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Editorial

THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE SUBSIDIES

2 JUL 1974

ON FRIDAY 14th June, the Head of State and Chairman of the N.R.C. announced on radio and television the withdrawal of subsidies on a number of consumer goods revealing in the process that over the past twenty two months government had been in diverse ways subsidising the consumer to the tune of ₵42 million cedis.

The **Legon Observer** has never supported subsidies of the sort that the government has persistently thought it desirable to dangle before the Ghanaian populace—and it is to be recalled that when government in January 1973 announced the revoking of a subsidy of ₵30 million on consumer items we welcomed the decision as long overdue. However, it is in the light of that decision that we were surprised by the recent announcement. For if the subsidies were removed in January 1973, then how could they be removed again in June, 1974, especially since the prices of several items underwent periodic upward revision presumably in consonance with the “inflationary world situation”?

The reason why these subsidies should not be there is indeed a matter of commonsense: the money could be more wisely spent on development, also the high prices would tend to discourage the demand for those items and therefore hopefully stimulate domestic production both for consumption and industry. It needs to be borne in mind that these objectives were included in the goals of the devaluation of December, 1971. To get the economy really moving, these high prices are perhaps inevitable; the N.R.C. however decided on a politically more expedient policy of maintaining subsidies but sought to save money by a system of rationing and price control. The policy was seen not to work as long ago as early last year. It was vitiated by smugglers and inefficient border guards and by unscrupulous distribution methods—in which government agents and private traders were involved—and by unrealistic pricing.

Now that subsidies have been effectively removed, the government needs to address itself to certain questions. The first is that of fixing prices realistically and enforcing these prices. One would have wished that with the removal of subsidies there was no need for controlling the prices of these commodities but the habits of the Ghanaian trader—especially since the removal of subsidy is likely to lead to a reduction of imports of these commodities—would counsel the retention of price control. In fixing prices however an important but evasive factor needs to be borne in mind,

namely the prices of these commodities in our neighbouring countries. Since our borders seem so easily permeable, in spite of our border guards, pricing could be an effective way of checking smuggling. But in taking their prices into consideration we need to take their wages and salaries also into account, not to mention the availability there of substitutes for items like sardines and tinned mackerel.

There is also a pressing need for more efficient distribution. Ghanaians are fond of saying that they do not mind if goods are expensive provided they can get them; and even if they are not to be taken exactly literally it is true that an efficient distribution of such goods as are available would prevent some frustration. In this connection we need to bear in mind the statement recently attributed to the Chairman of the Logistics Committee that he would hold up such goods as he had until he was assured that they would not be hoarded and smuggled—as if it was not partly because of these very problems that the Committee was set up. In the main the Logistics Committee idea has not been a grand success, nor has been the recent idea, for instance, of selling fish directly to the consumer to preclude hoarding and excessive profiteering. In the first place, it is a cumbersome method of selling to have vans patrolling towns with fish. Secondly, it is our information that those who are supposed to sell the fish claim it is not there—when it in fact should be there. What these examples point to is the need to devise more efficient techniques for making these goods available—thus avoiding regional and periodic shortages.

But while we admit that certain forms of subsidy are definitely luxurious, we do not think that all subsidy is such. For this reason, we are disturbed by the fact that following the Head of State's address a debate seems to have started as to the extent to which government ought to subsidise education. We think that education is vital for this country and government ought not in any way to be thinking of reducing its subsidy to this particular area. We regret the removal last year of the subsidy on Middle School Leaving Certificate examinations and will deplore any future cuts in the subventions for education.

Finally of course the way out is for us to activate our industries to produce at their full capacity. The recently announced decision requiring all industries which demand agricultural raw materials that can be produced here to plan immediately towards producing their requirements locally is certainly progressive as an idea. It is hoped that the details will be realistically worked out and the implementation assiduously followed up.

There should be no place in this country now for complacency, for indeed it must be obvious to all that our problems are neither easy of solution nor simply the creation of supposedly inefficient leaders.

Politics

ADMINISTERING THE BITTER PILL OR LESSONS IN GOVERNMENT

By
A Correspondent

The radio and television broadcast by Colonel I. K. Acheampong, Chairman of the ruling National Redemption Council, on the 14th of June last took a few citizens by surprise, even if it rang familiar tunes. The surprise was caused by the assertion that subsidies were still being paid on certain commodities, from which subsidies were said to have been withdrawn on the 30th of January last year. The N.R.C. Chairman's message was, however, familiar because that was not the first time that the citizens of this country had been informed that as a result of the international financial situation certain economic measures, entailing a rise in the cost of living had become necessary. This, in sum, was the burden of Busia's last broadcast message to the nation before he was overthrown. This was also the burden of Col. Acheampong's message to the nation a fortnight ago.

It is important to remember that this is not the first time that subsidies have been removed from certain "essential" commodities. When the first exercise was undertaken, the principal reason given was that the efficient operation of smugglers and the inefficient performance of our border guards had frustrated the object of the subsidies with the result that the beneficiaries of the measure were not the citizens of this country, but the smart smugglers and their clients in the neighbouring countries. Offering other reasons for the stoppage of subsidies, Lt.-Col. Felli (then Major and Commissioner for Trade and Tourism) spoke of the health centres, the schools and the roads that could have been built, as well as other social services that could have been provided, if the £30 million had not been paid as subsidies. Lt.-Col. Felli said *inter alia*: "The subsidy which we were paying came from the taxes which you and I have paid for development. It is our moral duty as a people to lay a firm foundation for the prosperity of this country, not only for ourselves, but also for our

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children and posterity. It will therefore be indefensible if our children should grow up to realise that the money which we could have used to develop the country was used to promote mass consumption of foreign foods which to most of us are of doubtful value". Echoing the same sentiments more forcefully some sixteen months later, Col. Acheampong, Chairman of the N.R.C. and Commissioner for Finance, speaking in his capacity as "Commander-in-Chief in the economic war", said: "We must decide now, fellow Ghanaians, whether we want to progress, stand still or retrogress. Is it possible to pay huge subsidies and at the same time develop? We would prefer to be judged by the ultimate well-being of the Ghanaian than the amount of sardines and corned beef we were able to subsidise. We do not want to build development projects in our stomachs!"

Two Withdrawals

Now, it is somewhat surprising that Col. Acheampong should have had the occasion to make this statement at all. If as far back as January 1973 the government had realised that the payment of subsidies was eroding the ability of the government to undertake development projects, why does anybody now talk to us again on subsidies? It is true that a few items like milk and baby foods continued to be subsidised after January 1973, but the whole country was told that subsidies had been removed in respect of soap, matchets, sardines, corned beef and pilchards. If as a result of rising prices in the producing countries it became subsequently necessary to raise the prices further why did the government not have the courage to pass these increases on to the consumer, or the candour to tell the nation that despite all the development arguments given against subsidies, it had been thought politically wise or expedient to continue to give subsidies?

In Col. Acheampong's June 14th statement, no reference was made to the earlier withdrawal of subsidies in January 1973, and the impression was therefore created that the government had only now recognised, in June 1974, that the granting of subsidies had a debilitating effect on our development efforts. But the government had already come by this knowledge sixteen months earlier. This, of course, also raises the question of the government's credibility. How can we be certain that this is the last we have heard of the removal of subsidies? There is no attempt here to cast any doubts on the government's assertion that it has been subsidising certain commodities; what is being questioned here is the government's apparent bad faith and lack of candour and courage in

hiding from the people the realities of our economic situation. Is it not a great pity that it has taken the government about thirty months to learn the simple truth that even in nation-building "man shall not live by bread alone"?

Outside Financial Pressures

One other truth which the government appears to have learnt is that an economy like ours is subjected to the vagaries of the international economic situation. In this respect, Col. Acheampong's recent speech sounded like Busia's devaluation statement in the sense that both leaders attributed our internal economic difficulties to the effect of inflation and economic turmoil which had pushed up the prices of our imports. In a sense, what we are being told now is what we were told about thirty months ago. The solution adopted by Busia and Acheampong may differ in philosophy and approach, but the result to the Ghanaian consumer is the same, namely, a diminution of the purchasing power of the cedi. Busia ended his devaluation speech with these words: "I know these measures will make imported goods much dearer, but it should afford us the opportunity and the incentive to buy more of our locally made goods and fewer imported goods, and so create more employment for our own people and generally help our economy. This is the best way to **self-reliance**. (Those who think that "self-reliance" is the latest invention in the science of political economy, please note). It is debatable whether devaluation of the magnitude ordered by the Busia government was the only or the best solution to our economic difficulties, or the politically wisest thing to do, but as far as "the cedi in the pocket" is concerned, those measures and the present measures have the same end result for the Ghanaian consumer.

The table below indicates the "progress" we have made in terms of rising prices since just before the devaluation of December 1971. The percentage increases in the last column are inflated in the sense that the bare figures have been presented without taking into consideration the increase in producer prices in the countries whence we import the commodities concerned. But these figures are nevertheless meaningful in the context of the purchasing ability of those living in this country. It will be a cynical understatement to say that salaries and wages have not kept pace with rising prices; the fact is that prices have galloped at an alarming rate while salaries and wages have barely kept a snailpace. This calls for urgent measures to enable citizens to maintain some sort of pace with the cost of living. We would like to believe that

the Salary Review Committee, having at its disposal the figures we have collated from Executive Instruments and newspapers as well as the prices of local foodstuffs and the cost of services, will proffer such advice to the government as will enable Ghanaians to maintain a decent standard of living in these times. Such an upward adjustment is urgent especially for those in the lower income group to enable them to live above the "poverty line", which is yet to be realistically defined in this country.

The difficulties that we are passing through should provide lessons to all those who rule or aspire to rule this country. In the foregoing, there was no intention of vindicating Busia's regime. Certain comparisons have been made only to show that ruling a country with a dependent economy such as Ghana's is not an easy task. It has become increasingly clear within the last few years that the country's problems cannot be solved by glib talk or even sheer good will. When this government took power, it created the impression that the

Description	Pre-devaluation 1971	Devaluation 27/12/71	Removal of Subsidies I Jan. 1973	Now 1974	Percentage Increase Since Devaluation	Price Increase From 1971 To 1974
Sugar (Cube) 1 kg. packet	.29- .33	.40- .41	.65- .67	.69- .73	72%	133%
Sugar (Granulated) 112lb bag	¢ 11.75-¢12.61		¢ 23.00-¢23.87	¢ 24.17-¢26.70		106%
Sardines	.12 .13	.16 .17	.18- .19	.23- .24	44%	92%
Mackerel/Pilchards	.10- .11		.14- .15	.23- .24		130%
Corned Beef	.48- .49	.65- .66	.85- .87	¢ 1.28-¢ 1.30	97%	167%
Rice (100lb. bag)	¢ 12.40-¢13.61		¢ 20.00-¢21.20	¢ 34.28-¢35.48		176%
Flour(100lb. bag)	¢ 11.64-¢12.28	¢ 17.00-¢17.54	¢ 21.40-¢22.06	¢ 27.30-¢29.73	61%	134%
Milk	.11- .12	.17- .18	.14	.14	18%	27%
Bar Soap	.45	.60	.95	.95	58%	111%
Detergents (Medium Size)	.23		.27	.35		52%
Lactogen (1lb.)	.75		1.60	1.60		113%
Beer	.50	.54	.52	.66		40%
Matchets	.59		1.20	1.20	50%	103%
Cement (local)	¢ 1.39-¢ 2.20	¢ 1.50-¢ 1.72	¢ 2.69-¢ 3.50	¢ 3.50-¢ 5.66	115%	131%
Corrugated Asbestos Sheets	¢ 4.40-¢ 4.70		¢ 6.10-¢ 6.43	¢ 6.59-¢ 6.96		36%
Flat Asbestos Sheets	¢ 1.40-¢ 1.53		¢ 2.31-¢ 2.48	¢ 2.58-¢ 2.75		84%
Galvanised Iron Sheets (1 Bundle)	¢ 32.64-¢34.59		¢ 48.82-¢50.74	¢ 61.10-¢66.75		87%
Petrol	.71	.71	.71	¢ 1.20		69%

previous government had failed miserably out of pusillanimity and incompetence. Little did it occur to those who ousted Busia that the repercussions of the international financial situation which were evoked to explain a major part of our difficulties were a reality they also would have to reckon with sooner or later.

The enormous problems facing the country now should serve to warn everybody that no particular class or group of people have got all the answers to our problems. The present performance of the men in power clearly indicates that susceptibility to failure or unimpressive performance is not the monopoly of civilian rulers, and that what outsiders might interpret as maladministration or wanton recklessness may only be a yielding to forces beyond the control of rulers. Despite all the fanfare surrounding the Operation Feed Yourself campaign, the naked truth is that there is no evidence that there is abundance of food or that it is any cheaper; in fact the contrary would be nearer the truth. We have been doing well on the export front mainly because as a result of the world inflationary situation our exports like cocoa and gold have been fetching much higher prices than ever prevailed within the last ten years. What all this means is that our export receipts have gone up without much effort on our part, in the same way as our import bill has been consistently going up through no fault of anybody in power in this country. In both cases we are the beneficiaries and victims of economic forces outside our control.

The Bitter Pill

This, of course, does not mean that we are so helpless as to be unable to reduce the impact of these external forces on our economic life and well-being. With proper planning and more serious efforts at food production and distribution, and with the production of raw materials to feed our industries, we can minimise the harmful effects of these forces beyond our control. But what this should mean is that no one in this country should delude himself into believing that there are any ready made and instant solutions to our economic and social problems.

We in this country have often shown an **obdurate** unwillingness to swallow the pill of economic truth. In the light of our present economic situation with the galloping cost of living and the corresponding reduction of the value of "the cedi in the pocket", it looks as if in certain respects the event of January 13th, 1972 was only a reprieve. The bitter pill of economic truth we refused to swallow then is being administered now.

Law and Society

REFORM OF THE LAW OF SUCCESSION*

By
Justice Philip Archer

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt and where thieves break through and steal".

Matthew 6, 19.

THE precept I have just quoted was preached about 2,000 years ago, but I am convinced that if the preacher were to visit this planet again, he would be staggered by the magnitude of our transgressions so far as this precept is concerned.

With the exception of the minority of our fellow men in cassock who have taken vows of poverty, our forbears have laid up their treasures on earth and we have been following their example with equanimity. The stark naked fact is that we have realised that certain treasures are indispensable in our age and in any case moth and rust do not destroy them. Our treasures now consist of edifices constructed with concrete, steel and glass. Our treasures consist of bank balances not in red but in green, insurance monies, corporate stocks and shares, government securities and other possessions which contribute immensely to our well-being and happiness. Moth and rust cannot corrupt some of these treasures. Nevertheless, as we are all mortals, we are bound to cease to have any dominion over these treasures as soon as the pale hands of death knock at our doors. If we are sensible during our life time, we indicate in our written or holograph wills how these treasures should devolve when we die. If we appoint reliable and honest executors and trustees, then our wishes, under the protection of the Courts, will be carried out to the letter and in such cases our souls will truly rest in peace.

On the other hand, for best reasons known to ourselves, some of us fail to reduce our wishes into writing in the form of a will or to declare these wishes orally in the presence of witnesses in the customary manner known as **samansiw**. What are the consequences? We plunge our dependants into woe, misery and unhappiness. The flood gates of litigation become wide open and these treasures are consumed and squandered by the cost of litigation. This is where the law of succession becomes relevant.

Unfortunately in Ghana, we cannot vaunt about one law of succession. On the contrary, like desert camels we have to bury our heads in the sand and whisper quietly that we have laws of succession partly based on ancient traditions and customs which have crystallised into law and partly dictated by our forms of marriage and religious beliefs. If a foreign tribunal were to ask what is the law of succession in Ghana, it would be impossible to answer the question in a few words. A whole dissertation would have to be prepared for the enlightenment of that Court.

What then is the law of succession in Ghana? I shall first deal with enacted law as I am intuitively persuaded that most of us here are affected by that law. Before

* Originally delivered as a lecture at a one-day school on Succession organised by the People's Educational Association.



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Christianity was introduced here and before the English system of jurisprudence was adopted, customs and traditions regulated our births, marriages and deaths. Accordingly succession to our properties was governed by custom. The family succeeds. Christianity brought in its trail concepts of monogamy. The twain shall become one flesh meant that on the death of one spouse, the surviving spouse and children should take. This undoubtedly, conflicted with the indigenous rule that the family succeeds. When the first Marriage Ordinance was passed in 1884, a person who married under the Ordinance or whose earlier marriage was validated by the Ordinance was subject to English law so far as the devolution of his personal estate was concerned and his spouse and children took everything. There was an outcry because the traditional family had been excluded. The law was amended in 1909 to give the family a portion—that is the present law which is contained in Section 48 of the Marriage Ordinance Cap. 127. Briefly it is as follows: Upon the death of a person who was subject to native law and custom and who contracted a marriage under the Ordinance and who is survived by a widow or husband or any issue of the marriage, then two-thirds of his personal and real properties must be distributed according to the law in force in England on 19th November 1889 and one-third in accordance with native customary law. The same law of succession applies to the issue of such marriages. So far no one has quarrelled with the one-third which goes to the family. But as regards the definition of widow and children, the Courts have construed the statutory provision so as to benefit persons not specifically mentioned in the Ordinance. Some have described this attitude of the Courts as judicial activism or judicial dynamism. Others have dubbed it judicial adventurism. I shall give a few examples to illustrate the irreconcilables and imponderables in some of the decisions. A man might have spent the best part of his life in promiscuity with the result that he has children with different women none of whom was married to him. If he was a member of a matrilineal community, these children would not be members of his family for purposes of succession. If, in his old age, he decides to marry under the Ordinance, his new bride and children by her, would assume that upon his death, they would be entitled to the two-thirds of the estate. But their hopes would be frustrated because the Courts would hold that the surviving wife and children together with all the children born before the marriage must take. The Courts would argue that in Ghana, there is no illegitimacy in customary law and as they are issues of the deceased, they must take, although, what the law of England contemplated was legitimate issue. In such cases, the Courts invoke customary law for the benefit of the children who normally would not have been entitled to anything if the father had not contracted an Ordinance marriage. Another example—if the same man, while the Ordinance marriage was subsisting, had issue with another woman, the Courts would hold that that issue was illegitimate because he was born in adultery. In this respect, the Courts would invoke English law to bastradize the issue and to deprive him of any interest in the estate. The Courts would ignore the customary law. Another example—if the same man became a widower and later married three wives according to customary law, upon his death the Courts would hold that the three wives are surviving spouses for the purpose of

enjoying part of the estate, although none of them is married under the Ordinance. The Courts have been construing and stretching matters to such an extent that I am afraid unless the law of succession is re-enacted with certainty, the Judges will inevitably earn for themselves, the sobriquet of "legal monks", because future decisions would be based on their individual predilections, their religious proclivities and their sense of morality.

Another defect in this branch of law of succession is that the distribution of the two-third is governed partly by the English Common Law and partly by English statutes in force in 1884. The English have been wise and sensible enough since 1884 to bring their own laws up to date in consonance with prevailing economic and social conditions. Here in Ghana, these laws, long ago jettisoned by their country of origin, still remain cluttered up in our holds and on our decks as valuable cargo.

Mohammedan Law

Should the tenets of a particular religion dictate the devolution of one's estate? This brings me to the Marriage of Mohammedans Ordinance, Cap. 128. If there is any enactment which is merely occupying space in the statute books without serving the needs of our society, it is this particular Ordinance, because the Muslim Community does not care about that Ordinance. First of all Mohammedans who are already married according to Muslim rites may register such marriages under the Ordinance. Secondly, if they do register then the succession to their estate shall be governed by Mohammedan law. It follows that in Ghana, all persons, who profess to be Muslims but have not fulfilled the above two conditions are not subject to Mohammedan law so far as devolution of their estates is concerned. What is the Mohammedan law of succession? The original rules of succession were laid down in the Holy Koran; but it appears that exponents of Muslim jurisprudence have in the past dilated on the earlier rules enjoined by Allah to such an extent that it is difficult to comprehend some of these homiletic expositions. Nevertheless, one thing is certain in Ghana. There is no established religion here because Ghana is a secular state except that its inhabitants are at liberty to practise whatever religion they like. It seems to me therefore out of place that the law of the land should be hamstrung by religious dogma. In any case, the Mohammedan law of succession discriminates between the sexes—males get twice the portion of females—and this should not be permitted in a developing country craving for social justice. In this country, you have Gas and Fantis who have embraced the Muslim faith and have assumed Muslim first names but they have not abandoned their family names and have not severed any connections with their indigenous families. Yet the Ordinance stipulates that once their marriages according to Muslim rites have been registered under the Ordinance, then their estates shall be governed by Mohammedan law. The provision is mandatory and the Courts must give effect to it. The family gets nothing because the Ordinance does not reserve any portion of the estate for the family.

I have referred to the short-coming of these two enactments—the Marriage Ordinance and the Marriage of Mohammedans Ordinance—to demonstrate that the

GRADUATES PLACEMENT IN THE PUBLIC SERVICES

The Public Services Commission wishes to announce for the information of all Graduates and Certificate holders who are currently serving under the National Service Scheme and have already submitted applications for permanent appointment into the Ghana Public Services that they are requested to attend an interview at the office of the Public Services Commission in Accra on the following dates and times:—

POST	DATE	TIME
1. Assistant Engineer (Civil)	2nd July, 1974	9 a.m.
2. Assistant Engineer (Mechanical)	3rd July, 1974	9 a.m.
3. Assistant Quantity Surveyor	4th July, 1974	9 a.m.
4. Materials Engineer	4th July, 1974	11 a.m.
5. Building Technologist	4th July, 1974	11 a.m.
6. Assistant Architect	4th July, 1974	2 p.m.
7. Assistant Engineer (Electrical)	5th July, 1974	9 a.m.
8. Agricultural Officer	8th July, 1974	9 a.m.
9. Agricultural Economist	8th July, 1974	11 a.m.
10. Agricultural Statistics Officer	8th July, 1974	2 p.m.
11. Assistant Engineer (Agric.)	8th July, 1974	3 p.m.
12. Assistant Regional Planning Officer	9th July, 1974	9 a.m.
13. Assistant Town Planning Officer	9th July, 1974	11 a.m.
14. Town Planning Assistant	9th July, 1974	2 p.m.
15. Assistant Staff Surveyor	10th July, 1974	9 a.m.
16. Meteorologist	10th July, 1974	2 p.m.
17. Geologist	10th July, 1974	9 a.m.
18. Mineralogist	11th July, 1974	9 a.m.
19. Ore Dresser	11th July, 1974	9 a.m.
20. Geophysicist	11th July, 1974	9 a.m.
21. Chemical Engineer	11th July, 1974	2 p.m.
22. Assistant Lands Officer (Valuation)	12th July, 1974	9 a.m.
23. Factory Inspector	15th July, 1974	9 a.m.
24. Assistant Labour Officer	15th July, 1974	9 a.m.
25. Assistant Conservator of Forests	15th July, 1974	2 p.m.
26. Assistant Game Warden	15th July, 1974	3 p.m.
27. Assistant Government Chemist	16th July, 1974	9 a.m.
28. Assistant Biochemist	16th July, 1974	9 a.m.
29. Assistant Biologist	16th July, 1974	9 a.m.
30. Assistant Nutrition Officer	16th July, 1974	9 a.m.
31. Assistant Health Educator	16th July, 1974	9 a.m.
32. Microbiologist	16th July, 1974	9 a.m.
33. Education Officer (Technical)	17th July, 1974	9 a.m.
34. Master (Technical)	17th July, 1974	9 a.m.
35. Fisheries Officer	18th July, 1974	9 a.m.
36. Fisheries Biologist	18th July, 1974	9 a.m.
37. Assistant Technician Engineer (Electrical)	18th July, 1974	10 a.m.
38. Assistant Technician Engineer (Mechanical)	18th July, 1974	2 p.m.
39. Assistant Technician Engineer (Civil)	19th July, 1974	9 a.m.
40. Senior Technical Officer (Mechanical)	19th July, 1974	11 a.m.
41. Senior Technical Officer (Agric.)	19th July, 1974	2 p.m.
42. Landscape Designer	19th July, 1974	2 p.m.
43. Assistant Hospital Secretary	19th July, 1974	3 p.m.
44. Instrument Curator	19th July, 1974	3 p.m.
45. Graphic Designer	19th July, 1974	4 p.m.

Candidates for the various posts stated above are requested to note the date and time stated for the interview for each particular post and to report at the Office of the Public Services Commission, Accra at the appropriate date and time for the interview for consideration for appointment.

Law Reform Commission has reason for tentatively proposing that there should be one uniform law of succession irrespective of a person's form of marriage or religious belief.

But what about tribal or ethnic considerations? This brings me to the thorniest problem in the whole field of customary succession in Ghana. As I said earlier, before Christianity and English law exerted any influence here, custom and tradition prevailed. Whenever there was migration from one part of the country to another, the migrants carried with them their customs and traditions. Therefore, in Akwapim, for instance, one can find the matrilineal and patrilineal systems of succession in force in certain enclaves depending upon where the settlers came from. Those from Akim Abuakwa brought the matrilineal system with them and the Guans brought their patrilineal system. Since then, there have been inter-marriages and at times it is not easy to say whether the matrilineal system or the patrilineal system should apply when a man in that area dies.

Outmoded Concepts

When the Law Reform Commission came to grips with the existing law for the first time it became necessary to define the objectives which the reform of this branch of the law should achieve. One course open to the Commission was to consider whether the matrilineal system alone should be reviewed by including spouses and children in the family. Of course, such a move would have offended the susceptibilities of those who have been brought up to maintain and uphold the ancient concept that for purposes of succession, children are not members of their father's family. The concept is so deeply entrenched that the Commission decided to steer away from it completely. In other words there should be no interference with the concept. Instead, the Commission took the view that the traditionalists should be persuaded to accept the fact that, so far as widows and children are concerned, the system is harsh and unconscionable and the State should intervene by legislation to give the widows and children a precise and definite portion of the estate. The usual justification for restricting the line of succession to the descendants of a female ancestress is that it is the womb that nurtures the off-spring. But our mothers should be the first to admit, without any prompting from the biologist or the geneticist, that unless the womb is invaded by a foreign material emitted by man, there will be no offspring. I have always maintained that the basis for the concept is unconvincing and, in any case, as the days of immaculate conception are over, it is against common sense to maintain that children are not members of their father's family. Have the children not got the father's blood, which is also that of the father's mother? There was a time in England when no atheist or pagan could give evidence in Court because these persons did not believe in a Deity that would punish them for speaking lies. The English found this concept untenable and out-moded and discarded it. Now atheists, pagans and heathens are competent to give evidence in Court although they need not swear. So also it seems to me that in contemporary Ghana, whenever any concept appears to be out of

date, we should tolerate that concept so long as it does not work injustice. In the matrilineal system of succession, the widows are at the mercy of the customary successor. If the latter chooses to take her as a wife, all well and good. If not then she must struggle for existence. Sometime ago, a case came before me in the Court. The young widow, aged 26 years with two children, had complained that the customary successor, who was in his late seventies, was not maintaining her and the children, although the customary successor had collected all the estate and was enjoying it. The customary successor's answer in open court was that he was entitled to take the young widow as a wife but she had refused to marry him. When I asked the young widow the reason for the refusal, she explained that she did not want to be a widow again shortly after the death of her first husband, and that in any case she was too young to be the new bride of a man who could be her grand-father. There was great laughter in Court when the old man retorted that he was Johnny Walker and he was still going strong. Only he knew what he meant. This is one example of the plight of a customary widow. What about the children? They have no interest in the father's estate but they should be looked after. By whom? The customary successor. Frequently, years elapse before the Courts are able to determine who has been appointed customary successor of a deceased person. Factional dissensions and squabbles in the family disrupt the administration of the estate and the children who are not members of the family have no redress except in the Court room. Moreover, children have only a right of residence in their father's self-acquired house subject to good behaviour. In effect, under the matrilineal system, widows and children have no security whatsoever unless the head of family and customary successors happen to be humane persons with consciences.

Patrilineal System

The matrilineal system of succession has undergone no change whatsoever. In Akim Abuakwa, the Presbyterian Church has laid down rules of succession for its members. But these rules have no force of law. Some families in this country have voluntarily agreed that whenever a male member dies his wife and children should exclusively take the estate and the family should not interfere. This is laudable as the agreement tends to mitigate the rigours of the law. But very few families can take such decisions.

The patrilineal system is not as harsh as the matrilineal system. There the children are not ignored but it appears the plight of the widow is no better although in practice, out of the abundance of their hearts, the family ensures that the widow is not completely ignored. This generosity is not universal.

In both systems the Courts have had to grapple with legal disputations as to who constitute the family for the purposes of succession. Should the circle of relatives be narrowed so as to include only the very close relatives, or should the circle be broadened to embrace what is usually described as the wider family? Recent decisions of the Courts have veered towards the first and the tendency is to restrict the family to the close relatives on the maternal side. But it seems to me the point is not yet finally settled and I personally think

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that any new law of succession should clearly delineate who constitute the family for purposes of succession to an intestate's property. Inter-tribal marriages have also posed problems. When a man belongs to the two systems, should the family from one system claim priority for the purpose of succession or should the law enact that both families should take. The views of the public are eagerly awaited as the Commission has deferred taking a decision on this point.

Failure to make a Will

I do not wish to repeat the proposals of the Commission in this address as you will be discussing them in detail during this seminar. Those of us in the urban areas who are sophisticated might have no difficulty in welcoming the proposals. But my own fear is the reaction of the ordinary person in the rural areas where the matrilineal system is in the ascendancy. When one talks to him about his property and the future, seldom do you hear him mention his children or his wife. His first pre-occupation is with his "WOFA". This attitude makes the whole exercise of reforming the law very delicate. Nevertheless the law should not be stagnant; it must be developed to suit changing conditions in life. The emphasis in the present reform proposals is the alleviation of the plight of widows and children in the customary system of succession. We are not interfering with basic fundamental concepts that have sustained the customary law over the years. These concepts constitute our heritage which must be preserved. Nevertheless, it is our hope that the proposals will be acceptable to the general public. After all the family cannot prevent any member from contracting a marriage under the Marriage Ordinance—a step which ultimately whittles down the family's interest to one-third. Ghana cannot boast of some of the social benefits in other countries—widows pensions, unemployment grants, charitable homes for orphans. It is therefore incumbent on the State to pass laws to ensure that those who leave behind widows and children, do not deprive these dependants of any share in their estates. The legislature must ensure that widows and children do not go about begging in the streets after the demise of the bread-winner. The State has a duty to perform and this should be appreciated by the hard-core disciples of the matrilineal system.

Some of us may argue that the existing law should not be reformed and that any person affected by any particular system of succession which appears to him to be obnoxious and oppressive should make his will or samansiw. This argument will not solve the problem. There are many reasons why people are found to have died intestate. They may die accidentally, they may think that they have nothing to bequeath or devise but upon their deaths some assets accrue to their estates, for example, death gratuities and superannuation awards. Who in this world is not guilty of procrastination? We usually resolve to make our wills either the next day, the following month or in the New Year but the wills are never made. One famous legal scholar Mr. Jarman wrote a classic on Wills in three massive volumes, and in the courts, one can quote Jarman on Wills with confidence. But when Jarman died, it was discovered that he had not made a will. He had spent all his life-time writing on the ramifications of will making. Why he himself did not make one cannot be

fathomed up to the present day.

Members of the public are genuinely under the apprehension that some testators could defeat and obstruct the interest of the widow and children under any new law by making wills which in effect will re-instate the matrilineal system of succession. Such a move has already been circumvented by the Wills Act 1971 which was pioneered by the Law Reform Commission. There is a provision in that Act that where a testator has not during his life-time made adequate and reasonable provision for his father, mother, spouse or child, then if there is no provision in the will for any of these persons, the Court may interfere with the wishes of the testator and carve out a portion of the estate for the benefit of these persons. In the past, some testators have given their widow 2/6d. or a Bible coupled with vexatious and slanderous remarks in their wills. These enormities if they occur in future will not be tolerated by the Courts.

I commenced my address with a prologue. What is my epilogue? I shall quote again from the greatest literary work on earth.

"Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?"

Romans 9:21

I personally think that Ghanaians have the power, like the potter with his lump of clay, to reform the existing law of intestate succession and to mould it into one of honour, equity and justice.

Africa

SOME IMPRESSIONS OF MOGADISHU — JUNE 1974

By

Richard Greenfield

UNTIL the recent Summit Conference held in Mogadishu the Somali Democratic Republic, independent since 1960, had played only a modest—if consistent—role in the affairs of the African Continent. It has seldom held the limelight. Perhaps this has been in part due to its marginal geographical location. Cape Guardafui, though well known to Graeco-Roman and other early navigators is nevertheless the most easterly point of Africa. Somali marginality is also to some extent due to the radiance of Emperor Haile Sellassie's external public relations and the dominance of Addis Ababa in matters relating to the postures and achievements (such as they have been) of the O.A.U. That era is ending. Few will weep for it. Last year has witnessed an O.A.U. reawakening under the leadership of General Gowon—even though LONRHO and the Secretary-General did not seem to notice that fact, to the latter's ultimate cost. And now a new era dawns. General Mohammad Siyad Barre, President of the Somali Democratic Republic, and commonly known as Jaalle (Comrade or Brother or Fellow-Worker) Siyad, is the new President of the O.A.U. The Somali Foreign Minister, also, was within

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a hair's breadth of the Secretary-Generalship, right up to the last of the many ballots.

The best criteria on which to assess the Comrade General—as it is on the one hand with General Gowon and on the other with the King of Kings and Conquering Lion—is what he has achieved for the people. Your observer went to see.

Flying from West Africa to Mogadishu, the Indian Ocean seaboard capital of the Somali Democratic Republic, one may travel via Kenya or Ethiopia and catch a connection there. In Nairobi, the visitor is greeted in hotel rooms by security warnings advising against exploring side streets, walking after dark or even taking taxis which might not belong to well known operating companies. On the streets of that tourist-oriented city, disabled, diseased and deformed beggars abound. A visitor cannot walk far in the city centre before aggressive cripples hobble deliberately into his or her path demanding alms. At night, shop doorways are heaped with ragged beggar-children lying together for warmth in the cool of the Kenya highland night.

Several Kenyan government ministers live today in attractive farm houses in the former so-called 'white highlands' and all but the meanest civil servants are very comfortably situated in suburban villas in Nairobi and other cities. In Addis Aaba such symptoms of social disease are even worse. Contrast between the rich and poor, the stuffed and the starving, has, despite critical years of inactivity and censorship, been so horribly and universally revealed of late that further comment is superfluous. Yet compared with the Somali Democratic Republic, Kenya and tomorrow's Ethiopia are rich. It is with some foreboding, therefore, that the observer proceeds towards Mogadishu. But what a contrast awaits him.

Mogadishu

A week before the arrival of the foreign ministers, the government organized a clean-up operation in the city. Whitewash was even provided in the old town. On Fridays and in the daily rest period, an army of volunteers equipped with spades and brushes cleared and cleaned their allotted areas. Additional trees and flowers were planted. The city's great placards and triumphal arches, bearing anti imperialist messages, were everywhere re-erected or touched-up.

Of course, nestled in the sand dunes beside its historic ancient harbour and picturesque suk area, outer Mogadishu, like the more modern city of Dar-es-Salaam, still retains something of the former colonial shanty town. But both are shanty towns with a difference. Mogadishu is on the move and barely recognisable to someone who visited it ten years ago.

A great circular road with dual carriageway and intersecting link roads has been laid across the city. New modern buildings extend far beyond the limits of the ancient port. Some Italian ceremonial arches, an opera house, (now the municipality building) and a cathedral are among the survivors of the Colonial and Trust eras. The Zanzibari Sultans' house is now a museum. But far more striking are the new Ministries, office and housing blocks, the monuments, the civic centres and the Mogadishu Peoples Hall where the O.A.U. Summit was held. Although ships are still unloaded by lighter, as in Accra in the old days, a new port is

under construction with Yugoslav assistance. Perhaps one day, in this context, it will be compared with the Port of Assab in Eritrea or with Tema. A fine national theatre, a present from the government of the People's Republic of China, staged a cultural festival in support of the O.A.U. Summit Conference. Among the lighter scenes were caricatures of planters and missionaries trying to tell the people how, and how not, to dance!

Chinese Aid

Nor is this hall the only gesture made by the Chinese people to the people of the Somali Democratic Republic. An asphalted road is being constructed through hundreds of miles of desert scrub to link Mogadishu with the northern city of Hargeisa, formerly capital of the British Somaliland Colony which on July 1st 1960 was merged with the U.N. Trust Territory, then administered by Italy, to form the Somali Democratic Republic. This road will do more than dampen any tendency towards separatism (of which no sign was apparent despite its being spoken of outside Somalia). It will greatly assist the people of the country areas because the Chinese Engineers are sinking wells for water every thirty miles. To your observer, the most striking factor is that the era of development seems to date not from independence, as one might expect, but from the 'Revolution' of October 21st, 1969.

The city of Mogadishu is divided into fourteen areas. Each one has a civic centre dedicated to 'national guidance'. In the evenings citizens, and particularly the youth, attend these centres to witness or play basketball, to see films and to hear government officials report regularly on the day-to-day activities of the government. At each centre a taxi stands by every night, lest anyone resident in the area and without transport is taken ill and needs to be rushed to hospital. There is an atmosphere of assertive puritanism in Mogadishu.

Schools in the capital already operate on a shift basis. But even so, community leaders and teachers appear to have time for activities arranged in the evenings in what appears a successful policy-effort to keep the young off the streets and away from bars and night clubs. Children wear school uniforms with different coloured shirts dependent upon their achievement on the ladder of educational advancement. The police are assisted by a youth wing in green uniforms. Your observer was not in Ghana in the days of the First Republic, but they might remind a Ghanaian of "young pioneers."

Beggars in the city are very few indeed. When they are noticed, they are collected from the streets and taken to residential training camps in the country where every attempt is made to re-habilitate them as useful members of the society. Even small discarded or orphan babies are looked after by volunteer workers in the Revolutionary Youth Centre at Afgoi, located a few miles south west of Mogadishu, and commanded by Brigadier-General Ismail Ahmed Ismail. There, as in the city, posters and slogans abound. "My father is Jaallee Major-General Siyad Barre: my mother is October" (i.e. the revolution) reads one dormitory wall. Better they than none. The streets of Mogadishu are safe at any hour.

Just before the Conference, selected boy and girl students were drafted into hotels to take crash courses

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in table and room service from their brothers and sisters, the skilled hotel workers. Their task was to help cope with the temporary boom associated with the O.A.U. Summit Conference. One amusing responsibility of several Somali Ambassadors, recalled from their posts for briefing just prior to the session of the Council of Ministers, was to act as guinea-pigs at a full dinner in the Juba Hotel. This 'bourgeois' exercise was conducted with great good humour—and there have been no subsequent reports such as the spilling of soup plates on dignitaries etc. Thus Revolutionary youth also serve who stand and wait—and apparently deserve congratulation for their achievements.

Similarly, drivers were brought in from other parts of the nation. Taxis were instructed to give preference to visitors, particularly journalists en route to file their copy at the telegraph office. A new international telex service was established.

The military in Somalia, like the National Redemption Council here in Ghana, make much of self-reliance in their speeches. Towards one anniversary of the military take-over—the Somalis also use the word Revolutionary and with some justice—the capital's largest and most modern hotel was burned down. Sabotage was suspected. The government immediately countered and a bigger and better hotel could be built entirely through local voluntary effort. This project—one of many self-help schemes—was exploited to the hilt for its propaganda value. As the splendid new Juba Hotel rose from rubble, civic pride was stirred, for even at the level of architects and engineers no foreign hand had (designedly) been involved in the project.

Scientific Socialism

Important though it is and the Juba Hotel is comparable to the Ambassador Hotel in the early independent days of this country, there are of course other hotels. Nevertheless accommodation was scarcely adequate for the Presidential entourages and for the journalists who flocked to Mogadishu. In part this may have been why some Somali diplomats and bureaucrats were not at first very enthusiastic about diverting so much national developmental effort into the 'city cosmetics' which summitry must inevitably involve. Only history will reveal whether or not it has all been worthwhile.

A large new housing estate 'Africa Village' was set aside for the use of Heads of States and their immediate staffs. It was not planned for the Conference. Now it will house civil servants and others. Areas of Mogadishu designated for the supporting groups of the major delegations and for journalists are also part of the longer term Mogadishu development plans. One problem was that the Department of Information is almost completely deficient in French speakers. Nor is the Foreign Service in a much better state. Anglophone Africa also suffers in great degree from this problem, so it is not a particular reflection on the Somali Democratic Republic. Officials in Mogadishu at least realize that Italian, for African purposes, is hardly an international language. Many officials speak good English, but even English speaking visitors, including some with a little Arabic, found themselves in difficulties at times. But traditional Somali hospitality responded to this.

The Somali Republic today is governed by a Supreme Revolutionary Council composed of military men

and Police Officers. The ministries are headed by Secretaries of State (Ministers) and Directors-General and their staffs of civil servants. These are civilians. The military, although in control, thus remains remote from the experienced day-to-day decision making which is government. There is some parallel to this in Nigeria. Several of the intellectuals to be found in the ministries were educated, at least in part, at one or other of the few secondary schools that existed in the Ethiopian Empire after World War II. In fact once a year, five members of the Supreme Revolutionary Council still help their fathers pay taxes to the Imperial Ethiopian government, since they hail from the Ogaden—part of the Ethiopian province of Hararge, where many Somali speakers live.

The dress of government officials might be described as casual. Not so their attitude to the work. One does not see suits or ties. Outside their barracks, the military are not allowed to wear uniform in the city. Civil servants, who have already suffered a 40% pay-cut, to decrease the gap between the elite and the masses, are similarly not allowed to participate in business either through their wives and families or on their own account and are not allowed to own second houses. No civilian, to the knowledge of your observer, has ever been drilled. Nevertheless, they and anyone in Mogadishu or the surrounding countryside seem only too willing to advise the visitor that the Revolutionary Military Government is doing well.

Most citizens to whom your observer spoke, stressed their memories of the days when the country wallowed ever deeper into corruption at the hands of former politicians. The Somali Republic they said, was known as the graveyard of aid. Vast amounts poured in from which there is nothing to show. In what is claimed as final exasperation, the Supreme Revolutionary Council took over and, as posters and slogans on the street corners and even country junctions tirelessly affirm, embarked on 'Scientific Socialism' as the 'only way' to 'develop both economy and culture'. Such programmes always depend on the degree to which the mores of the people encourage their acceptance. How successful this will all be, only time will tell and these are early heavy days—but in 1974 it is clearly going well.

Self-Reliance

The last German technician leaves the cotton textile factory this month. Faulty, secondhand or unsuitable machines—perhaps offloaded before the advent of fully trained Somalis—have been replaced. Local engineers have successfully taken over and much of the local demand is already met. The same is true of sugar. To the south of Mogadishu, and adjacent to certain privately owned farms, are extensive new state-owned and irrigated farm projects, producing grains, tobacco, sugar and other food crops.

Nearby, close to the ancient Indian ocean port of Merca, sand dunes are encroaching over some of the best Somali agricultural lands where surface waters flowing from the Ethiopian mountains finally disappear into the sands. When consulted, the United Nations suggested a sizeable fee for a survey and pilot scheme in dune stabilization. However, choosing typically to rely again on the nation's own slender resources. Jaalle Siyad led workers to give up their holiday (Friday) to

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plant grass and bushes on the dunes. Military trucks convey parties of workers and student volunteers weekly to the project, which to date, besides generating great enthusiasm, has met with considerable success — costing so much less than the 'experts' had advised.

The Somali Republic has a shortage of skilled labour and may indeed in future have to import contract workers from, for example, South Yemen. Educational plans are thus clearly vital and currently are perhaps more ambitious than carefully thought out. There has, however, been conspicuous achievement. One of the first actions of the present revolutionary government was the introduction of the Roman script for the writing of the Somali language. Action has at last followed years of indecisive discussion. All notices and signs are now in Somali. A textbook project is underway. English, and to some extent Italian, are also used in the system of education but the government no longer uses Arabic in written communications — although of course that language continues to be of profound religious significance.

This pride in the nation's culture and language well illustrates the appearance that the Somali Republic still rides the crest of the revolutionary wave. The present scene is most constructive and encouraging and those engaged are most zealous — but the real political questions today concern the plans being made for tomorrow, especially for the rural areas, and the degree to which they are integrated into a realistic concept of national progress.

Education

One ambition is to rapidly introduce universal primary education, even for the nomads of the interior and the north. So far little consideration appears to have been given to the likely effects of this measure on, for example, living patterns, self-images, rising expectations and overall manpower planning. With more enthusiasm than judgment, the University likewise rushes to produce the necessary teachers. It is endeavouring with as yet grossly inadequate plant, faculty and particularly library resources to create graduate teachers in two years rather than three or four. The Ministry of Higher Education would probably be wiser to take the trouble to make it a stated condition that such 'emergency products' will be recalled for deeper studies at a later date when the national development plans permit. A little more foresight might suggest that grossly farshortened courses make for a future 'age group' bottleneck and can also create bitterness between younger and better trained officials and their seniors on the ladder of promotion in the years that lie ahead. One has only to look back to the so called 'mutinies' in the East African armed Forces in 1963 for a warning of what can happen.

Something over £50,000,000 is to be provided by the EEC for the development of new scientific faculties in the Somali National University. There are already law, Medical, Agricultural and Engineering faculties. Veterinary work appears soundly if meagrely established and Education also advances. Top level manpower is, however, in demand — witness that the head of the University, an able young Somali physician, leaves soon to take up another post and young teachers are transferred to administrative and research work in the Ministry.

But as the present embryonic pattern develops, so closely overseen (sometimes for very good reasons) by the Ministry of Higher Education, university students in the future — to say nothing of faculty members — may well not tolerate the plastering of political slogans — however high minded — right across their classroom walls. Likewise the existing degree of censorship and control may frustrate tomorrow's intellectuals.

Nor is it only intellectuals who tend to think of soldiers as oriented by training more towards the maintenance of law and order than economic and political development — and they may ask, if not for political parties, for some form of political movement. Perhaps some of this should be anticipated. Currently there is no political party or movement in the Somali Republic. It would be too easy to create parties on unsatisfactory bases, such as the connivance of foreign powers or religion, so this is a delicate issue. Nevertheless, the junta may have to consider de-militarizing itself at some stage.

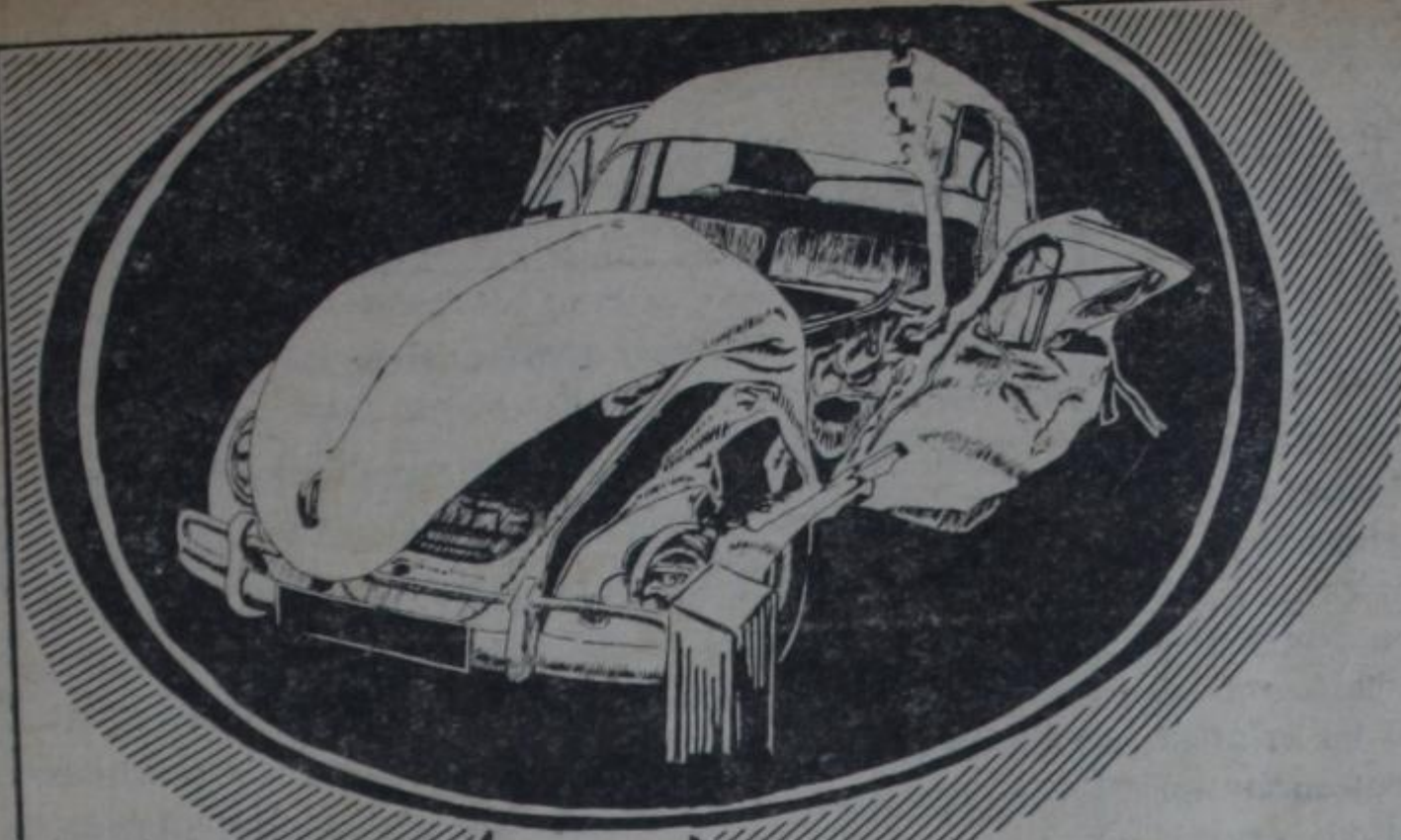
In the area of Foreign policy, apocryphal or not, a popular story current in Mogadishu is that a foreign Ambassador once declared that a Senator at home had protested about ships flying the Somali flag (of convenience) which traded with North Korea. Aid, it was implied might therefore be discontinued. The Comrade-General is said to have immediately publicised this 'secret diplomacy', dispensed with aid and continued as before on the grounds that the Somalis must control their own foreign policy. Similarly he is said to have warned two other great powers not to involve the Somali Republic in the tensions between them.

Today the Russian, Chinese and North Korean embassies are perhaps the most prominent. All missions — including the Americans located near offices of the Palestinian and Eritrean Liberation Fronts — compete with displays of propaganda photographs. The East Germans have mounted a very interesting exhibition on the current situation in Chile, for example.

Foreign Presence

Doubtless for the O.A.U. Conference, the Russians have even added Mondlane — hardly a Marxist — to a picture gallery featuring Cabral, Nkrumah and Lumumba. The Americans likewise concentrate not only on their own achievements in city development and race relations but feature Somali self-help projects, such as the sand-dune stabilization, in which they are not directly involved. The French and British (the former British Council is closed) are present but less prominent. Somalis can hardly be interested in pictures of a royal wedding. Only the Imperial Ethiopian Embassy, which dominates the old seafront, displays no pictures. Haile Sellassie's smart young envoy must be a lonely man, for relations between the two neighbours are not good.

Somalis are to be found in all areas adjacent to the boundaries of the present Republic. They live in what used to be called the Northern Frontier District of Kenya, in the French Afar and Issa Territory formerly even called French Somaliland and in the Haud and Ogaden, both Ethiopian areas. A large Ethiopian army and airforce stand on the Somali frontier, well equipped by the United States and more recently Iran. The Somalis too have equipment provided by the Russians



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but they would surely have little chance if it came to full scale conflict — unless of course, as some argue, the strikes and the civil and military unrest (one Somali official talked of the 'creeping coup') in Ethiopia cause the complete disintegration of central authority in that Empire.

Somali Officials hope that a new government in Ethiopia will at last address itself to social development and be forced therefore to take a really serious view of the day-to-day problems faced by the peoples of Eastern Ethiopia and Western Somalia which are undoubtedly interrelated. Your observer reserves judgment on whether the national frontiers involved will be adjusted in any major way, as the Somalis seek, but surely an end to oppression and far greater cooperation between so similar a people with such complimentary economies is the only sensible future order. The present sad conflict also bedevils Africa's search for unity.

Although the 'border question' was on the O.A.U. agenda because a report had earlier been called for on the issue, it is perhaps a little unfortunate that it had to be presented in Mogadishu rather than on a neutral ground. The issue of Rhodesia, which could well have been very prominent on the agenda, took second place to discussion on the status of the so-called Portuguese territories whose future is more immediately in the balance following the *coup d'état* in Portugal. Besides, Mogadishu will in November this year be the venue of an Afro-Asian Congress entirely dedicated to the support of the Freedom fighters of Zimbabwe.

Arab Relations

On the vital issue of oil prices and their impact on the economies of the developing countries, the Somalis at least were able to play the calm host. Although vital to many members including Ghana, this topic was not of Somali choosing, but her Chairmanship was of some importance because of the most unfair tendency in some quarters to blame current oil prices on the Arab Republic of Egypt (herself hardly a significant oil producer, particularly subsequent to Israeli aggression in Sinai). The Somalis are conscious that the Egyptians have sacrificed very much for the dispossessed Palestinians on whom eventually must fall the task of liberating their own land. The Somali Republic hopes that she herself has offshore oil in the north and with French help is currently sinking a well there—but she has nevertheless recently become a member of the Arab League. Her position is that support of the Arabs is one of principle and if the Arab countries wish to recognize this support by helpful, reciprocal economic measures then that is up to them. A more mundane and balanced approach, one might think, than General Idi Amin's plan to sell Nile Water by the barrel.

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Observer Notebook

Price Differentials

One disturbing feature about prices in this country is the gap between official fixed prices in the urban areas and the rural areas, and also between the southern parts of the country and the northern parts. Sometimes the difference is very little, as for example in the case of a packet of sugar which goes from 69p in Accra to 73p in Bolgatanga. A 100-pound bag of rice sells for ₵34.28 in Accra and for ₵35.48 in Bawku and Tumu. But the most savage differences occur in the prices of building equipment. For example, a bag of cement sells at a retail price of ₵3.23 at Tema and for ₵55.66 at Bolgatanga and other towns in the Upper Region — a difference of about 70%. Again a bundle of corrugated aluminium sheets sells for ₵51.21 in Accra and ₵55.36 in Wa, Navrongo and Bolgatanga, with the price going still higher to ₵58.18 in places classified as "other towns outside main controlled centres" in the Upper Region.

The most obvious reason that comes to mind in trying to explain these differentials is transportation cost, even though one cannot easily understand, on the basis of this reasoning, why prices for certain items should differ as between Cape Coast and Elmina, separated by only eight miles! Plausible as this transportation argument may sound, it can be considered as psychologically counter-revolutionary in the sense that the price differentials, however little they may be in certain cases, are likely to further encourage the migration to urban centres where things are relatively cheaper and social facilities better. The people living in the rural areas have been short-changed for too long and are already in a bad enough way without these discriminating price differentials. There is no reason why people should appear to be punished for not living near Accra-Tema or Sekondi-Takoradi where officially controlled prices are lowest.

A way out of this discriminatory and invidious price differentials is to calculate the whole cost of transportation and other handling charges and and to work out an average price that will apply to all regions, towns and villages in the country. This is being done in other countries and can be done here. In fact it is apparently being here for certain commodities like oats, grass mats, tomato paste, beer and Guinness Stout which despite transportation costs, have a uniform price throughout the country. There would even be a case for making items cheaper in the rural areas and in the regions farther away from the coast as compen-

sation for the several privations those living there are forced to endure as a result of our lopsided development efforts and the unequal distribution of social services. It could even have the further advantage of attracting people away from the coastal or southern urban centres and encouraging more people to stay in the rural regions.

One way of evening out the differences is for the government, through the Logistics Committee or a similar body, to undertake the entire distribution of these commodities. If this is done, the transportation costs can be centrally worked and spread on the cost of the commodities. It will certainly be unfair to expect traders who individually collect their allocations from the big centres and bear the transportation costs themselves to sell at uniform prices.

One other solution which comes to mind is the paying of cost of living allowances to people living in areas where commodities sell at higher prices. This idea sounds good and has, for other reasons, been tried before in this country. But the main objection to it is that such allowances will only benefit the wage and salary earners, leaving the vast majority of self-employed or unemployed people in the same discriminatory situation.

Some time ago, one advantage in living outside the large towns was lower rent. If one now has to pay 70% more for cement in the Upper Region and also more for galvanised iron sheets and asbestos sheets, how can people be encouraged to build there, and how can rents be kept low when building costs are going higher than they are in the main centres down south? Should it be any wonder then, in the light of these developments, if people are not willing to accept transfers to certain areas of the country where they will have to pay more for essential and non-essential commodities alike? And it is the more scandalous as the people who are expected to pay more for certain items because they live in particular areas are those who can least afford the luxury of paying more.

If ever the exhortation of people becoming their brother's keeper was relevant, it is now, and in the context of these price differentials. It is the immediate abolition of such differences through passing on the burden to all consumers in this country that will make sense and show concrete evidence of our talk of "one country, one people, one destiny".

Intestate Succession In Ghana

There are many problems left behind for survivors and successors, by those who die without having made a will. This is universally so, but in Ghana the complexities and the distress involved in intestacy must be exceptional. At any rate that was the conclusion a stranger attending a one-day school on the subject in Accra recently was bound to draw; the Ghanaians themselves who formed the audience on this occasion, took it for what it was: a stark reinforcement of what they already knew and had come together to take counsel upon. They had in fact been brought together there by the People's Educational Association, in the P.E.A.'s first major public function under its new National Executive, headed by Mr. C. K. B. Tachie-Menson and with Mr. J. Opare-Abetia as National Executive Secretary. The meeting was held at the Ghana Y.W.C.A.'s national headquarters in Accra, on Saturday, 15th May.

This public exercise was designed by the P.E.A. as a contribution to the national consensus being sought by the Law Reform Commission of Ghana, in the L.R.C.'s effort to have a law passed to rationalise and unify intestate succession in the whole country and bring justice to the widows and children, especially, of men who die without making a will. The case for these victims of largely unjust social practices in this country was made by no fewer than three authorities and one lay woman panelist of considerable knowledge and persuasiveness. They were: Mr. Justice Philip Archer, the Acting Chairman of the Ghana Law Reform Commission himself (whose address is reproduced elsewhere in this issue); Nii Anyetei Kwakwanya II, Mantse of Labadi; Mrs. Kate Abbam, Editor of the women's journal, *Obaa Sima*; and Mr. I. Amisshah-Aidoo, a well known lawyer and also a stool occupant (as Ohene of Efutuakwa).

Each of these speakers showed how "some of the defects" in "our intestate succession laws" result in terrible injustice to widows and children in particular. The Secretary to the L.R.C., Mr. J. Ofori Boateng, was also there to add emphasis to the presence of difficulties and anomalies in both customary and ordinance law in intestate cases, and to appeal for the maximum possible feedback from the public in this matter. The "school" later broke up into five groups under well known personalities and community leaders, whose findings and recommendations were to be collated, faired and eventually submitted to the L.R.C.

**ADVERTISE
IN THE LEGON OBSERVER**

Letters

The African Deal

SIR—The few writers who reviewed the film *CONTACT* (The African Deal) in some of the Ghanaian papers quite easily identified and enthusiastically hailed the tourism promotion potential of the film. "The fact that Ghana is portrayed in colour to the international scene is the goose that will lay the golden egg for the nation's tourist industry", remarked a reviewer in the *Daily Graphic* of March 22, 1974.

This aspect of the film is so emphasised that I feel the director subordinated everything else to the achievement of this aim. It is my contention that certain scenes should have been cut out before the film was shown to the Ghanaian public. Let us look at some of the scenes I object to.

A helicopter (sent by the fictitious Kofi to pick Sylvia whose duty is to use her charms on Kofi in order to make him pliable to her employer-boy friend, Donati, the Italian business man) lands on one of the lush lawns of the Continental Hotel. One sees an obtrusive cine-camera in the helicopter. I am sure somebody made a slip here. This glaring slip reminds one of Ghanaian T.V. cameramen who suddenly appear with their cameras on the screen when they should be discreetly hidden somewhere out of sight.

From the Hotel we are shown an aerial view of Central Accra marked by prominent buildings such as the Central Library, the Ghana Commercial Bank, and the High Court building. I consider this objectionable because the director has already shown us those buildings before. And to increase the weight of the objection we are later on made to follow Mr. Donati to this same area to meet Kofi alias Rumah in the Head Office of the Ghana Commercial Bank. In no time at all the helicopter leaves Accra and hovers over the Akosombo Dam for a short while before it takes Sylvia to her rendezvous.

The University of Ghana is a beautiful, picturesque place. And film director interested in promoting the tourist industry of Ghana should shoot some scenes on the campus. The director of *CONTACT* does precisely this. But I can't believe that the University Square is an indistinguishable extension of Commonwealth Hall, but in the film the Square is made to dovetail very smoothly into Commonwealth Hall. In addition it is to be noticed that the director's desire to achieve his aim compels him to whisk us from one scene to another without so much as a "by your leave," so to speak. The irritating result is that one feels one is thumbing through an album of postcard photos of Ghana's places of interest.

However, I wish to say that the film greatly humoured my ego. I believe the film is designed to cure the blackman of his morbid sense of inferiority acquired from the colonial era. In this film we see a modern emancipated Ghanaian or, for that matter, African who proves conclusively to his shrewd and unscrupulous white counterparts that the days of the slave trade are gone and that he or the blackman should no longer be treated as "dirt", but as a human being who is not different in all important ways from a white man. He teaches them that he is a match for them.

Quite clearly the film preaches a doctrine that should inspire Africans to consider themselves the equals of whites. But I must say that we should not rush to produce many more of such films. A couple of very good films based on the same theme as the *CONTACT* should suffice to reorientate the thinking of our people and of course, the whites.

In conclusion one may say that as far as its objectives go, *CONTACT* is not a completely unpleasing effort.

La Bone Secondary School
P.O. Box 079
Osu Accra

Kwei Orraca Tetteh

Adverts in The Legon Observer — A Rejoinder

SIR—I wish to take issue with one Effie Hinson's attempt in L.O. IX/11 to criticise the quality of the advertisement carried in your Journal.

I have gone back to read the pieces objected to and have found nothing offensive to proper taste.

I venture to say that it is not at all "squalid" to advertise rest-house facilities or artificial insemination for cattle, toilet roll or even sanitary pads.

May I further suggest to Effie Hinson that what is squalid may be the way she (or he) chooses to look at things.

P.O. Box 3478
Kumasi

Kofi Agbley

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Going to great lengths to please

Obituary

Kwame Yeboah Daaku

THE stunning news of the death of Dr. Kwame Yeboah Daaku, Senior Lecturer in History in the University of Ghana, was broken to the members of the University of Ghana and of Ghanaians in general on the evening of Friday, 26th April, 1974. Because he had just turned 41, and known for his robust health and vivacity, the news of his death sounded incredible to all—his wife and family, his former lecturers and pupils, his colleagues and friends. A dedicated scholar, an outstanding and prolific historian, a great ambassador for African history in the West Indies, in the United States, Papua New-Guinea, the United Kingdom and in other parts of Africa, Kwame's premature death is a most tragic and an irreparable loss.

The late Dr. Daaku was born at Abetifi in the Kwahu District in the Eastern Region of Ghana on 1st August, 1933. After his elementary education at the Abetifi Presbyterian Middle School from 1941 to 1948, and his secondary education and teacher training at Krobo-Odumase from 1948 to 1954, he started his career as a teacher at the Local Authority Middle School, Agogo in January, 1955. Far-sighted, ambitious and always anxious to study and improve himself, he took the 'A' level Certificate Education examination on his own and entered the then University College of the Gold Coast, now the University of Ghana in October, 1958.

Throughout his studies here in the University he proved himself an intelligent and conscientious student and, above all, a shy, modest man and a real gentleman. He was one of my students in his final year and his clarity of expression, his analytical ability, his deep insight into historical issues and above all his dedication to history singled him out as a student of exceptional talent and promise on whom the Department could depend in future. It was with that hope in mind the late Dr. Daaku after creditably passing his B.A. degree examination in the Upper Second Division in June, 1961 was encouraged—indeed almost compelled him—to apply for the University post-graduate scholarship, and it was on that scholarship that he proceeded to the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London in September 1961 to study for his doctorate degree.

The hopes of the Department were not betrayed for not only did Kwame obtain his Doctorate degree in the minimum stipulated period of three years but he also joined his former Department as a lecturer in October 1964.

Within the first two years of his appointment as a lecturer, he distinguished himself as one of the most assiduous, reliable and productive members of the Department, as a competent and dedicated teacher, and as a natural leader. Nothing testifies to the confidence that had been developed in him better than the fact that he was appointed the Honorary Secretary of the Historical Society of Ghana in succession to his Head of Department during this short period. From then on, Kwame grew from stature to stature, and the number of his publications rose with the years. Among them

were two full length books, *Trade and Politics in the Gold Coast, 1600-1700* (Clarendon Press, 1970), and *Osei Tutu of Asante* which in fact is still in the press, six collections and translation of oral traditions: *Assin and Twifo* (1969), *Adanse* (1969), *Gonja* (1970), *Denkyira* (1970), and just before his death, *Sefwi* (two volumes) and *Wassa Fiase*, and about 14 articles, three of which are still in the press.

With such an impressive list of publications, it is not surprising that Kwame soon gained world-wide reputation. This is evident from the visiting appointments he held in overseas Universities and the many international seminars and conferences to which he was invited. From February to June, 1971, he was Visiting Professor of African History at the University of Bloomington, Indiana, U.S.A. and from October, 1971 to September, 1972, at the University of Papua—New Guinea, where he not only lectured on African history but above all introduced the staff and students to the techniques and methodology of the collection and the use of oral traditions as historical sources, an area in which he was most active and had won international recognition as one of the leading authorities by the time of his untimely death.

The many international conferences and seminars he attended include the conference on African Historiography at Dar-es-Salaam in September, 1965, the International African Institute Seminar on West African Trade and Markets at Freetown, Sierra Leone in December, 1969; the UNESCO Conference held at Porto Novo, Dahomey, in November, 1970; and between December 1973 and January 1974 that is three months before his death, he participated in a Symposium at Yaounde in the Cameroons; the Third International Congress of Africanists at Addis Ababa and finally the joint University of Ghana and University of Ivory Coast Conference held at Bonduku in Ivory Coast from 2nd to 9th January, 1974. Indeed, it was only a few days after his return home from Ivory Coast on 15th January that he was admitted at the Legon hospital and then at Korle Bu with infective hepatitis from which he never recovered.

We all, his almost seventy year old mother, his wife and four children, his extended family and the whole world of scholarship do mourn him and say: **Kwame Dammrifa, due, due, Kwame da yie.**

A. A. BOAHEN

PROFESSOR AND HEAD OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY,
LEGON.

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Miscellaneous

KONTOPIAATKROM REVISITED — VI

By
Kwadwo Kontopiaat

IMMEDIATELY after the departure of Joe Boy, we decided to call it a day. Certainly, I was beginning to get worried about my farm and about the essential commodities which compelled me to show my face again in Kontopiaatkrom. But before we could rise, our eminent Economist burst in breathing fire and brimstone down every body's neck. Never have we seen this highly respected citizen of Kontopiaatkrom in so agitated a mood.

"What in the name of all our 77 gods is the matter with you, Kwasi Pepee (Kwasi the Miser)," all of us screamed! "Please give me a shot of V.C. 10", he replied, "We all are finished! Do you know that as from this very moment, a packet of sugar is going to cost 69 pesewas, a large bottle of beer 66—70 pesewas, a bag of cement ₵3.73 in Koteikrom and Bramscoville, ₵4.06 in Kutville, ₵4.46 in Baahkrom, ₵4.73 in Minyiville and as much as ₵5.66 in Fellstadt". He took a shot of V.C. 10 and continued, "Can you believe that a tin of sardine will now cost 22 pesewas and that of corned beef as much as ₵1.28, yes, one cedi and twenty-eight pesewas?" At this point, all of us became convinced that our economist was simply pulling our legs. "How", Kwadwo Kontopiaat asked "could the price of corned beef which was 48p. only November, 1971 and even — 65p after the alleged disgrace of the cedi now cost ₵1.28? Mr. Economist, are you all right? Are you sure that you have not been 'caught' by one of the gods of Kontopiaatkrom and if so, don't you think that the best place for you is the shrine of that god where you can confess all your sins and get the necessary treatment? I am sorry to speak in this vein to you, Sir, since I do have the highest regard for you", Kwadwo continued, "but I cannot help feeling that either you are really pulling our legs or you must be er...er... a little mentally unbalanced".

Cool and collected, Kwasi Pepee simply pulled out of his pocket the day's copy of the **Kontopiaatkrom Gossiper** which contained a list of the new prices. For a minute everybody was struck dumb! "How can the Radio Active Committee do this to us," Kofi Sabesabe broke the silence, "we thought the main reason for proclaiming themselves our liberators was precisely to reduce the high cost of living..."

Our economist cut in at this point, "Precisely, and indeed, what is even more surprising is that in the talking drum and **gong gong** message in which the Chairman of the Radio Active Committee gave the citizens of Kontopiaatkrom the foretaste of what was to come, he did indeed specifically state that it was precisely to save the farmers, the unemployed and the workers of Kontopiaatkrom from the high cost of commodities imposed by the heartless Proboys that he and his colleagues, aided by the gods moved in the Asafo Companies to throw them out.

"But if this is the case, why then can he do this to us", Kofi Sabesabe continued. "Sugar for example was costing only 29p a packet in the first year of Kwame Kontopiaat's administration. Even after the so-called

murder of the cedi, sugar still cost only 40p but by the end of the first year of the Radio Active Committee's administration the cost of self-same packet of sugar, without any more cubes being added to it, rose to 65p and now you are telling us that it has gone up again to 69p. And as Kwadwo Kontopiaat has pointed out already, the cost of Koomeef (corned beef) — which, is no more a luxury in the face of the recurrent acute shortage of Kusinam (smoked rat), crabs, beef, mutton, and even snails — even after the devaluation was only 65p is now to be ₵1.28." But what beats me even more", added another, "is the present price of cement." In the first place, even after Kwame Kontopiaat had struck that fatal blow at the cedi, the cost of cement was only ₵1.50. But now the prices are to range between ₵3.23 and ₵5.66? In the first place, what is going to happen to the low-cost house that I was building? Moreover, why in the name of all mosquitoes and tsetse flies of Kontopiaatkrom and all the guinea hens of Yendi is it that a bag of cement should cost ₵4.06 in Kutville, and as much as ₵5.66 in Kontopiaatkrom? What have we done to deserve this discrimination? If petrol and beer are being sold at the same price throughout the country from Koteikrom to Fellstadt, and from Bramscoville to Minyiville, why should these other commodities be sold at different prices in different places? Or is it because we rural folks do not use petrol or consume beer?"

"But my friends," the Economist added, "the prices of 'V.C. 10' and palm wine, you may be relieved to know, were not raised — probably to compensate for the price differentials".

Popularity of Rice

"But this is no consolation", a V.C. 10 specialist on the nearby table added, "since 90% of the raw materials for the brewing of the dear stuff consists of imported as well as local sugar, the raising of its price is only a matter of time."

"And why in the name of all the crabs in Bramscoville should the price of rice be increased even from the immediate cedi assassination price of 10p per tin to as much as 18p! This represents an increase of 80%, does it not? This increase must surely be due to the fact that the Chairman of the Radio Active Committee has not quite caught up with the changing food habits of the people of Kontopiaatkrom. You see, until only about 5 to 10 years ago, only a particular ethnic group and an alien one at that in Kontopiaatkrom ate rice as its staple food. This was the Kru group from Tubmanmantia. But today everybody in Kontopiaatkrom eats rice. And there are four very good reasons for this revolutionary change in our culinary habits. The first is that unlike such staples of the true citizens of Kontopiaatkrom as plantain, yams and cocoyam, rice is not seasonal but is always available! In any case, either Maame Yaa Alata before the Aliens Compliance Order or the Kwahuman always had some rice in stock. Secondly, the cost of rice even after the murder of the cedi was relatively much lower than that of say plantain or yam or cocoyam during the lean seasons. Thirdly, there is a greater variety of ways in which rice can be prepared and eaten than the traditional yam-plantain complex. One can prepare rice-water (for breakfast) cooked rice (eaten with stew, soup, or ground pepper or just raw), jolof rice which is a Creole or Sierra Leonean invention introduced into Kontopiaatkrom via the Fante of Cape Coast etc. etc.

Finally — and this is a sociological or is it an anthropological reason — whereas any Kontopiaatkrom citizen who eats any number of dishes of rice during funerals is officially recognised as having fasted that day, one who eats plantain or cocoyam or yam is accused of having broken the fast, and considering the popularity — indeed shall we say the banality of funerals these days as we shall see in a subsequent dispatch — it is not surprising that rice has now virtually become the staple food of the citizens of Kontopiaatkrom. Obviously the Radio Active Committee is unaware of this fundamental socio-culinary change and this should be taken as yet another true measure of the concern of the Committee for the plight of the ordinary citizens of Kontopiaatkrom."

"However," the Economist continued, "we must be fair to the Radio Active Committee and point out that their boss did give some reasons why they have been compelled to increase the prices of all these goods. The first was because of the inflationary waves engulfing the whole world, in other words, the very high cost of manufactured goods, and secondly because of the need to remove subsidies with a view to raising sufficient revenue for the internal development."

But these explanations really infuriated Kwame Kontopiat. "All this is absolute crap!" he uttered. "It was the same inflationary issues which compelled our Committee to take action against the cedis — upon which action the Committee was overthrown. The prices of imported commodities were also relatively high at the time, and indeed so high that we also had to subsidize some of the items. Secondly, unlike the position in our case, even if the prices of imported goods have gone up, the prices of our exports have since the time of the Radio Active Committee reached astronomical heights. A ton of cocoa which in our time was fetching about £233 in the world market is now fetching the incredibly high price of £600. The price of gold and timber have also soared during the last two years. The huge increase in the selling price of our exports then should more, indeed far more, than compensate for the increases in the cost of imported goods. Furthermore, in our case, besides the relatively low prices of our exports, we also had to service all our foreign debts which ate quite deeply into our funds. But in the case of the Radio Active Committee, not only have some of these debts been repudiated but a moratorium of 10 years has also been declared. In view of all this then, all this talk about world inflation, subsidies etc. is just to confuse us. The real explanation seems to my simple mind to be the fetish that the Committee is making of favourable balance of payments, and what we should do here is to institute action against the Radio Active Committee for hoarding foreign exchange in some banks abroad! As for subsidies, it should be pumped into the heads of the members of the Committee that the essence of government is the promotion of the welfare of the governed, and this often involves not simply granting subsidies but even giving some services such as education, medical treatment etc. free of charge! After all that is why we pay taxes", Kwame concluded.

In the middle of all these discussions somebody walked into the bar with the latest copy of the **Kontopiaatkrom Gossiper** with this front page headline:

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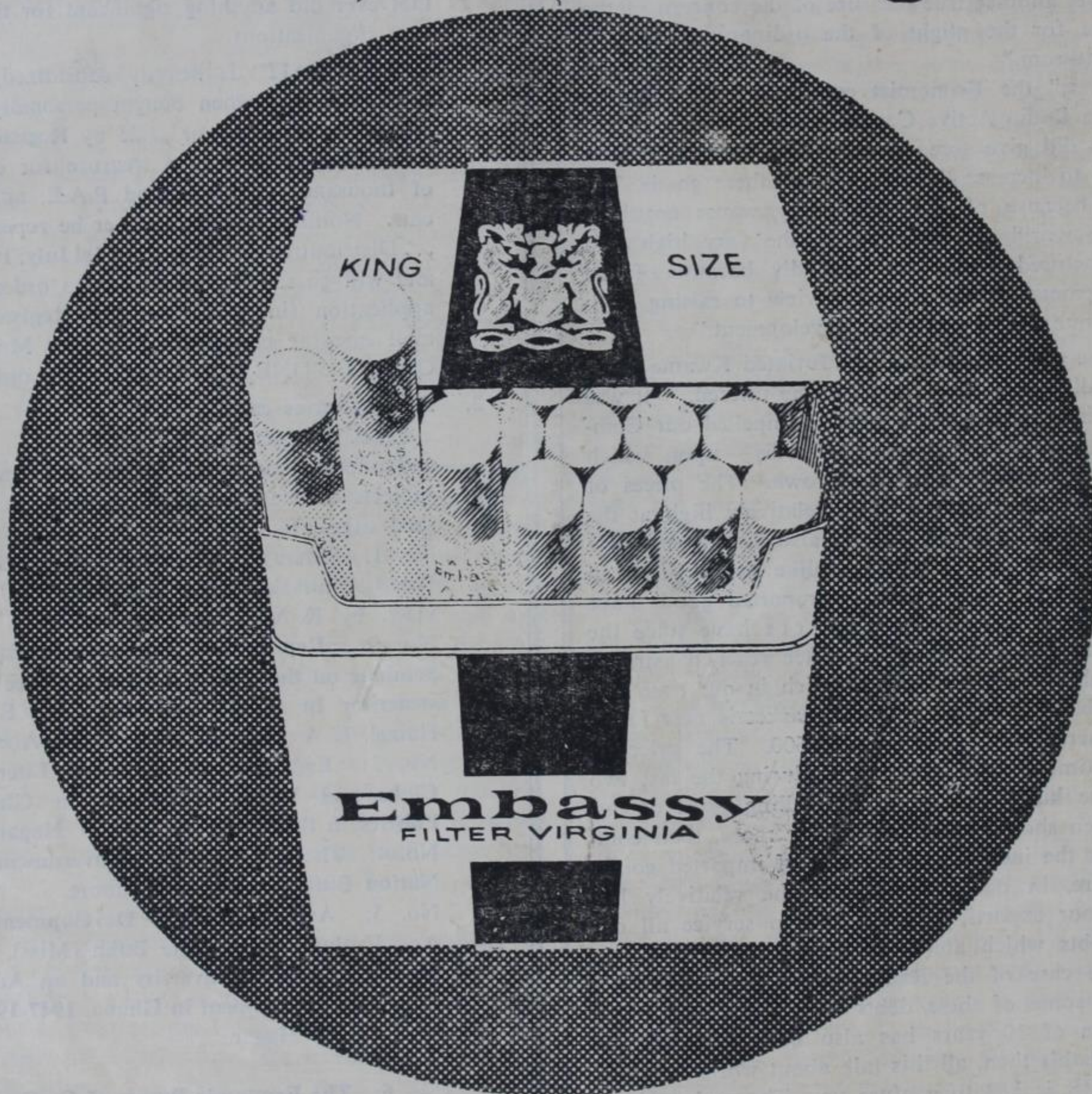
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CORRECTION

Vol. IX No. 13, p. 316 col. 2, 1st page:
The price of cement in the North is \$5.66
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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.

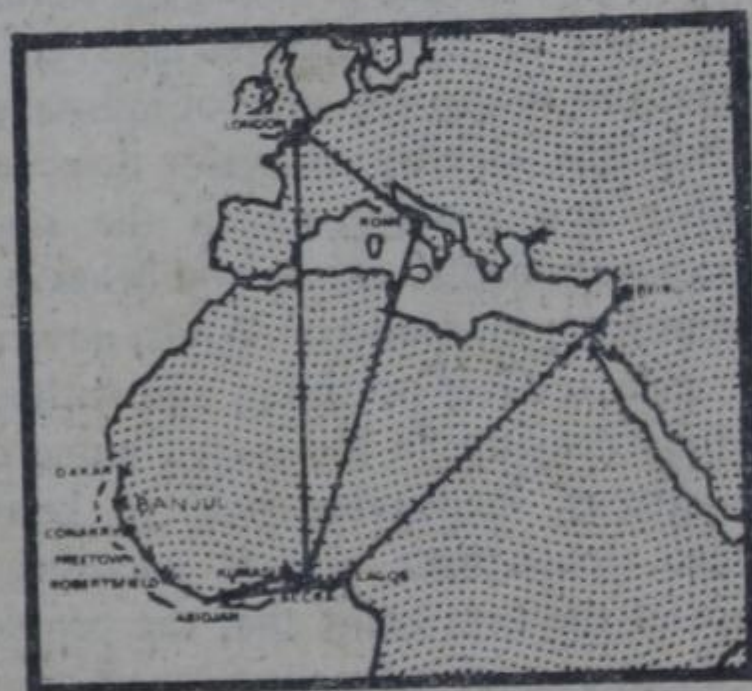
Consider Watergate! The America press corps consists of full-blooded Americans who are no less patriotic than any other Americans. Why is it, then, that they seem to be tearing President Nixon to pieces? Are they not aware of the tremendous impact of President Nixon's foreign policy, and its possibilities 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

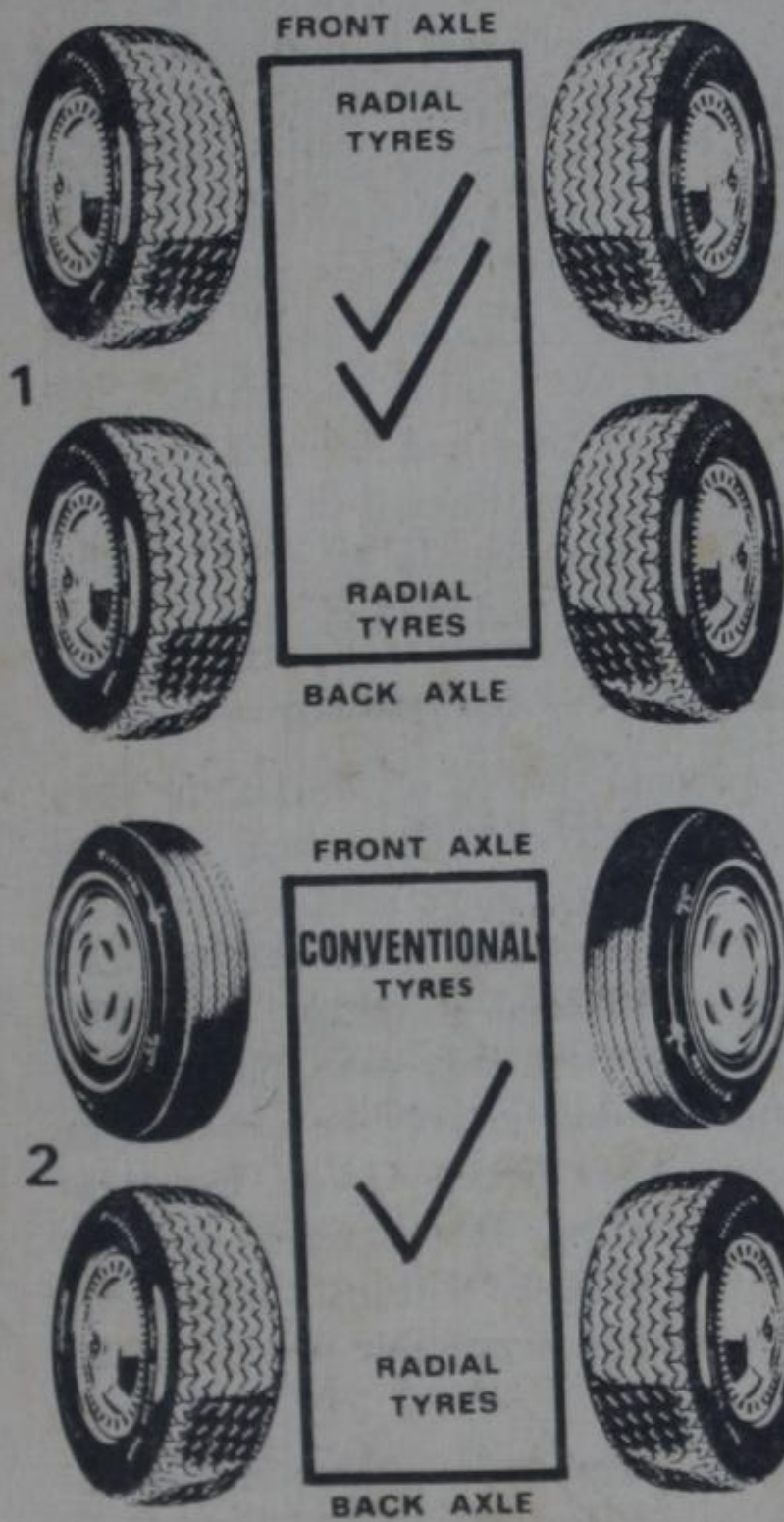
The Ghanaian journalist is urged to fully support and propagate the ideals of the government. His fate in the past is apparently of no consequence to anybody. What has been the cause of his frequent dismissal and humiliation but his identification with the aims and objectives of an ousted government? 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.

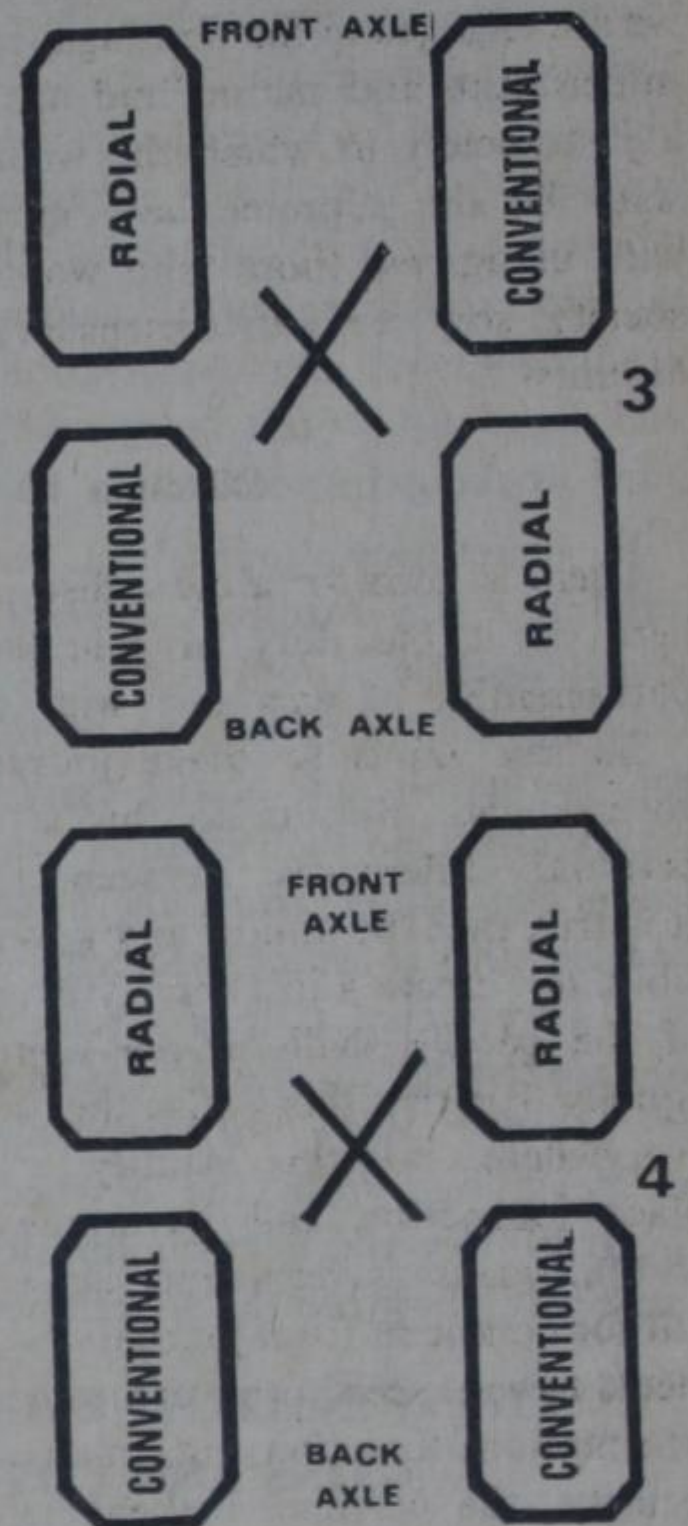
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It is a question of great marvel that the press in the colonial days, dedicated as it was to the open destruction of the colonial edifice, nonetheless enjoyed peace of mind and tranquility in which to perform its herculean duties. It is even more amazing 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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Applications are invited from suitably qualified candidates for the post of General Manager (Operations) in the Social Security and National Insurance Trust.

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Accra.

Not later than 30th July 1974.

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.

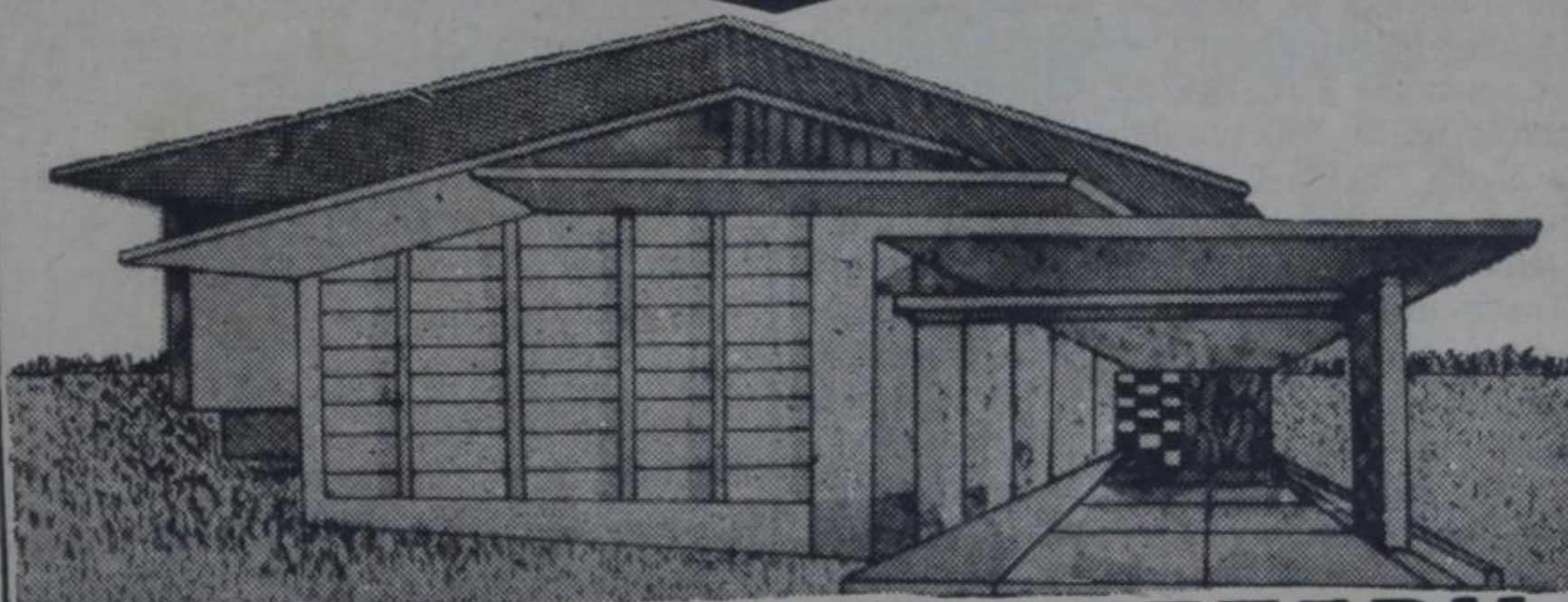
In view of the Government's desire to help accelerate training of professional accountants in the country it could be possible for the School to help educate the Institute's students at the Final Part I and Part II stages. However, this help would fall outside the domain of the FYC and would of necessity 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 retouched 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.

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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

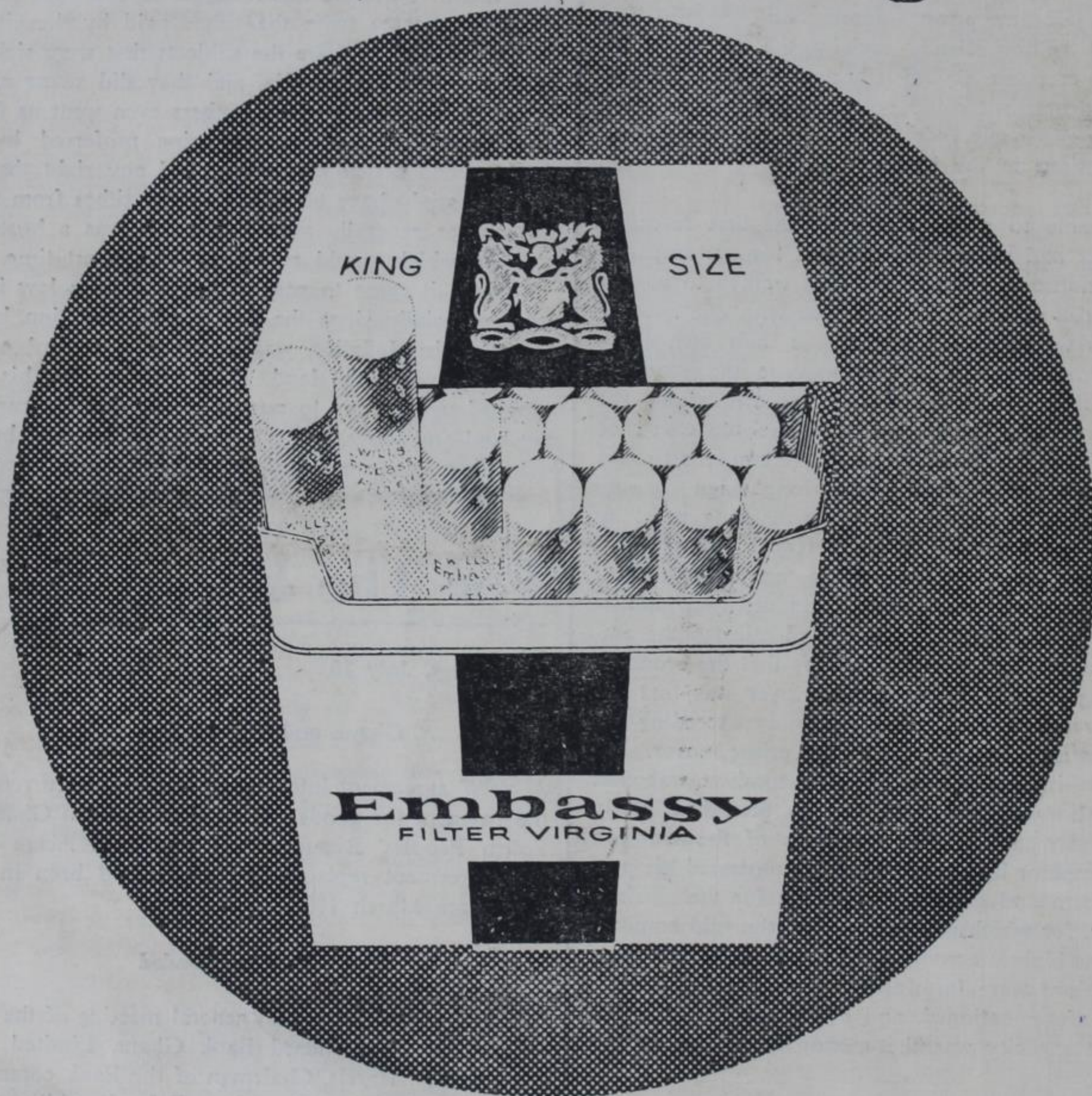
SPEAKING at the annual general meeting of the shareholders of the Standard Bank Ghana Limited today, Mr Peter N. Harris, Chairman of the Bank commended the National Redemption Council for its ability to pay another instalment of the country's short-term loans.

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
Embassy
 the milder, smoother cigarette



To-day more and more go-ahead people are changing to Embassy.

Embassy cigarettes are preferred because they are
 milder and smoother, with a pleasant aroma.

Embassy are the popular choice because they give smoking
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