangements made for mounting the FYC would continue only up to June 1974 and thereafter the Regulations would be revised and that in future all students admitted to the course must register individually before going into residence. Students then pursuing the FYC were advised to register individually with the Institute and to have their examination fees paid to the Institute.

Between April and May 1974 the Institute raised the following controversial issues:

1. Notwithstanding any agreements hitherto reached by the Institute and the School, the Institute would reserve the exclusive right of examining all their students (including the Fourth Year students) for admission to the Institute. This was based on the premise that the Institute had an establishment "rule" that those who teach the final examination courses must not examine the students.
2. The School of Administration be requested to mount remedial courses in Cost Accounting for the present students in the FYC.
3. Even though under Company Law, "Liquidation" is only dealt with in outline, and the "Law of Bankruptcy" is not treated at all under Company Law, those deficiencies be overlooked.
4. Other students of the Institute should be allowed to take advantage of the teaching and other facilities available at the University.

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5. The Joint Examination Board, specially formed to administer the FYC is only a sub-committee of the Examinations Committee of the Institute.
6. Until the current intake of students reach the Fourth Year, future Fourth Year accounting courses should be mounted for a 2-year period and not one year after graduation.
7. The Council of the Institute has the right to review the whole programme in the near future.

Again, the School was forced to call on the Institute for further discussions on the fate of the Fourth Year students. By the end of May 1974, the only definite agreement that seemed to have been reached between the Institute and the School in respect of the above issues was that the fourth year students would be advised to take the Institute's June examinations. However, it had not been clearly resolved as to whether the students would be required to take a university examination in addition to the Institute's examinations.

The main unresolved issues that arise from current developments on the FYC are:

1. Who should examine the fourth year students?
2. Who should decide on the nature and content of the syllabi for the FYC?
3. What should be the duration of the FYC?
4. Who are eligible for admission to the FYC?

Each of these issues will be briefly discussed.

Examinations

Theoretically, if a student has been given a certain set of syllabus and has had an opportunity to digest thoroughly (by means of instruction or otherwise) the content of the syllabus, he should be able to take and pass an examination based on the content of the syllabus irrespective of who sets and grades the examination.

It would, however, appear that if two reputable parties entered into a genuine agreement each party would be expected to honour his part of the agreement. There is substantial documentary evidence to confirm that the FYC was established with the explicit understanding between the University of Ghana and the Institute that students would be required to take one examination jointly administered by both organisations. The students were, thus, admitted into residence at the University of Ghana with that agreement in view. It would, therefore, appear strange that the Institute should decide or realise as late as May 1974 that it is their exclusive right to organise their professional examinations.

Section 9 subsection (2a) of Act 170 stipulates that it shall be the duty of the Council of the Institute "to conduct or to provide for the conduct of qualifying examinations for membership of the Institute or for the registration as a registered accountant under this Act and to prescribe or approve courses of study for such examination". The writer's interpretation of this subsection would be that as long as the Institute approved initially of the Examination that examination should have legitimately qualified students for admission to the institute. Thus, it would be of interest to all concerned to have explanations for the apparent breach of agreement by the Institute. The students as well as many members of the public are confused!

Nature and Content of the Syllabi

One would have thought that a definite and conclusive agreement would have been reached on the nature and content of the syllabi before mounting the FYC. In furtherance of the power entrusted to the Institute by

Section 9, subsection 2(a) of Act 170 to prescribe or approve of courses of study for its examinations, the School revised its B.Sc. (Administration) programme in 1971 to facilitate the implementation of the FYC. A copy of the revised syllabus was given to the Institute for its perusal in 1971—more than two years before the FYC was introduced. The Institute did have a chance to request for a copy of the old syllabus and compare it with the new one. Thus, if there was any need for remedial courses or certain revisions in the syllabus those points should have been raised before April 1974 when the students who had been admitted into residence had barely one month to complete their lectures.

Duration of the Course

The nature and content of a syllabus would generally determine the duration of a course. The School of Administration authorities claim that there is no difference between the course content of the old and the new B.Sc. (Administration) programmes. The new programme it is asserted merely involved a reorganisation of the course content of the old programme. There was no change nor additions to the course content of the old programme. Thus, the School of Administration authorities would contend that there is no deficiency in the old programme and hence no need for an extension in the duration of the course. Besides, the first batch of students who followed the new programme will graduate in June 1974 and qualify for admission for the FYC in October 1974.

Eligibility for Admission to the Course

Both the Institute and the School seem to be silent on this issue. The writer would, however, wish to suggest that subject to limitations of resident facilities at Legon, all B.Sc. (Administration) accounting graduates irrespective of the class they attained, and who satisfy Section 14 of Act 170 should be eligible for admission to the FYC.

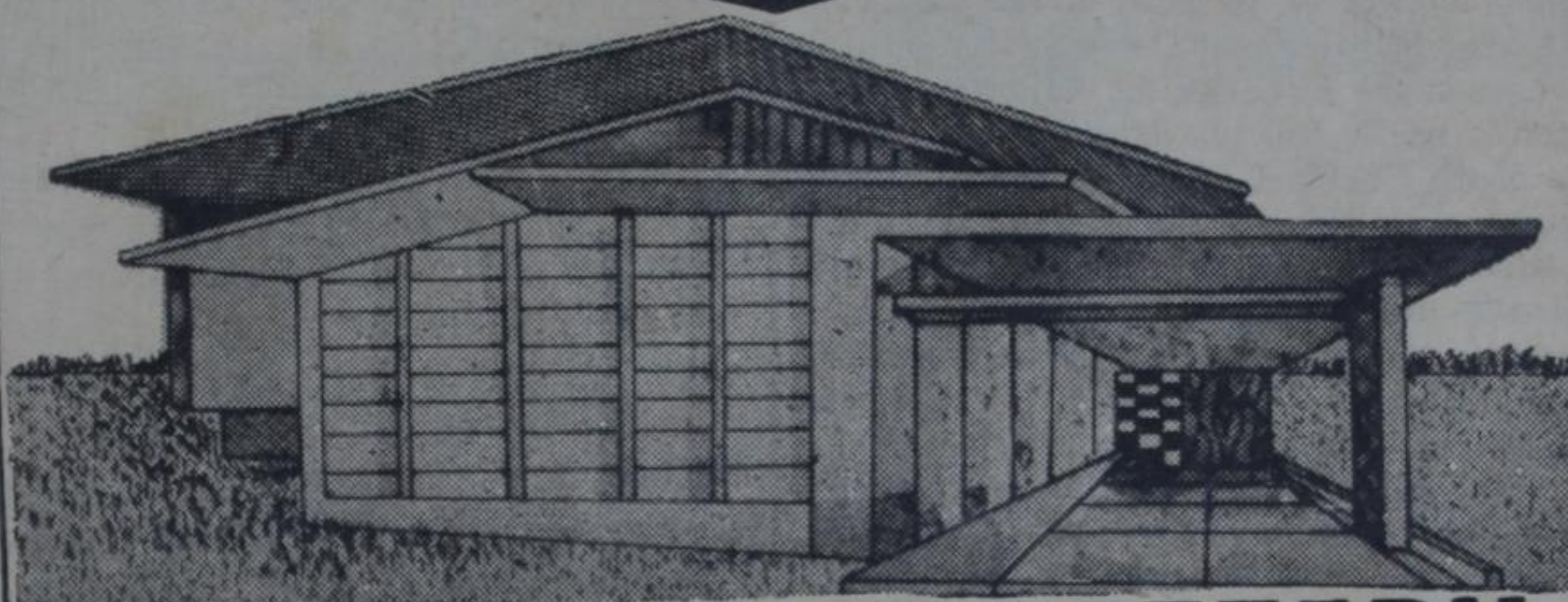
In view of the Government's desire to help accelerate training of professional accountants in the country it could be possible for the School to help educate the Institute's students at the Final Part I and Part II stages. However, this help would fall outside the domain of the FYC and would of necessity require special arrangements between the Institute and the School. In the meantime, the Institute could employ the part-time services of lecturers from Legon and other qualified personnel to help the Institute's students prepare for their examinations.

Conclusion

It is rather unfortunate that the first batch of students admitted for the FYC had to go through that traumatic experience. It is hoped that their investments will yield fruitful dividends. In the meantime the following conclusions could be drawn from the foregoing discussions:

1. It is certain that in future all students admitted to the FYC must register individually with the Institute before going into residence.
2. The students currently enrolled in the FYC will take the Institute's Examinations last month.. Whether they will be required to take a university examination in addition to the Institute's examination is yet unknown. It is hoped that the appropriate authorities will soon come out with a definite policy statement on the conduct of future FYC examinations.

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3. There does not seem to be evidence to confirm allegations that a deficiency exists in the old programme and hence any grounds to entertain the fear that the FYC would be extended to two years. Also, the Institute specifically mentioned that the FYC should be mounted for two years until the current intake of students following the new programme reach the Fourth Year. The current intake of students following the new programme will reach the Fourth Year in October 1974. Thus the conflict on the duration of the course could be resolved at this stage.
4. All B.Sc. (Administration) accounting graduates who satisfy Section 14 of Act 170 should be eligible for admission to the FYC. However, this proposal is subject to confirmation and or approval by the appropriate authorities.

There is every indication that the FYC will continue in the 1974-75 academic year. It is even probable that additional facilities will be provided at the School of Administration to help train and educate accountants other than those in the FYC (see the Editorial in The Legon Observer Vol. IX No. 10). However, the success or otherwise of the FYC and other programmes will to a large degree be determined by the extent to which the School of Administration and the Institute could rely on and trust each other. Both groups should be able to develop confidence in each other and be willing, able, and ready to implement decisions and or agreements reached at conference tables and formal meetings. Failing that, a third party, most probably, the National Council for Higher Education might have to set in as an arbiter and to supervise the successful implementation of plans and decisions. The Law Faculty at Legon and the General Legal Council seem so far to be doing a good job training students for their profession. Perhaps the Institute of Chartered Accountants and the School of Administration can learn a few lessons from them.

Observer Notebook

THE CIVIL SERVICE WEEK

The Week 20 June — 6 July of this year was observed as the Civil Service Week. It was the first time in this country that the Civil Service was adopting the more or less open day method of Schools and Colleges to let the public which it exists to serve know that the Service is not inhuman, pro-inertia, anti-innovative, subversive of governments, inefficient, corrupt, rude etc. In addition to the public relations aspect of the Week, it was the expectation of the organisers that the Week would provide the opportunity for the government, the public and the press to define and indicate the sort of civil service which would best serve our needs.

One wonders whether the organisers of the Week were serious in expecting that the market place provided by the occasion was the correct medium for profound and responsible thinking about the sort of civil service which the country needs. Indeed going through the press coverage of the activities of the week one sees that the image of the service did not emerge any better than before its exercise in public relations. The current picture of a Service, especially at its highest levels alleged to be intimately involved in corruption; giving bad advice to political/military leaders, and generally being insensitive to the public it serves was re-touched to the joy of those who persist in seeing the Service in that light and to the detriment of the Service.

It is hoped that the appointment of the Okoh Commission will provide the correct medium for more serious and profound thinking about our civil service which has since the days of the First Republic been the "whipping boy" of politicians. An important task of the Commission should be to define what the needs of this country are and and the nature of the problem which the civil service presents. It is only through this type of exercise that the Commission can suggest structural changes which can be said to have emerged from the soil of Ghana. Otherwise we will still be caught in the trap of picking up examples from American and European systems about whose politics we may have little understanding.

The Commission made up of two very able top administrators, a director of one of the leading companies in the country, a successful businessman, a soldier, and a trade unionist, with one of the top administrators in the Service as its secretary, should place a very high premium on its method of working. The traditional methods of

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visiting regional capitals to talk to "men in their work-places", asking ministries and departments, individuals and interested bodies to submit evidence on relevant topics should be strengthened by sponsored research conducted by experts and management consultancy teams.

The point about research and analysis is critical because so far in the discussion about the Service the articulated view is that the Civil Service should be overhauled. If large changes are expected to result from the work of the Commission, then gathering and analysing intelligence for such a change must be scrupulously conducted. It is certainly common-place to point out that decisions which seek to effect large scale changes should be based among other things on sure knowledge of what exists and what the future state of affairs will be. It will indeed be welcome if the Commission will make it a point of publishing in full all the major memoranda submitted to it.

Research and analysis will be critical because the Commission will be concerned with the organisational problems of government which fall into the area of applied social sciences. But made up as it is of men whose daily preoccupations are not in the mainstream of the intellectual developments in the social sciences, and being normally busy people who must of necessity give only part-time attention to the subject of inquiry and, perhaps, more importantly, are expected to report within a year, sponsoring research to be conducted by academics and management consultancy firms should be used to strengthen the other assets of the Commission. In this connection also the public should be interested to see published the research findings and recommendations of the academics and management consultancy firms so engaged.

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Letters

Administering The Bitter Pill or Lessons in Government — A Rejoinder

SIR — I found the article by your Correspondent on "Administering the Bitter Pill or Lessons in Government" (L.O. IX/13) no more than an unfair comparison of the economic policies — at least in terms of commodity prices — of the Busia and the NRC regimes.

Your Correspondent would like us to believe that Busia's devaluation had the same objectives as the withdrawal (or withdrawals) of subsidies by Acheampong, and even went on to suggest that Ghanaians might have made a mistake in saying a "military no" to Busia. But then the world economic situation in 1971 was by no means what it is now, and of course changes of government are not always justified by economic reasons alone.

By quoting the prices of some essential commodities — "problem" commodities, if you like — your correspondent created the unfortunate impression that the NRC isn't doing any better (if not worse) than the Busia administration, notwithstanding his pledge that "there was no intention of vindicating Busia's regime." Couldn't he have brought to light whatever economic shortcomings he wanted to without this comparison? Surely in the face of rapidly rising manufacturing costs nobody expects prices to remain static. And hasn't the Government demonstrated enough concern in this direction by appointing a Salary Review Committee?

Certainly, in these difficult days of our economic history we can all do better than trying to open up old wounds. After all, we sink or float together as a nation.

Accra Polytechnic
P.O. Box 561
Accra

G. Mac Afeti

World Prices of Exportable Goods

SIR — To justify its economic measures, the Government has published the levels and increases of the prices of many imported goods. However, it has not published the prices and the percentage increases or decreases (if any) of exportable goods. The impression is that the commodities exported by Ghana have fixed prices while our imports are rising in prices.

Ghana exports such commodities as cocoa, gold, diamond, timber and manganese. To present the full picture the Government should furnish the public with the current prices of these exported commodities. Failure to do so will amount to the suppression of the truth.

A2 Akuafo Hall
University of Ghana
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National Holidays Decree

SIR — It is quite disheartening to see police officers arresting people out of ignorance about the law or decree under which they think they are operating. I was a witness of such acts over the week-end of the last public holiday.

I was at Saltpond on the morning of the 1st July when I saw some plain-clothes policemen arresting people: a woman sitting behind her second-hand goods at home. The first case appeared in order, but I was baffled by the second, for, the mechanic sleeps and works in the same room, as is common with many small self-employed people. He was not working, but the police officers contended that to have opened his bedroom/workshop was an indication that he wanted to work. And they would not listen to any pleas or explanations.

This was not the only blunder the officers committed. They also besieged a drug store and requested the owner to lock it. Fortunately, the store-keeper was well-informed: he showed them that day's papers which carried the exemption in black and white, and that ended the matter.

The police should be educated on the application of the public holidays decree before they pester the lives of peace-loving people on holidays.

C43/1, Adama Avenue Sammy King Oduro-Denkyi
Adabraka, Accra

The Environment: Comment on Some Pollution Problems in Ghana

SIR — Mr. K. A. O. Mensah's article published in June 1974 in the Legon Observer Vol. IV/12 with above caption needs to be given serious consideration. Industrialists tend to over-exploit the available resources and pay little or no attention to the effects of industrial effluents on the ecological system. Ghana has clean air, streams, and rivers, but chemical and allied industries spew forth pollutants into the environment at such an alarming rate that water and air pollution will undoubtedly become a major problem in Ghana in the near future. Environmental pollution is a by-product of the chemical industry, and because of health hazards, there is the need to keep it under control. The bye-laws of clean air, clean streams and rivers must therefore be enforced.

The increasing pollution problems in Ghana include industrial waste disposal, mining hazards, pesticide threat and poor sewerage schemes. And now the question is "what will it be like when other African developing countries have achieved the western standard of development? Will the atmosphere become saturated with pollutants so that there will be no place on earth where man can go for a lungful of fresh air? The answer at the present moment seems clearly to be YES. The National Environmental Protection Council (NEPC), as an anti-pollution watchdog therefore owes a great duty to the nation. It will be desirable that ALL chemical and allied industries in the country inform the NEPC on the raw materials used, types of waste products and methods of waste disposal so that the Council can organise effective research into methods of disposing these without much damage to the environment.

Also, today's pollutants may be tomorrow's useful products. The spent grains from the breweries which have become a potential source of pollution can be processed to improve the feeding value and used as animal feed. There is a need for the protection of the environment and the maintenance of a sound ecological system, and with the support of the public and co-operation of the industrialists, the NEPC can make Ghana be a pollution-free country for the present and future generation.

Dept. of Biological Sciences
U.S.T., Kumasi

Kofi Edirisah-Aidoo

Afro-Arab Solidarity?

SIR — I might not have added the question mark to the above caption but for a statement purported to have come from the camp of the Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC).

They are reported to have said or announced that they can't give African countries concessionary oil prices, "because the oil might find its way to enemy countries!"

"Whaat!" This is a slap in the face of Africa! And even if African countries cannot reply to the SLAP, we can at least tell the Arabs to swallow those words immediately.

Our economy is being crushed by world inflation in general and oil price-rises in particular. And if Arab countries will not push those prices down for us in exchange for the solidarity we gave them, then they must at least shut up.

Is it surprising that some African countries want to go back to the romance with Israel?

c/o P.O. Box 230
Kumasi

J. Allan Owusu-Yaw

Miscellaneous

AND IT CAME TO PASS...

By
Santrofi

AND it came to pass in those days that there was mighty embarrassment in the land, or verily there had to be. For some grave events had transpired in the empire since my last sojourn therein, according to one of my revered acquaintances. "And whence cometh this embarrassment?" quoth I. To which my interlocutor made answer thus: "The beloved emperor hath for reasons unknown lost his magical powers." When I did pressure him further for an explication, he did recount to me this concatenation of events wherewith I shall apprise you, beloved brethren readers, presently. The emperor, who was hardly known in the land, except by a small coterie of legionaries, he said, had been acclaimed as one of the most astute magicians and financial wizards in the land who was believed capable of solving the empire's economic ills at a stroke, or so he himself let it be known. For which reason, seeing what mess others were making of the empire's monetary structures, his heart filled in equal parts with wrath and grief, took it upon himself to work his wonders before any unworthy chieftain could collapse the economy. And thus it was that he cleared the way in an appropriate manner and set himself up as emperor.

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And so it came to pass that having become emperor, the said senior citizen did manifest his prowess as a financial wizard, did, redress the economy of the empire, or at least so it seemed. As he had promised in his self-installation discourse, he had become saddened by the sacrifices that the subjects were being constantly called upon to make, and had decided to bring them salvation. This salvation he did bring in the form of supplementary benefits towards consumption — this had a specific name in the empire but it has escaped my feeble mind — and all those who had amenities withdrawn from them had the same restored, and it looked as if the empire was being ushered into an era of plenty with the motto, *Ut omnes edent*, to wit "That all might-feed themselves." And most subjects suddenly started to believe that they had arrived in the land of plenty.

Inflation

While all these things were going on, it came to pass that there came unto the land a man sent from God-knows-where whose name was Inflation. He was not the essence of economic distress, but he came to bear witness thereunto so that through him all might believe that there were dark days ahead. So devastating was the power of the said sire that not even the emperor's magic wand could get the better of him; the wand had become impervious to solicitation and rebellious to command. And the emperor, forsooth, was mightily distressed, seeing that he might lose his credibility with his subjects. Little did he know that this was no problem at all for the land over which he held sway was peopled by docile, considerate and mature subjects. With these grave matters in hand and in mind, the emperor did hold a monologue with the said subjects on the public address media to apprise them of the failure of his magic wand to respond to his pleas.

While the emperor was holding this unilateral discourse with his subjects, an exceedingly irate citizen thought that the emperor was wasting his time talking to the the citizens since he might have done better addressing himself to his cohorts. For, he reasoned, even if the citizens were not pleased or amused by what the emperor was saying, they could only protest in muffled tones to trusted acquaintances; on the other hand, the said citizen full of ire and venom continued his reasoning, the emperor's legionaries were the ones to whom any explications should be offered since they had the wherewithal to make their protest concretely felt, just as the emperor had done about one score months before. Whereupon the citizen was acclaimed for his logic and unbraided for his singular lack of nationalistic patriotism. There was in the assembly an enthusiastic supporter of the emperor who was so infuriated by his unpatriotic colleague that he savaged him verbally and would have laid hands on him had not the old man resolved the issue by opining that if the emperor could not do better others could not do worse; which opinion, fatuous and specious though it sounded was accepted by the verbally warring factions.

But it came to pass in those self-same days that in consonance with its sacred aim of acting as the empire's voice and conscience, the **Empire Chronicle** conducted an opinion poll in the land to ascertain the subjects' reaction to the failure of the emperor's magic-financial powers resulting in the drastic diminution in the purchasing power of the drachma. The results of this poll

gave great mirth and comfort to the emperor who learnt that his subjects, imbued with the necessary, related or relevant civic virtues, had gladly accepted the realities of the situation, recognised the scourging effects of inflation and accepted the economic measures taken with equanimity and philosophical resignation. For it had become clear to all that all emperors are subject to human forces and external pressures, and that when Lord Inflation strikes, even emperors must yield to forces beyond their control.

But verily, this was not the last that was heard in the land concerning painful economic truths to be faced. If some subjects had only merely accepted the new realities, others were so beholden unto the emperor that a traditional chieftain had solemnly declared that having regard to the emperor's brilliant performance in telling the subjects exactly what others had told them two years earlier, and considering all the rehashed slogans that it had pleased the emperor to introduce into the land, and considering also the fact that the emperor was supplementing health and educational needs — never mind the source of the funds — for these and several other tender mercies besides, the said traditional chieftain had solemnly declared, as I was saying or rather writing, that it would be meet and proper if the said emperor should deign to prolong his reign for another two decades. The same was faithfully reported for the benefit of the benighted citizens, and it did appear in one of the empire's official gazettes, the **Quotidinal Sketch**. The said gazette had a very impressionable chief scribe who, considering the gravity of the matter and the profundity of the wisdom contained therein decided to accord it prominence and to editorialise approvingly on the matter, thereby enlivening another debating topic in the empire.

Chieftains and Logic

For it had come to pass that following some opinions emitted by one itinerant nuncio in the empire, a debate had been started as to the form of government the citizens in the empire might live under after the imperial interregnum had been ended. Nobody quite knew the said interregnum might come to an end, but most citizens felt that since the proconsuls had shown that they were subject to the same foibles whereof they accused their predecessors who at least had the advantage of exercising imperial power by the decision of the peers, the withdrawal of the said proconsuls to whencesoever they came was only a matter of time. Before the debate, given a new dimension, could get off the ground, some citizens took it upon themselves to point out the perversity in the said traditional chieftain's heroic suggestion. These citizens yearned to know why people chosen by their peers should be granted an imperial tenure of about five years, renewable only subject to good behaviour, whereas people who had not passed this entrance test should be granted such a lease. No response could be made to this question, and nor did most citizens feel like pressing it further for it was agreed by all that logic was not the strongest points of such petty chieftains. Whereupon it was agreed that the matter was not even worth debating. The emperor, for his part, was said to have been exceedingly beholden unto the said petty chieftain for having given him such a psychological booster at a time when he would have been the first to admit that

his spirits were low and his performance mediocre.

Nor was the said natural ruler or traditional chieftain left to operate as a lone voice crying in the wilderness. Consequent upon his appeal to the emperor to prolong his rule for two decades, other chieftains echoed his patriotic sentiments. Not many citizens in the empire were impressed or amused by such naive utterances, and they could not hide their contempt for such cringing sycophancy. They did recall that members of this princely confraternity were well known for their mercurial tempers following the rise and fall of emperors in the land, and could visualise a situation in which these self-same powers, dominations and principalities would enthusiastically acclaim the successors of the reigning emperor, should it happen by some mishap that the said emperor could not complete his tenure of two decades graciously endowed him by the said powers and dominations in the land.

And it came to pass that after the first so-called natural ruler had intoned his eulogies for the emperor, no other traditional ruler in the land wanted to be left out of the roll of honour. They vied with one another for pretexts whereon they might base their own encomiums. One thought that the emperor had rendered himself meritorious of the highest commendations for deciding even if reluctantly, to increase the cost of living in the land. Another lauded the emperor for his mighty works and wished him a long reign for the simple reason that he was fed up with being ruled by his peers. And yet another chieftain, welcoming a provincial governor into his domain, opined that since it had been proven that inflation, an essential characteristic for a developed economy, had affected the empire's economy, demonstrating thereby that the economy was making salutary progress, his prayer was that the emperor's reign should be long, possibly exceeding the two decades already suggested by the prime mover. But the laureate in this showering of encomium was that chieftain who was convinced that by providing newly fashioned garments to the custodians of the empire's jails, the emperor had indubitably demonstrated his profound concern and generous solicitude for the workers in the land, for which supreme gesture the said emperor deserved the highest commendations utterable. All these commendations were faithfully reported in the **Empire Chronicle** aforementioned, and everybody instantly believed that sagacity was the monopoly of the natural rulers.

While all these encomiums were being showered on the emperor, a majority of the citizens were left rather perplexed, for they could comprehend how the emperor had so suddenly come by this goodwill and unsober adulation. It was recalled by chronicles in the empire that such comprehension had not been shown the emperor when he was performing his economic wonders and generally making a Father Christmas of himself and restoring amenities to such as had lost them. It was found paradoxical that the emperor should find so much favour with a section of the citizenry, even if only an infinitesimal part thereof, when it had become proven that he was not a superman as he had pretended to be at the commencement of his reign. But such were the contradictions in the land that such illogicalities were found to accord with the sentiments of the populace.

For it came to pass that consequent upon the emperor's discourse with his subjects, another debate had started in the empire, this time about the extent to which the abolition of supplementary benefits known in vulgar parlance as the withdrawal of subsidies could be carried. The essence of this novel debate centred around what the term subsidy could possibly signify. The emperor and his komissars were constantly but unintentionally creating the impression that subsidies were monies which they had personally set aside from their emoluments and wherewith they provided services for their subjects out of the unbounded goodness of their heart. Nowhere was it suggested that such monies could have come from the tithes paid by the citizens themselves. Many were the subjects that were sickened by this vulgar propaganda, and they did swear not to be taken in by such wiles. Others even went as far as to suggest that the menaces being proffered by the emperor and his komissars nullified any right that the emperor might have of collecting any tithes from them. But it was generally agreed that this was a hysterical reaction which would pass away in a short time.

And so it came to pass that spirits were low in the land, especially since the forces of destruction led by the said sire Inflation was beyond the control of any of the rulers in the land. The emperor, for his part, summed up courage to pursue his work. He surveyed the land and looked upon his work so far, and became more than ever convinced that his work was good.

For The Record.

Wednesday, July 10

Ghana and Poland Sign Pact

A NEW agreement introducing convertible currency for the payment for goods and services between Ghana and Polish Peoples' Republic was signed in Accra today. The agreement replaces that which had been in existence since March 1967.

NRC Commended

SPEAKING at the annual general meeting of the shareholders of the Standard Bank Ghana Limited today, Mr Peter N. Harris, Chairman of the Bank commended the National Redemption Council for its ability to pay another instalment of the country's short-term loans.

Wednesday, July 10

Chinese Gifts

MR. Ke Hua Chinese Ambassador in Ghana has presented through Colonel M.P. Simpeh-Asante Special Assistant to the Commissioner for Sports to the Sports Council 80 footballs, 4 pairs of table-tennis tables (with nets and nets posts), 230 dozens of table tennis balls, hundred dozens of table tennis bats, 50 footballers' suits, 50 pairs of footballers' stockings, 50 pairs of football boots, 30 pieces of basket balls, 20 pieces of volley balls, and 2 pairs of Volley nets and net posts.

The trend is to
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the milder, smoother cigarette



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