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EDITORIAL

CHIEFTAINCY ON TRIAL

THIS WEEK Ghanaians have been mourning the death of Nana Osei Agyeman Prempeh II, which sad event was officially announced the week before. Undoubtedly, the late Prempeh, who died at the ripe age of 78, was the incumbent of one of the most illustrious of traditional positions, not only in Ghana but throughout black Africa.

Although historically the concerns of the occupant of the Golden Stool have tended to be focused more on reinforcing and consolidating the gains and the strength of the Ashanti nation, the late Otumfuo had the mixed fortune of living at the cross roads of two historical epochs. It is not easy to live through three generations. Like any other chief in tribal-orientated social structures, the Otumfuo's first duty was naturally to his tribal people. Unlike his predecessors, however, he was also caught in the whirlwind of nation building. Even during the trying days of the secessionist National Liberation Movement, the Otumfuo never refused to combine his tribal leadership with his *Ghanaianness*. The shrewdness and tact with which he conceived — and reacted to — his dual orientations of governing his tribe and serving the nation may be regarded as the most enduring and at the same time chequered tribute that can be paid him.

The *Observer* ventures to predict that, with the passing away of the Asantehene, a new dimension in our conception of chieftaincy will certainly be experienced in Ghana. The Asantehene was, of course, not the only chief in the country; nor, indeed, could one regard him as the most typical representative of the 'medievalists'. His various pronouncements on education and on social welfare, and his acute knowledge of world events which he revealed to those who came in contact with him, are well remembered. But clearly the constitutional barometer of the future of chieftaincy tended to revolve around very few chiefs in Ghana — with the Asantehene as one of the most prominent.

For instance, it is reported that the Otumfuo died in Christ, and had the last sacraments administered to him, which tells much about the wind of change in the notions of chiefdom. The glare of publicity surrounding his death — being laid in state at his Manhyia palace, and at the St. Cyprian's Anglican Church for *all* to see; the mild temper with which the palace executioners have performed their otherwise excruciating functions; these and other circumstances indicate not only the increasing secularization of the office of the chief, but also the fact that men's conceptions of traditional statuses and roles have undergone drastic

SUPPLEMENT

Vice-Chancellor S. O. Biobaku
of University of Lagos
Interviewed by
K. A. B. Jones-Quartey

changes.

For some time now, Ghanaians have been debating the relevance of chieftaincy in contemporary society. When the solemnity and passion of Otumfuo's death and funeral are over, the debate is bound to resume in an even sharper and more acute form. Although the position of chiefs is guaranteed in our Constitution, this in no way prevents a reappraisal of this aspect of our national life in changing Ghanaian society. The original role of the chief as a military warrior, which found fullest expression in the Ashanti kings of olden times, is now wholly inconceivable of expression in modern society.

The religious nature of the chief's office, as the hub around which the ritual life of the people revolved, is now undergoing a deflection in significance. The position of the chief as the repository of cultural integration and continuity of tradition and lore — this is no longer possible in transitional communities where values are in flux.

To ask what Ghanaians want to do with their chiefs is to make an enquiry which admits of no single, simple answer. Chieftaincy has for long been part of our traditional culture. Thus, the future significance of chieftaincy will be evaluated largely by, among other factors, the type of men who occupy the stools and skins, and their understanding of the changing nature of culture, and of their roles in nation building. This will be the test of the resilience of this institution.

It is a credit to the late Asantehene that he was able to grapple with the most difficult task of reconciling the values of the past with the cultural imperatives of the sociological present.

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Politics

THE ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT UNDER THE CONSTITUTION

By

Kwame Afreh

UNDER the Constitution the President is expected to play an important and active role in the development of democratic institutions in this country. The executive authority of Ghana is vested in him; all executive action is taken in his name. He is the Head of State, First Citizen of the Nation and the Commander-in-Chief. In the performance of his duties the President is not answerable to the National Assembly or liable to any proceedings in any Court. While in office, he is not liable to any civil or criminal proceedings whatsoever in any Court.

There is nothing original or extraordinary about any of these provisions; they are found in most constitutions all over the world. They confer only formal powers or are intended to preserve the dignity and honour of the Offices of President.

A Father-Figure

The person who occupies this august office must be a person of standing in society. Many would like to see him as the symbol of the nation or father-figure, above politics, yet able through his wisdom and influence to calm political passions, and deal with crises, check political excesses and keep public officers within the bounds of decency. He must not be too young: the Constitution says he should not be less than 40 years old. He is not expected to be as popular or powerful as the Prime Minister or even the Leader of the Opposition: yet he must be of enough standing to win not less than half of the votes of an Electoral College consisting of M.Ps, representatives of local government bodies and of Chiefs. In theory at least he must be well-known and respected in all parts of the country and in all sections of the society. But the Constitution expects something more: he must be capable of exercising power, if need be, contrary to the wishes of the Prime Minister and his Cabinet.

This is what makes the position and authority of the President of Ghana rather unique at least in Africa. He is not an executive President. But he is not a purely ceremonial head either. His position is somewhere between the two extremes. His position was summed up by the Constitutional provision:

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with and vested in the Executive will be given to the President, sometimes assisted by the Council of State. Of course the executive authority of the state will formally be vested in the President and all executive acts of the Government are to be taken expressly in his name. Real executive power, however, will be with the Cabinet, but the exceptions to this rule will be important.

What are these important exceptions? Under the Constitution the President as a rule acts on the advice of the Cabinet or a Minister acting under the general authority of the Cabinet. But in specific cases, mostly in appointing certain public officers, the President is required to act in consultation with or on the advice of some person or authority other than the cabinet, or in his own discretion.

Cases where the President is required to act in Consultation with bodies other than the Cabinet.

In appointing some of the most important public officers the President is only required to act in consultation with the Council of State. Among such officers are the following:

1. The Auditor-General.
2. The Sole Commissioner or the Chairman and the other members of any Commission established by the Constitution; e.g. The Electoral Commissioner; The Chairman and other members of the Public Service Commission, and the Chairman and two members of the Lands Commission;
3. The Ombudsman;
4. The Chairman and the other members of the governing body of any institution established by an Act of Parliament or out of public funds for wireless broadcasting, Television, the press or other media, for mass communication, or information—eg. G.B.C., G.N.A., Graphic Corporation, New Times Ltd.
5. The Chief Justice.

The Chief of Defence Staff is appointed by the President acting in accordance with the advice of the Council of State.

Theoretically, where the President is only required to act in consultation with a body or person he is not bound to take the opinion or advice of that body or person. The final decision lies with him. The Council of State, which is part of the Presidential Household, is only there to help him to

come to a correct decision. This is the theory. In practice, it may be different.

No wise President would ignore the views and wishes of the Prime Minister and his government. It will be rare indeed for the President to appoint some one in the teeth of opposition from the government; if he does he must be prepared for a showdown, a serious constitutional crisis.

But apart from this, much will depend upon how far the Council of State is independent of the party in power. If most of the members belong to one party and are active, leading members of that party, the President is likely to receive one-sided advice. And should there be any serious clash between the President and the Cabinet over an appointment, the majority of the Council are likely to desert him. The Council of State need not consist almost entirely of members of one party. Apart from the Prime Minister, the Speaker of the National Assembly, the Leader of the Opposition and the President of the National House of Chiefs, other members are appointed by the President in his discretion, subject to the condition that he should appoint some members from specified classes of people, e.g. ex-Presidents, ex-PMs, Chiefs, and women. By careful selection the President can ensure that as far as possible the most important interests and political views are represented, and at the same time that the Council is independent of political control.

Political Patronage

Whatever may be the practical problems it is important that the President and his Council should be above partisan interests. There are good reasons why certain officers are appointed by the President only in consultation with his own Council of State. Our experience under the old regime has taught us that once certain sensitive positions fall under the patronage of politicians the road to dictatorship is open.

We may now briefly compare what we have said above with those cases where the President must act in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister or some other person. The governor and other members of the governing body of state-owned banks, the chairman and other members of the Council for Higher Education, and the chairman and other members of the governing body of statutory corporations other than those for information, the heads of the Police and Prison Services, are appointed by the President acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister. Judges are appointed by the President

acting in accordance with the advice of the Judicial Council. In such cases the President has to appoint the person chosen by the Prime Minister or the Judicial Council, as the case may be. These cases also show that in those in which the President has only to consult the Council of State, the final decision lies with him.

The words "consultation", "advice" and "discretion" were chosen deliberately. The Constitutional Commission and the Constituent Assembly obviously thought it would be dangerous to entrust certain appointments to politicians. They obviously believed that all those fine words about free elections, freedom of expression, and the Rule of Law, would be meaningless if those entrusted with the direct responsibility of implementing and safeguarding them were nothing more than the puppets of politicians. It is only when such public officers are appointed by impartial, non-partisan bodies that we can really be sure that they are independent and that the best persons are appointed. In the absence of such a guarantee, it may not be enough that those public officers enjoy security of tenure of office.

The Necessary Safeguards

Since the return to civilian rule we have focused all our attention on the powers of the Prime Minister and his Cabinet. It is right that we should pay such attention to the performance of the Prime Minister and his ministers. They have the power; it is upon them that much of our economic and social well-being depends. But we should not forget the role that the President has been assigned in the preservation and defence of our democracy. It is a most crucial role. It is time we began to study how the Presidency operates.

Upon the first holders of the President's Office lies the responsibility of ensuring that the role, the power and authority assigned to the President under the Constitution are in no way diminished. If they allow a convention to get established that *all* Presidential powers *should* be exercised in accordance with the advice of the Cabinet, if they allow the Presidency to become a purely ceremonial office, they would be creating a situation which some unscrupulous politicians at some future date would use to establish, if not naked dictatorship, at least a perverted and hollow form of democracy.

International

AN AFRICAN IN LATIN-AMERICA

By E. Ofori-Akyea

MOST people generally know Latin America because of such topics as the unstable political situations, coups d'état, Cuba, or Che Guevara. Any enquirer on Latin America is most unlikely to be told that the continent is bristling with political activity; that Argentina, for example, produces a considerable amount of wine and cattle; that Brazil comprises almost half the total land area of the continent and is a potential world power; or that the United States is seen as an imperialist power in Latin America.

Latin America is so vast that it may not make much sense to talk of the whole continent. It would be like trying to talk about the whole of Africa !

What is attempted in this essay is to provide some observations which apply specifically to Uruguay, Argentina and Brazil, but which to a lesser or greater extent applies to the whole continent.

Great Mobility

In certain significant ways Latin America is more homogeneous than Africa. For one thing, the Spanish invasion was very thorough, so the culture is Latin with a South American flavour. This means that Spanish as a language has spread throughout the continent. With the exception of Brazil where its population of about 90 million people speak nothing but Portuguese, Guyana, and Haiti, the rest of the continent is Spanish speaking.

This makes for a certain mobility to be possible on the continent. Perhaps the most famous example is to say that Che Guevara was born and educated in Rosario, Buenos Aires, but he moved out of Argentina and applied his experience to the Cuban situation and helped in the Cuban revolution. Besides it is common to find Chileans working in Uruguay, Bolivians in Argentina, Paraguayans in Peru, and so on. The closeness of Spanish to Portuguese makes the communication barrier very insignificant indeed. In fact, Spanish and Portuguese are mutually intelligible.

The Spanish "Conquerors" made sure to eliminate the Indians from the centre of the

cultural place, and to impose their own language. They actually attempted to transport the Spanish culture to their new home and in this they succeeded. There are no significant populations of Indians left anywhere on the continent except in Bolivia and in Peru. Elsewhere the people are a mixture of Germans, Spanish, Portuguese, and Italians.

In Brazil, however, there is a substantial black population who have contributed in no small measure to the enrichment of the Brazilian culture and personality.

Latin America presents a wide spectrum of experiences, and it is difficult for the visitor not to be overwhelmed by these.

One begins to wonder if one is in Europe or America. The coca-cola signs are more numerous in Latin America than anywhere else I have seen; and the dress patterns look to the north. Besides there is the appalling institution of "country clubs" which is American to the core. But Europe remains the spiritual home to which almost everyone looks. The American association is thus one of convenience. Yet this convenience is working in the favour of the oligarchy in Latin America.

Ignorance about Africa

A surprise for a visitor from Africa is the abysmal ignorance exhibited by Latin Americans about Africa. The African continent remains to most of them, a closed exotic place which might be anywhere near heaven or hell.

A black visitor is taken for an American negro. After he has divested himself of such a description his hosts go through various stages of facial as well as mental convulsions. The question is shot back whether he really comes from Africa. No country in Africa mentioned registers except maybe South Africa and Biafra; even these they have no idea where on the map they are.

But read the following conversation!

Y. May I introduce Mr. so and so to you. He comes from Ghana (pronounced geena).

X. Oh, Canada? Welcome, Mr. so and so—They shake hands.

As they shake hands the Ghanaian corrects—GHANA

X. Ghm Gha—what? GHANA (he repeats).

X. Ghana? Where's that?

Y. Oh West Africa—making use of intelligence communicated on a previous occasion.

X. Ah yes, is that Costa d'Oro? (Spanish for Gold Coast)

Y. Mr. so and so is that correct?

What the above dialogue depicts is a communication gap which needs filling or bridging through the use of the most daring engineering techniques. It is a shame that all that we know here about South America comes filtered through U.S. sources—and we get only the kind of news that serves their interests.

The U.S. news media are given to sending out the kind of news that businessmen like to read and what will preserve their sphere of influence in that hemisphere. If we can open a communication channel with Latin America our peoples can benefit. We can see, for example, the pernicious result of what foreign aid does to a country and a people, and they can take new heart in our situation and so create a new world situation in which the Third World will move from the rear seat into the driver's seat.

Portugal's Prestige

In Latin America it is common to call anyone who advocates for closer links or change in the status quo a Communist because the entrenched interests are afraid of any change. In fact, they will not tolerate it.

Linked with the question of ignorance about Africa is the great esteem in which Spain and Portugal are held in that part of the world. In Brazil Portugal is thought of as *the* land and people of the world. And yet Portugal is the most undeveloped country in Europe and in most parts of Africa. The people of Latin America are unaware of the atrocities committed by these two countries on the African continent. For instance an African who tells some Brazilians that Portugal is not a friend of Africans is looked at with incredulity and disbelief. Such knowledge does not even let the scales fall off their eyes. It dangles there with the possibility of falling off if more information is made available.

Then there is a substantial black population in Brazil who are just awakening to the situation in which they live. There is a great deal of racial harmony in Brazil but the example of the U.S. could be pernicious in many ways to the future relations with the country.

There is the need to let more information seep



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through to the ordinary person about what is happening and where. In this connection it is pertinent to comment that Ghana has only one Embassy in the whole of Latin America in Rio de Janeiro and one in the Middle Americas in Mexico. Chile and Argentina, not to speak of the whole of the central countries, Peru, Paraguay, Bolivia or the north, Venezuela, Guyana for example, or the whole of the Carribean have been left unexplored.

All the European countries are fully represented in such far away places as Uruguay and in such places as Papa Doc's Haiti. Given all the threats of assassinations and kidnappings these diplomats still remian.

The point here is that there is a potentially great market which we can tap there if we put our minds to it. There are also students who wish to broaden their outlook and who would want to see what it is like on the other side of the Atlantic. If we continue as we are we may wake up and find that 200 years have gone by while we slept like Rip Van Winkle.

Obituary

**OTUMFUO NANA OSEI AGYEMAN
PREMPEH II, ASHANTIHENE, 1892-1970
THE END OF A TRANSITION?**

By Kwame Arhin

THE OLD men say that when an Ashantihene dies, the State Drummer beats out the history of the nation from the earliest times when, as the Drummer himself says, Odomankoma created the Osae Dynasty, the House of Mighty Warriors, and so of Heroes. At the death of the Otumfuo it is fitting to look at the contemporary meaning of that office, the symbol which to his people made him man among men. The contemporary meaning of that office is related to the fortunes of Ashanti and therefore of her kings from the last quarter of the nineteenth century to the present day.

For two centuries, the maternal descendants of Osei Tutu 'the just and the good' had held sway within an ever increasing area — the Ashanti Empire — until they came into friction with the European traders on the coast. Nearly a century ago, for three days — from the 29th to the 31st of January, 1874 — at the village of Amofo, near Bekwai in southern Ashanti, the Ashantis mustered their forces in a vain

attempt to beat back the invasion of Kumasi by British forces: non-professional musketholders were no match for the trained riflemen of the British army. Sir Garnet Wolseley and his men pushed on to an abandoned Kumasi, looted and burned it, and then withdrew.

At Amofo, the Ashanti army had fought as if they knew the invasion was a portent, that it was a tidal wave that would sweep away the Ashanti they had heard of and known for over two centuries. We know now that it was only a question of time before the proud Ashanti would bow to the British conqueror, that the Battle of Amofo was an *nkwanhyia kese*, a point of no return.

Political Anomie

The Ashanti never recovered from that blow. Since it destroyed their belief in their own invincibility, it shattered their nerve. What was even more serious, the British presence on the coast was a standing source of encouragement to the fissiparous tendencies within central Ashanti. The result generally was political anomie: the loss of certainty about basic political values. In concrete terms, this meant that the Ashanti were no longer certain of the need for that unity under the Golden Stool which had made them supreme within the boundaries of present-day Ghana. The obvious signs of this anomie were the succession disputes and civil wars which continued in the reign of Kwaku Duah III (Prempeh I).

The reign of Prempeh I coincided with the intensification of the European scramble for Africa and, since he would not voluntarily accede to the British request to him to accept their protection, Prempeh I had to be exiled in 1896 as a prelude to the division of Ashanti into its component units, so that it could be the more effectively ruled. Yaa Asantewaa fought in 1900-1901 and lost. Ashanti, together with the Gold Coast and the Northern Territories, came effectively under colonial rule.

It is in the character of colonial regimes to alter the nature of indigenous chiefships. For effective administrative purposes, and since the British in particular wanted to avoid the expense and trouble of brutal suppression, the colonial authorities relied on chiefs, who presumably had the ear of their peoples, for the transmission and execution of orders. Consequently, the chiefs became their executive agents. As such, they were identified by their people with the colonial

regime and regarded as traitors. Secondly, colonial administrations initially misunderstood the character of indigenous chiefships, believing them to be autocratic institutions when in fact government by chiefs was government by consensus.

When, therefore, it became a practice of the colonial authorities to transmit peremptory orders through the chiefs to their people, the chief was put into a quandary: he became an autocrat to his people and deserved to be destooled if he carried out these orders; but if he did not, the colonial authorities considered him disloyal to the British Crown and destooled him simply by withholding recognition by a Gazette Notice. The spate of destoolments in Ashanti and elsewhere on the Gold Coast in the first phase of colonial administration, 1896-1935, was evidence of the predicament into which the requirements of colonial administration and the exigencies of *Pax Britannica* had put the chief.

Restoring the Union

Ashanti provided special difficulties for the British. Prempeh I was in exile from 1896 to 1924. On the basis of the belief that a divided people were easier to rule, the colonial authorities maintained the fiction that Prempeh I had never been properly enstooled in 1888, and that he was not Ashantihene but Kumasihene, in which presumed capacity he was allowed to return to Kumasi in 1924. Yet the British knew that the people of Ashanti regarded Prempeh I as Ashantihene; that so long as the Golden Stool remained, so long would Ashantihenes remain in the hearts of all Ashanti; and that it did not matter whether the occupant was on the moon, or in the Seychelles Islands.

The patient patriotism of the Ashanti was rewarded in 1935 when the late Otumfuo, who had succeeded his uncle Prempeh I in 1931, prevailed upon the colonial authorities to restore the Ashanti Confederacy in 1935. This was a major achievement of Prempeh II. Ashanti was no longer the Ashanti of the nineteenth century, but it meant a good deal that her people were politically re-united; the vigour of Ashanti culture can only be maintained through the collective ritual performances of which the Ashantihene is the centre.

The restoration was no mere window dressing. Until the abolition of the Native Authority Courts in the nineteen-fifties, the Asanteman Council had judicial authority in customary matters over the Ashantihene's subjects. But it

is questionable whether the grant of such powers by the colonial authorities did the chiefs any good. The bitterness evinced by many subjects towards their chiefs grew out of comparisons of judicial processes in the Magistrate's Courts with those in the Native Courts. And it did not help matters that appeals lay from the latter courts to the Magistrate's Courts. It was an invitation to potentially disobedient subjects to defy the chiefs.

Besides colonialism, the 'larger' nationalism of the modern state, with its different organisational requirements, has also left its mark on the institution of chiefship. Since 1946, when the late Otumfuo, to his credit, agreed to a legislative merger of the Gold Coast Colony with Ashanti, the latter has ceased to be a separate entity, which means that in the period 1946-1951 colonial officials wielded legislative authority over the Ashantihene and his subjects.

Party Politics

But the real problem for the Ashantihene and the chiefs came with the introduction of party politics and universal adult suffrage. When a people are supposed to independently exercise their will on public matters through secret voting, how can a chief, however elevated, claim to speak for his subjects? How, for example, could the National Liberation Movement, by virtue of the support of the Ashantihene, claim to speak for the Ashantis if the Ashantis had voted massively for the Convention People's Party? The situation was further complicated by the fact that Ashanti could not be considered in isolation but as part of a new entity, Ghana, so that its will could only be considered in relation to the will of Ghana as a whole. It would appear that in the political crisis of the fifties, the late Otumfuo did not see very clearly the implications of the merger of Ashanti with the Colony in 1946, and also of the introduction of the party system and of universal adult suffrage.

It became clear after the loss of the battle for federation that the tide to modernity could not be resisted, and it is a sign of his capacity for flexibility that the late Otumfuo settled his account with the Nkrumah regime and peaceably assumed the role that the steady march of time had left the rulers of Ashanti among lesser chiefs in Ghana: that of influential counsellors by virtue of their positions as the personal symbols of the historic and cultural diversities in the unity of Ghana. That role Nana Agyeman Prempeh II played to near perfection. For he was proud in his heritage and learned

in the ways of his ancestors.

I venture to suggest that his death marks the end of a transition. The curtain is now drawn over the turbulent times in which our chiefs, of whom Nana Prempeh was the leading representative, had to find a role. Now our chiefs have no doubt that they may reign and not govern, and that they exist at the will of their people.

Observer Notebook

Ghana's Ambassadors

MANY Ghanaians have viewed with enthusiasm the orientation course which was recently organised for our ambassadors. The *Observer* should, however, be quick to recall that this is not the first time that our representatives abroad have been lectured on the image which they should present in their accredited countries. Nkrumah used to do this, in the lavish and luxurious atmosphere of the defunct Winneba Ideological Institute; but it is difficult to know what impression these ambassadors got.

The situation today is different. The problems which Ghana is facing are complex, and it is fitting that our envoys should know these and inform those who also want to know about them. The various visits they have made to different parts of the country should acquaint them with the enormity of the task of national reconstruction. They leave to represent a nation which is poor — and the modesty of their style of living would go a long way to impress our friends and prospective friends abroad that the days of a fool's paradise are gone forever.

What is novel about this new approach is the way our ambassadors' wives have been brought into the orientation scheme. These august wives are no less representative of the nation. Many an ambassador's life, and indeed the life of a nation, has been ruined through a misdeed (often unintentional) of the feminine partner. We would like to add our voice to the lectures our honourable ladies have already received: they should learn to spend less, talk less, listen more, and make foreigners — and Ghanaians in foreign countries — see that frugality, like charity, should always begin at home.

Travelling Salesman of Evil

THE news of Vorster of South Africa going to confer with Caetano of Portugal, after a similar conference with Smith of Rhodesia only last month, should sound like the death knell to hope in the ears of black people the world over. And when to these certainties you add the possibilities of South African bargains with France and West Germany (also named on the itinerary of the current high priest of the apartheid religion), the transition from alarm to despair is practically complete. Inclusion of Spain on Vorster's ticket does not, incidentally, add another dimension to this ominous panorama; it merely emphasises its grimness.

In other words, here, in spite of lofty idealisations to the contrary, is the spectacle of a getting together—nay a *bringing* together—of Christian capitalists, capitalist democrats, practising fascists, racialist fanatics, decadent survivors in imperialism, dynamic giants of modern industrialism—this, strange mixture of principalities and powers getting together for the blatant purpose of self advancement and self protection. Now self advancement and self protection are *not* a crime in themselves for most groupings of peoples, but when a group is as mixed as this: in its component economic, political and moral philosophies, it makes one wonder what sense and what purpose there is in contemporary history for *anybody*.

The more so as, according to a recent BBC "World Today" analysis, the "Revolutionary Left", which alone attempts to fight this order of things, is itself in disarray: no direction, no coordination, no organisation, no central drive. Embattled students around the world, guerilla bands, intellectual radicals, executioner elite guards, and other groupings of the Revolutionary Left, are all described as being like the amoeba: dividing and splitting and going off in little pieces in divergent directions.

So, for the time being, Vorster and Smith and Caetano organise and strengthen themselves day by day, and mostly against already largely helpless Africans, while those among their racial kind who are not exactly of the same mentality look on equally helplessly, or make feeble efforts which avail nothing. Yet the fears which are really at the bottom of Vorster's activities will, like chickens, one day come home to roost.

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Application forms can be obtained from the Personnel Manager directly or through P.O. Box 211, Tema. Completed forms should reach him not later than 15th June, 1970.

A New Columnist

TODAY the *Observer* welcomes a new writer to its Miscellaneous columns. Under the *nom-de-plume* of "Kwame Ademoawa", our new humorist promises our readers a lot of "fun and games", much political satire, and a mixture of serious discussion, controversial debate and just plain cussedness. Ademoawa's mouthpiece and foil is a figure he has discovered and named "Joe Apalahala", the unique character who is "stoopid when sober and serious when soaked"!

Ademoawa and Apalahala will support our original funster, "Kontopiaat", who is given to the habit of periodic disappearance, sometimes on high-powered diplomatic missions abroad on behalf of the government and the people of Kontopiaat-krom. Or so Kontopiaat claims anyway!

We hope Ademoawa and his devil-twin-mascot will be able to live up to *their* promise to get us stimulated and amused whenever we can find space for them. If not—out they go!

Education

ON TEACHERS' UNIFORMS

By J. E. Opoku

ONE could begin this discussion of uniforms for teachers and pupils by asking a question: What has the dress which a student wears, or that which his teacher wears, got to do with the process of learning and teaching in the schools?

To me, it is rather naive to categorise or standardise the attire of pupils and teachers, in the way the practice has been with us in the elementary schools from the colonial era. On school attire the geographical location of the school community, economics, and the social desire of the students and teachers should be the only criteria that should be allowed to influence the dress habits of both pupils and teachers.

There has been a long tradition regarding pupils' uniforms, during the past forty-odd years, in the schools and colleges in Ghana. One particular item of school dress has even come to be generally termed "Achimota sandals". Educational research elsewhere has provided increasing evidence that the type of dress the pupils wear to school materially affects their attitude towards their relationships with others and their concern for the educational experiences they receive at their respective schools or colleges.

I need not remind readers of the importance alumni attach to their old school ties, or coat badges. Naturally and rightly, many schools and colleges in Ghana have developed codes of

accepted dress to which their students must conform before they may be admitted to the institutions. Because most of these codes were developed cooperatively by students and teachers themselves, and because they were reasonable in their costs, they were successfully accepted by both students and parents. I know schools and colleges where the most costly item of dress, eg. the school blue or green coat is made optional according to economic means, so that only the pupils who can afford them buy the coats.

It is necessary that a school's code for uniforms should be acceptable to the pupils in terms of the economic potential of ALL students in the school community to buy such items of dress. That was the wisdom of the pioneer colonial Education Department, which prescribed khaki and similar drills for boys and girls school uniforms. There should always be a limitation on the school's authority to enforce any dress regulation. Up to date, I am not aware of any Education Act on what dress Ghana school children should wear.

What Mode of Dress?

In 1960, even in the city state of New York, a court of law ruled that if clothing worn by pupils was not immoral, or so suggestive that it could be construed to impair the moral atmosphere of the school, then the school was powerless to legislate against a particular mode of dress of pupils. I agree, however, that the school does have the right to expect its pupils to conform to a realistic pattern of dress for, say, sports, swimming, dancing, instructional classes, or attending religious services.

A short while ago, the Ghana National Association of Teachers resolved at a press conference that they and their colleagues — the Elementary School Teachers—had divested themselves of teachers' uniforms for good. Following this announcement, on Sunday, 18th of May 1970, there was a T.V. programme — "Comment" — on teachers' uniforms. Again, on Wednesday, 20th May 1970, an Accra daily carried an article entitled "Taking Government for a Ride?", by a Correspondent. His article condemned the teachers' stand on uniforms.

May I also remind readers that previously an editorial in an Accra newspaper condemned the teachers' decision against school uniforms. To my way of thinking, the question of uniforms for teachers is NOT one of the several educational problems facing the country at the moment. It would pay us better if we prevented our energies from being dissipated in bickerings as to what teachers should wear to school. I repeat: a



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teacher's uniform is not, and cannot be made to seem, an educational problem for Ghana. What we should rather exert all our energies on are some of the following: providing enough classrooms for all elementary and secondary schools at present using out-moded or temporary buildings; providing enough secondary school places for all youngsters between 13 and 18 years, with biases for academic, technical or trade courses; and providing middle school leavers trade training, so that they can be absorbed into the several sectors of the economy. One could continue to enumerate educational problems without ending.

But now, what about teachers' uniforms, really? My belief is that teachers in the elementary schools or at any other level of education should always dress in a manner befitting the members of a respected profession. We should leave it to the good sense and taste of school staff and head-teachers to see to it that at no time should female teachers wear "jeans" to school or male teachers "pioto" (underpants), or any other attire that would tend to reduce the professional dignity of the teacher. But here, too, there should be no exceptions to the rule; for, when teachers and their pupils go on nature study trips, camping, or field trips to the plains or castles, dress should be worn that is appropriate to the particular occasion—not uniforms.

Personal Preference

A teachers' attire should be on personal preference and good taste; so these items should be dictated by school community expectations and traditions, and not by a decree. My view on a teacher clothing is that it may be anything that is in keeping with the mores of the community in which the school operates, and the dress should uphold the dignity of the teacher's profession, and should also be appropriate to the type of instructional service the teacher is giving at any material moment. In discussing school attire, we should remember that parents buy the uniforms for their children, but teachers provide for themselves. We should remember also that teachers are adults, whereas school pupils are minors. Therefore my plea is that teachers should be allowed to wear any decent dress befitting their profession, without interference from anybody.

We know that those government workers who, for reasons of identification and smartness, have to wear uniforms are supplied the uniforms by the state—e.g. soldiers, sailors, nurses, the police, etc. I would never suggest that our government

should supply uniforms to elementary school teachers, even if Ghana's economy were buoyant. Uniforms are unnecessary for teachers; they will not work any educational magic in the schools; they cannot be an educational prerequisite for the elementary school teachers of Ghana.

If the Ministry of Education thinks that elementary school teachers cannot be relied upon to dress properly by themselves, I suggest that they allow them to come to school without the prescribed uniform for the rest of the 1969/70 year, as an experimental period. I am sure my colleagues in the elementary schools will prove to the nation that teachers are a responsible group, and that they can dress decently by themselves without regimentation from above.

Letters

The Beaver Aircraft Accident

SIR—It took the Ghana Armed Forces five days to reach the wreckage of the Air Forces Beaver plane which crashed into the forest only 18 miles from Takoradi. They were supposedly going to the "rescue" of possible survivors.

We must feel ashamed of this very poor level of performance by the soldiers, for if there had been any lucky survivors of the crash they could not have lived in the forest, with their injuries, for five days without food, water, first aid, and shelter. The nation demands an enquiry into the apparent lack of drive on the part of our soldiers.

What kind of training are they getting if soldiers of the 3rd Infantry Brigade, based in Takoradi, do not know the terrain of the bush only 18 miles away? They are expected to parade less in the streets and train more in the jungle: battles are fought more in the bush than on paved highways.

P.O. Box 1840
Accra

Owusu Yaw

Archaeology and African History

SIR—I should like to clarify some of the points made in Miss Ayisi's article on "Archaeology, Anthropology and African History" in which certain quotations from my Inaugural Lecture to the University of Ghana are quoted out of context (L.O. V/10). My work is quoted (though the quotation is not acknowledged) as evidence that the division between "Berber Africans" and "Black Sahara Africans" is fading, yet I am then credited with holding a view that places me in the same intellectual milieu as the "Trevor Roper School".

Miss Ayisi's main complaint appears to be that I regard the study of tropical Africa during the thousand years before A.D. 1000 as more appropriately falling within the discipline of prehistory rather than of history. I made a plea in my inaugural lecture "for treating the human past as a single unit rather

an segmenting it amongst different disciplines". I pointed out that under the present meaning of the terms, the word prehistory is used to denote the state of our knowledge about the past. For the first millennium A.D. of the history of tropical Africa very few written documents are available, therefore it is imperative to make use of discoveries in many related disciplines such as linguistics, palaeobotany, ethnography, human biology and archaeology.

Rather than decrying the African achievement I made the point that archaeology is demonstrating the "cultural continuity" of West Africa and is providing "tangible evidence", rather than theories based on undocumented hypotheses, to account for the past variations in human society in Africa. Speculation about the past is not necessarily wrong as Miss Ayisi seems to suggest when she claims that I "denounced the use of hypotheses in African history"; rather it is an essential part of the function of a historian, be he or she a historian using documentary or non-documentary sources; and I quoted some of my speculations about antu migrations. What archaeologists have done is to provide data on which speculations can be based for the period before written documents or oral traditions are abundant.

If some of the insights come from disciplines other than history, this can only serve to enrich African history and provide an awareness of the varied background and contacts of the present day Africa and its peoples.

Department of Archaeology
Ghana
Merrick Posnansky

R—Miss Akua Asaabea Ayisi's analysis of the historians' flirtation with the inaccuracies of the African past could be commended (L.O. V/10).

Some historians have claimed that Africans never originated a civilization, nor have they successfully borrowed one. Others even contend that one of the primary races which have not made any creative contribution to civilization is the Black race. It is clear from Miss Asaabea's analysis that what motivated these spurious and half-baked assertions was the white man's desire to perpetuate the subjection of the African slavery.

The attempts by a few white historians such as Basil Davidson to approach the continent's past from a divergent historical telescope, clearly indicate the profundity of knowledge yet to be accumulated by consistent study and effort on our part.

I agree with Miss Asaabea Ayisi that the African past should be placed in its proper historical, archaeological and anthropological perspective; Africa can no longer be ignored in the study of world history.

P.O. Box 80
Accra
King Osafo

Preserving Ghana's Monuments

R — I am writing to suggest that either some Photographic Society or some government agency, newspaper, or magazine, undertake the work of photographing the many beautiful old buildings in Cape Coast, Freetown (and in many other towns and villages) which are not likely to be left standing many more years from now.

It will be the greatest pity if some permanent record

of the buildings is not made; and the photography, if exhibited and published in the form of a book, might well pay for itself.

Swedru Secondary School
Private Post Bag
Agona Swedru

K. B. Forge

Ghana's Unemployment Problems

SIR—Mr. G. A. Donkor's article on Ghana's unemployment problems (L.O. V/8) made very interesting reading. But one finds it difficult to appreciate that his analysis would be complete without any indications of some of the measures for solving the unemployment problems.

In my view, the immediate solution of the problems is the creation of more job opportunities for the people. And to do this, it is necessary that foreign investment in Ghana be encouraged as much as possible.

For unless more factories are built and industries set up, it is difficult to envisage any immediate solution to the problem. Moreover, to advocate the encouragement of foreign investment would not be construed to mean that the nation's interest should be sacrificed or given away. Far from it.

The wealth and assets of the country must be utilised for the benefit of its people. There should also be greater effort to cut down government spending.

Could it not help if the retirement age of workers was reduced to about fifty, in order that more vacancies would be created for the young?

P.O. Box 9
Wenchi, B/A

Joseph Gyinayeh

Foreign Experts and Local Talents

SIR—By virtue of interdependence of nations both developed and underdeveloped countries have to rely on one another for various economic reasons. In developing countries in particular, economists often stress the need that foreign "experts" in one discipline or another are essential ingredients in the building of a very sound economy.

To this end, planners of the national economy, especially in developing countries, often tend to give special priority to the foreign "experts" in certain sectors of the economy even where local talents may exist. This has increasingly paved the way for all sorts of people under the guise of "experts" literally flying from one country to another.

After thirteen years of political independence, we still find that whenever an advice is sought, the resort is always to the foreign expert. This is a pity because our trained Ghanaians become neglected, despite the fact that they are better able to appreciate local conditions.

I agree with a recent suggestion in an Accra daily that foreign experts should be called in only when there are no qualified Ghanaians in particular areas of expertise.

Kokomlemle
Accra

E. Y. Frempong-Mensah

Women and the Nation

SIR—I would like to comment on Mr. P. A. V. Ansah's letter in the Observer (L.O. V/8) against my article entitled "Women and the Nation" which appeared in a previous issue of the paper.

The idea of a University Women's Association is not peculiar to Ghana. And, by forming one, Ghanaian university women are not seeking to segregate themselves from the rest of Ghanaian womanhood. They feel that as a group of people with similar experiences and training background there would be better understanding among them in trying to find a solution to some of our national problems.

The extent of Mr. Ansah's lack of understanding of some of the problems existing in our society was clearly revealed in his dismissal of our activities as "more or less irrelevant symposia and conferences". The problem of the treatment meted out to widows and orphans in our various tribal societies is a pressing but long neglected one. Its neglect has resulted in many grave social problems which modern Ghana can no longer afford to ignore.

Mr. Ansah is entitled to his own opinions about issues such as career guidance for girls and help for market women. But I think that voluntary societies that are trying to help in the process of development should be allowed to do things in their own harmless way and at their own pace.

And incidentally, the Association has never had a tea party; not on one single occasion!

Balme Library
Legon

(Mrs.) Christiana O. Kissiedu

Promotion of Teachers

SIR — The Ministry of Education has stated that as from next year promotion to the senior teacher grade would be by examination. But it seems many unpleasant consequences would emerge from this approach.

For example, any teacher who wishes to pass his examination will give more attention to his books. There is, therefore, the probability that some of the teachers, if not all, instead of teaching their pupils during school hours, will prefer to give more attention to their books. If this happens the pupils would suffer greatly.

Teachers should be given every encouragement to give their best to school children; they will be discouraged if they have to pass their examination before they are promoted.

I will therefore suggest that their promotions should be based on efficiency and dedication to service rather than on brilliance. What good do brilliant teachers do to Ghana if they fail to go about their work conscientiously?

P.O. Box 58

Wenchi (B/A)

Edward Obeng Yeboah

Teachers' Uniforms

SIR—I don't understand the fuss being made by some people concerning the teachers decision not to put on uniforms. I think the teachers have got a convincing "case" in abolishing them and people must leave the teachers alone. The teachers have already got their enormous problems. Any attempt therefore to duplicate and augment these difficulties would just amount to adding insult to injury.

Personally, I think the word "teacher" is being vaguely and ambiguously interpreted by some people in this country. They thought that the teaching profession is limited to only a class of these professionals—i.e. the elementary school teachers. What of those in our Secondary Schools and Training Colleges? Relatively,

even those lecturers in our Universities are teachers!

Ghana, our dear country, is facing acute financial problems and these are immediate problems which should engage our attention rather than teachers' uniforms. After all, whether there are uniforms or not the teachers are already doing their work.

Commonwealth Hall
Legon

Sam Bruku

Transfer Fees in Soccer

SIR— I read the views of many people on transfer fees which are now turned into training fees. But I have my reservations.

Take, for instance, the case of Mohammed Lawal. He played for almost all the football clubs in this country before finally going to Nigeria. If Lawal decided to rejoin Accra Hearts of Oak, which of the clubs should be said to have trained him? Is it Olympics, Hearts, B.A. United, Eleven Wise, Nima Lizards or Lagos Stationery Stores? Another example is Willie Andrews. He, was with Accra Great Olympics before going to Lagos Stationery Stores. On the question of training fees, which of these teams should benefit?

I think the mechanics of transfer fees should be clearly worked out, before the system is implemented.

29, The Folly

Achimota

Ben. Akutteh

Miscellaneous

INTRODUCING JOE APALAHALA

By Kwame Ademoawa

I AM a new character myself in these columns, and by the universal standards of courtesy and procedure I should first be introducing myself to you, the reader. But I have a horror of talking about me. Besides, my friend and shadow, Joe Apalahala, is my real business today. He's the one I want to tell you about. From now on he and I are going to appear — irregularly, I hope! — in the *Observer*.

To know Joe Apalahala is to relish him to an almost excruciating degree, for the man is an extraordinary fellow. Without him my own life would not be worth one brown pesewa's value of fun, and I promise you that after a very short while neither will you be able to live without some fairly constant tickling of your funny bone by this man. Just you wait and see. In fact I am willing to take a bet with you: that within three issues of Joe's stuff in these columns you will become a rabid Apalahalan yourself, as I have. Wanna bet?

Now you couldn't learn much about a chap like me by studying my name, could you? ADE-MOA-WA— what is that? Perhaps a few readers of these columns may have heard the "name" before, I wouldn't be too sure; certainly the majority of you couldn't have a clue.

But if you then turn from me to Joe, you face an even bigger conundrum. Is Joe's name any better as an index to his personality and origins than mine is to me? APALAHALA? What is that doing being anybody's name? Yes, yes, that's right: some of you may know it, perhaps, as a nickname — a nickname for a "shortie", a figure of fun, anything except . . . !



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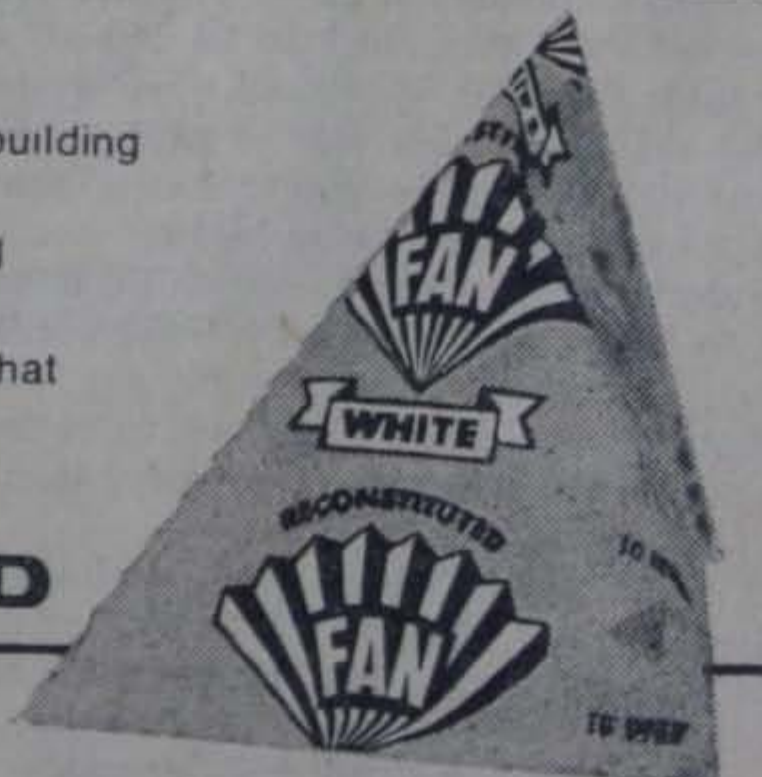
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So the question is, did you ever see or hear of a real person carrying a label like "Apalahala" for a name?... Well, I'll tell you the truth: Joe is real all right, but not his name! As a matter of fact he and I often have fights about which of the two of us is the bigger fake, "Ademoawa" or "Apalahala".

However, when we get to that point we suddenly stop, out of deep mutual disrespect for each other's unconvincing traditions of origin, as the historians of "tribal" history call it. Moreover, since December last year we have in fact practically stopped arguing altogether about our origins or nationality. And you must know why, of course!

That brings us back to the question: Who and what is Joe Apalahala? And that is a tough one to answer, but I shall try my best to satisfy your curiosity. Joe is a mystery, even to me. His origins are even more obscure than mine, as you would have gathered by now. He does seem to have been born all right, though somewhat suddenly! It happened somewhere in Ghana, on a completely unspecifiable date.

In fact, about that date of Joe's sudden birth, here's the position. To this day, if you ever try to pin him down for the details of his own "nata fides" (that's a forgery, of course), he tells you to go promptly to hell and mind your own business down there. (Joe says hell is UP though, not down.)

Incidentally, that bit about his having been born suddenly is not original. I stole it. (I always confess my sins. Joe insists upon that) As I was saying, the joke about Joe's sudden birth is lifted straight out of a book by an American humorist with the typical name of Will Cuppy, and the title alone is worth the price of your first laugh from this priceless treasury of fun.

More Tit-Bits

The book is called *The Decline and Fall of Practically Everybody!*, and in it many of the famous as well as infamous characters of world history get a treatment designed to split the reader's sides with laughter. For instance, it was of Louis XIV of France, himself!, that Cuppy said that he had been born "rather suddenly" (in 1638)!

And of that great Fiddler of Rome he says this: "Since Nero's character leaves much to be desired, we are apt to forget his good side. We should try to remember that he did not murder his mother until he was twenty-one years old. Besides, he only did it to please his sweetheart, Poppaea Sabina, whom he later married and kicked to death while she was with child. It was her own fault, in a way, as she nagged him for coming home late from the races." (I must serve you with more tit-bits from this little gem of a book from time to time in these columns. That is, if Joe and I should last that long, of course.)

And so back to us. But let's leave Joe's origins and background alone for now, shall we? It is obviously a profitless activity to try to give him a respectable ancestry, for he can have none to speak of. Joe himself occasionally explains, with pointed indifference, that he was personally responsible neither for the choice of his parents nor for the fact of their fantastic obscurity!

So it is to Joe Apalahala, as Joe Apalahala, that we must get back. That is the important thing here Joe is quite extraordinary. I told you that before but

have to repeat it, because this is the time to say how extraordinary.

Apalahala is absolutely unique as a character: the only one of his kind I've seen or heard of or read about anywhere in the world, or in history. For Joe is the only person ever known to talk nonsense when he's sober and sense when he's drunk. Some people are sensible and sane, whether sober or soaked; most are sensible when sober and slobbery when soaked; Joe alone is "stupid" when sober and sound when soaked.

Please don't laugh. This is very serious! Joe Apalahala is a virtual illiterate, a joker, a murderer of language (especially English). He is a sometimes baffling, sometimes exasperating, often a riotous and very often an embarrassing nitwit — when he has not even seen a bottle. But when and as he drinks, he becomes, steadily, an unfolding revelation: serious, lucid, sharp as nails, devastating with wit and wisdom — yes, in a word, (even) intellectual.

So, all of a sudden, you are stopped dead in your hitherto casual interest in or amusement with Joe, you are now looking at the man with new eyes, and wondering what he really is all about: what his real story is, where he really comes from, how far he really got in school, why he seems to be covering up behind a split personality as different between the two halves as Dr. Jekyll was from Mr. Hyde, though fortunately not in the horrible form and manner of the Hyde half. . .

'Who are She?'

Well, that is my friend Joe Apalahala for you. With him I have endless conversations, arguments and fights (verbal, of course), in that order. Most of the time — of which he seems to have a lot — Joe is sober. Therefore most of the time he is cursing and swearing and talking nonsense by the chestful. And practically the whole time he is doing so in the most terrible English ever squeezed out of that language in these parts.

For instance, should you ever venture, after one of Joe's more vile performances, to suggest to him, say, that Elizabeth of England would take a very dim view of his "handling" of the Queen's English, Joe would explode in your face with: "Ho, who are she!", adding immediately the one word: "Caustic!"

Just like that—"Caustic"! . . . And what does that mean? Well, who cares? Not Joe Apalahala. Besides that, anyway, is just one (though a favourite one) out of Joe's myriad brutalisations and shameless verbal forgeries. Some of these are utterly unbearable, being illiterate and nonsensical; yet they are uttered when Apalahala is perfectly sober. Nonsensical, yes, but expressive too, and somehow getting through with a message. Like this unbelievable expression. "Empty portmantos with empty holes"! Joe, what in heaven's name does that mean?

"Ho, what does you mean yourself?", counters Joe. "Caustic"!

Well that's Joe Apalahala — a little of him for now anyway. Next time I'll begin to relay to you full versions of my conversations and arguments with him. In fact I might as well call this series "Conversations with Joe Apalahala", "By Kwame Ademoawa."

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