

THE OKYEAME YEARBOOK

A Transcript of Electronic Mail Discussions
by a Group of Ghanaian Residents Abroad

1993

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THE OKYEAME YEARBOOK 1993

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1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.01 ABOUT THE OKYEAME YEARBOOK, by *Adams B. Bodom*

Co-ordinator/Editor-in-Chief of the Okyeame Yearbook 1993

This book contains a selection of discussions that took place, in the course of 1993 among a group of about 500 Ghanaians abroad, in an electronic mail (e-mail) forum - the Okyeame Network. These Ghanaians, mostly graduate students but also some workers, are distributed all over the globe - from Alaska to South Africa and from Japan to Norway. Most reside in North America, Europe and the Arabian peninsula.

The e-mail forum, Okyeame, is an open forum exclusively for Ghanaians. The history of its development and its general policies are explained by the "Postmaster" in the next article. In general, discussions on Okyeame range from serious political issues to petty gossips and jokes. The language is mostly informal. It was realised, quite early in the year, that some of the discussions were pregnant with useful ideas for national reconstruction. "Taboo subjects", for instance, were discussed with sincerity and with unusual openness. A decision was made, by consensus, to compile selected articles into a yearbook that will reflect the breadth and depth of these discussions.

The practical task of realising this objective fell on seven of us who had teamed up in response to a call to "move beyond rhetoric" and put in practice some of the brilliant ideas expressed on Okyeame. I was nominated to serve as the editor-in-chief for this project. The other members of the team served as sectional editors and members of the editorial team. The 1993 Yearbook project is then the very first practical task of our group.

How was the task at hand to be accomplished? With the help of the members of the editorial board, I set up a preliminary table of contents which consisted of the major topics discussed throughout 1993 on the network. Next, each sectional editor read through the huge stock of articles and selected specific articles that captured the essence of the range of discussions that were held on that topic in the course of the whole year. A preliminary list of selected articles under each topic were presented on Okyeame for vetting by the general readership of Okyeame and for suggestions, additions and deletions. Each sectional editor then carefully read through the selected articles and made spelling changes or minor changes in format, as necessary, to improve upon the clarity of presentation. As much as possible, the articles are presented in their original informal style. Colloquial expressions are retained, except in cases where they interfere with the clarity of presentation. A few articles were wholly rewritten by the original authors for technical reasons, such as to avoid infringing on copyright laws. Such articles have been clearly marked as such.

And now what constitutes the various sections of the Okyeame yearbook? The General Introduction contains three articles, this introduction to the yearbook, a lucid article by the Postmaster, Kwabena Ofori-Tenkorang Mensah, about the origins and structure of the Okyeame Network, and an official copy of the Okyeame Rules as of 1993. The

succeeding sections - 21 in number - then consist of the yearbook proper. Each section begins with a short editorial note or comment by the Section Editor, enabling the reader to have access to an 'abstract' of the discussion before s/he begins to read. Stephen Agyepong served as the editor for the sections dealing with Chieftaincy, Computer technology and, Racism and their related affairs. Samuel Asomaning edited the sections on Research and Development, the Military in Politics and the discussions on the chemical composition of 'kau'. Yaw Agyaba edited the section on Health related issues. The sections on Language and Culture, Literacy and Development, Sex Education, Educational Reforms and the social cancer of 'Kuntanism' were compiled and edited by me. Daniel Appiah edited the section on Politics and Good Governance, and co-edited the section on Economic Rationality with me. Samuel Aggrey compiled and edited four major topics, including Circumcision Rites, Religion, African Affairs and the Relations Between Africa and its Diaspora. Anthony Sallar compiled and edited topics dealing with the problems of having our foreign degrees fairly evaluated in Ghana, the issue of ethnicity in our country and the discussions on Dual Citizenship for Ghanaians. Finally, there is a miscellaneous section, a kind of pot pourri part of the book containing various topics that would not naturally fall into any of the other sections but which were considered to be of importance by the Editorial Board. A list of contributors is provided at the end of the book.

Such a monumental project could not have been completed without the co-operation and support of a lot of people. The difficult task of the editorial team was done as a labour of love. I am grateful to all the members of the team for their co-operation and for proving that together we can make a difference. On behalf of all the members of the Editorial Board, I wish to thank members of the Okyeame Network for their demonstrated interest in this project. There were trying moments but your encouragement kept us through. Also, I wish to express our gratitude to the Postmaster of the Okyeame Electronic Network for providing an excellent background information about the Okyeame Network.

In conclusion, I wish to stress that the Yearbook 1993 is a product of "Okyeameans" for "Okyeameans". The ideas expressed in each article are those of their authors and not necessarily those of the editorial committee. Our hope is that these discussions will inform Okyeameans and fellow Ghanaians about the thinking, hopes and fears of some of Ghana's citizens abroad at a point in time. I hope Yearbook 1993 will not just be the first and the last of its kind but that every year a group of people, volunteers, will come together to compile the next book in the series and improve on what its predecessors have done. We have paved the way.

1.02 THE STORY OF THE OKYEAME NETWORK, by *Kwabena Ofori Tenkorang-Mensah*

Postmaster of the Okyeame Network.

In the year 1990, the Kenyans in the Boston area set up an electronic bulletin board "kenya-net@athena.mit.edu". The server was an MIT machine because MIT allows registered students to create and maintain mailing lists at no cost to the students, and one of the founders of kenya-net was then an MIT student. After a year of operation kenya-net had grown substantially with subscribers scattered all over the globe. When the list maintainer (the postmaster) left MIT, the database was moved from MIT to a machine belonging to the company that one of the co-founders of the kenya-net works for. Kenya-net is still alive and can be reached at "kenya-net@ftp.com".

In March 1991, Mawuli Tse (then a graduate student at MIT) decided to form a similar network for Ghanaians which would allow the numerous Ghanaians, scattered around the globe to communicate, share ideas, experiences and discuss issues relevant to Ghana and its development. He then got together with Mike Owu (MIT alumnus), Vincent Adzovie (then a graduate student at MIT), Nana Benyin Dadson (then a graduate student at MIT) and Korku Dayie (a graduate student at Harvard) to discuss the form and nature that such a forum should take.

The first task was the choice of an appropriate name for the forum. The name "Okyeame" (an Akan word meaning linguist) was chosen because the network serves as a medium through which different people communicate - a functionality that is similar to the way chiefs and people communicate in Ghana.

The second was to iron out the details for the operation and maintenance of the network. Kenya-net which at that time had its membership open to all was facing two problems. The first one was the lack of discipline and control of the

network and the second was the lack of focus since many of the subscribers were not interested in the nitty gritty details of Kenyan affairs. Drawing from their experience, membership of the Okyeame network was restricted to Ghanaians for two reasons: 1. To bring some focus into the discussions and 2. To allow subscribers to “tell it as it is” (i.e. no need for censorship, after all we are all Ghanaians).

Once permission was granted by MIT and the network was set up, an invitation was sent out on other bulletin boards (such as Africa-1) inviting any Ghanaian subscribers to contact Mawuli (then maotse@mit.edu, currently tse@atf.cambridge.ma.us). Those who answered were invited to join Okyeame and asked to spread the word to their fellow countrymen. That is how Okyeame started to grow.

I took over the job of postmaster in September 1992 when Mawuli graduated. Since then Okyeame has grown quite rapidly - tripling in size over a period of one year. Because of the fact that membership of Okyeame is restricted to Ghanaians we have had to set up the network a little different from other fully automated listserv networks, where one subscription, de-subscription and a review of members on the network can be done automatically.

So how is Okyeame set up? Okyeame is the name of a virtual user on the MIT server `moira.mit.edu`. Under Okyeame (on moira) is a list containing only the e-mail addresses of all subscribers. This list can only be updated by the postmaster and hence all subscriptions and de-subscriptions HAVE to go through the postmaster. On my personal account, I keep a file containing the e-mail addresses and personal information on all okyeame subscribers. I also have written a few relatively simple programs that process user requests for subscriptions (assuming they follow a format which I send to new subscribers) and generates the Okyeame list that I send to netters at the end of every month (so we have some level of automation!).

What else does the postmaster do? The postmaster receives a HUGE amount of mail comprising all regular Okyeame postings in addition to a copy from EVERY node that bounces, private subscription and de-subscription requests, occasional nasty notes from other system administrators who are running out of disk space because some subscriber to Okyeame is not reading and deleting his or her mail. It is my duty to verify (to the best of my ability) that a prospective subscriber is indeed a Ghanaian or qualifies to be on Okyeame by applying the “substantial presence in Ghana” test as indicated in the Okyeame rules. I have had to refuse admission to quite a number of non-Ghanaians and a few of them haven’t taken it lightly! Oh well, whoever said that the world was fair?

I scan through all the postings on Okyeame to ensure that people are not abusing the network. I send private mail to people who abuse the network reminding them of the “power of the semi-colon” (Termination of a user’s subscription is as easy as putting a “;” in front of his or her e-mail address). Generally people are “cool” about it, but fortunately or unfortunately I have only had to remove 2 people from the list since September 1992. Okyeame operated for quite a while without any rules or regulations. As the network grew larger, netters wanted to see it become more structured and some even wanted to politicise the group. It therefore became necessary to put together the Okyeame rules and regulations that I mail to all netters at the end of every month.

I also activate and deactivate user subscriptions at their request and temporarily deactivate any bouncing nodes or filled mail boxes. How long will okyeame last? I believe Okyeame will last as long as Ghanaians are interested in being on the network. When I graduate, I will pass on the job of postmaster to other dedicated Ghanaian students here at MIT. If we cannot find a postmaster here, then we may have to move Okyeame onto another machine, which can be anywhere around the globe as long as that machine can handle the huge Okyeame mail traffic and the host institution is willing to pay for the network charges. We, however, do not anticipate the necessity of such a change, at least, for the next few years.

So, fellow netters, this is the story of the Okyeame network that all of you have been waiting for. Thank you.

1.03 OFFICIAL RULES AND PURPOSE OF THE OKYEAME NETWORK

MEMBERSHIP:

To join Okyeame, persons must be Ghanaians and have access to e-mail. Non-Ghanaians are barred from joining, unless they can prove they have lived in Ghana for a substantial part of their lives. To join, a person must send an e-mail message to the current postmaster (ofori@mit.edu). If the request includes a brief description of the person, showing that they are indeed Ghanaian, their names are added to the list without further ado. If they don't, the postmaster will typically send a private message to the person requesting further information before adding him or her to the list. To be removed from the list, either permanently or temporarily, persons should send a private request to the postmaster (ofori@mit.edu) and indicate whether the removal is permanent or temporary.

A person can only ask for his or her name to be removed from the list; you cannot ask for someone else's name to be removed. The postmaster has the sole right to remove anyone on the list who either repeatedly contravenes the etiquette of the net, or continuously sends mail that is irrelevant to Ghana or Ghanaians. The ultimate penalty of removal shall only be exercised after at least three private warnings to the offender. Notice of removal shall be publicly announced on Okyeame.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:

Postmaster: The postmaster's responsibility is to add and delete names from the list, and to occasionally post the full list of members to the net. His job also includes screening applicants for membership to ensure that they are Ghanaians. Obviously this is difficult to do, and is only meant to keep out those non-Ghanaians who heard about Okyeame and are curious. Anyone really determined to join can easily fake Ghanaian citizenship.

The job of postmaster is limited to Ghanaians at MIT, because the system we're using requires the person to have an account on MIT's main campus network.

Everyone else is just a regular member of Okyeame.

PURPOSE:

Okyeame is a free forum for discussion, debate, and the sharing and formulation of ideas that concern Ghana. Postings can cover any topic of members' choice, including politics, economics, culture, education, history, geography, religion, architecture, medicine, development, etc. Postings may include news, opinions, observations, humor, announcements, or requests. If it has anything to do with Ghana, it can be discussed.

Okyeame has no political, religious, or economic affiliation, and draws its strength from the diversity of opinions expressed by its members, thus reflecting the full make-up of Ghanaians.

Members of Okyeame are free and encouraged to form committees or interest groups to accomplish specific tasks, or to discuss subjects that are of mutual concern to them but not of general interest to Okyeame members. The results of such sub-discussions are welcome to be posted on Okyeame.

DUES:

There are no dues. The only costs associated with Okyeame are those that modem users may have to pay their phone company to transmit and receive electronic mail over the phone lines. Okyeame itself has no dues, no fees, no charges, no budget, pays no salaries, and funds no projects. In short, Okyeame has no financial operations.

Individuals and sub-groups are free to solicit voluntary donations from other members of the list for particular projects they or another organization are involved in.

RULES:

The only rules that members should follow are those of simple etiquette, network and otherwise.

1. Messages posted to Okyeame can be shared with any other Ghanaian, on or off the net.
2. Private messages, whether from members or non-members, should only be posted to Okyeame with the author's permission.

3. Personal attacks on individual members should be kept personal; send a private message to that individual and deal with it off the net.
4. Do not post personal messages (specifically for one particular individual) to the net.
5. Okyeame is for free debate; do not try to force your opinions on others.
6. Anybody who does not adhere to these guidelines will get three “unfriendly” reminders from the postmaster. Subsequent violations may result in the removal of the offender from the list.
7. If your mailbox gets full or your mail starts to bounce due to network problems, you are automatically removed from the net since there is no way to inform you of the situation. You will be reinstated if you send mail to the postmaster after you rectify your problem.

All current members should take note of this message. It will be sent to all new members, and will be posted to the net whenever the full list is posted.

Kwabena Ofori-Tenkorang Mensah (postmaster)

2 SEX EDUCATION

compiled and edited by *Adams Bodo*

2.00 Introduction, by *Adams Bodo*, Section Editor

In the light of the spread of AIDS and other sexually transmissible diseases in all parts of the world the issue of sex education is of prime importance. It is even more so in our country where unwanted teenage pregnancies are on the increase. These and other concerns are taken up under this topic. It seems clear that most agree on the necessity of sex education. However, people have different opinions when it comes to what form this education should take. After going through the various shades of opinions Korku Dayie of Harvard University gives us a concise summary of the various positions as follows:

“Camp 1: Emulate what the West has so ‘successfully’ done.

Camp 2: No, do not import any western constructs; go back to Tradition.

Camp 3: Integrate the best elements of camps 1 and 2.”

The discussion ends with enthusiastic calls for a conference on these issues.

2.01 Sex Education, by *James Essegbe*, Trondheim, Norway

I was watching a film on the TV at a friend’s house when one of the inevitable scenes that finds its way into all modern films came up: the principal characters started making love (just acting of course). My friend asked me to look at her kids (who had recently arrived from Ghana) and when I turned, I saw that the poor kids (ages between 8 and 12) had taken their eyes off the screen and were fidgeting whilst trying to look for something neutral to focus on.

The incident brought back to me something I’ve been thinking about for some time now: sex education in our elementary schools. We have inherited a tradition that considers the discussion of sex before children a very big taboo. It is interesting to note that when we discussed population in Africa and education on the use of condoms, nobody mentioned starting that among children.

I am beginning to think that this attitude is very unfortunate indeed. To say that these children do not know about sex is to be like the ostrich that hides its head in the sand and thinks it is well hidden from all its troubles. I can cite myself as

an example. I grew up in a rural community in a compound house shared by several tenants. I got to know what sex was by the time I was in class one (from conversations among peer groups). I also learnt it was a sacrilege to discuss it before parents. I got to know about condoms somewhere in the secondary school and even then it was an extra large sized balloon that was blown and hung on Christmas trees. By the time I got to know of its purpose, I was a 'chrife' and all unmarried 'chrides' would agree with me that it is a sacrilege to be seen with a condom. Anytime I saw a condom a hundred metres away, I went in a different direction. If between the time I learnt about sex (class one) and the time I knew of the real use of condoms (somewhere in the 6th form) I had decided to try it (I'm not saying I didn't) it would mean that I would have taken no precautions for the simple reason that I knew nothing of such precautions. The only sex education my old man gave me was sometime after my O-levels when, whilst we were chatting, he told me: "Son, one important thing I want you to know is that you should never chase other people's wives!"

I know a girl who was very bright at the elementary school. By the time she got to Secondary school form one, she was receiving letters with "of all the beautiful fishes in the sea, you are the only one I want" written in them. Well, this lucky beautiful fish discovered, to her chagrin, that not all the consequences of her being the chosen one were favourable. She got pregnant in form three and had to be at home for a year to give birth. After that she had the chance to go back to school (she lost her Cocoa Marketing Board (CMB) scholarship, though) but she couldn't resist the temptation. In the end, her best O-level result was 7 (I don't remember in which subject) and she followed it almost immediately with a second child.

There is another girl who was not too well endowed with the 'fair lady attributes'. It might therefore have come as a pleasant surprise to her when a young apprentice nearby expressed interest in her (they were both less than 18). Before long, she was pregnant (I'm not even sure she knew what had hit her and whether she could have prevented it). The sad thing in the case of this girl is that her guardian (elder sister who should have known better) got furious and left the girl and the baby in the care of the boy's parents. Result: the girl got another baby even before the first one was one year old. It was only then that the elder sister rushed back for her.

The two examples above are not isolated cases. Unwanted pregnancies among children represent a greater percentage in our population explosion than we care to admit. A lot of these people, if asked, would say that they were only playing. They never knew the consequences of their games. Before they realise what is going on, they are already pregnant. A few desperate ones try abortion. A senior of mine was once so furious with the form one boys in the secondary school that he came to the dining hall and declared to the whole school that if it had not been due to the fact that his children ended up prematurely in the gutters, he was very sure some of them would have been older than the form one boys. (I wish now he had rather talked of 'spermatozoids' ending up in a condom). So what is my point?

When I wrote an earlier article on the outrageous aid we get from the West, I initially included such things as their insisting that part of the money they give us go into family planning. Later, I had to delete that part. This was after I watched a programme on TV5 (a French channel) on which a Frenchman complained that right now they are compelled to produce to feed their citizens and Africa. In the near future (he gave the year but I've forgotten) Africa's population would have tripled and they would be feeding 3 Africas!!

Right now in Ghana, there are those who feel that the ideal family should consist of 4 kids. Others feel it should be 5 and others 6. We have not got to the stage where people would be content with 1, 2 or 3. If we are going to get those huge legitimate ones, the best we can do is to prevent the illegitimate ones. And what better way to do this than to accept the fact that these children will learn about sex whether we tell them or not so the best thing is rather to tell them ourselves and in a proper way. We could start giving sex education to our children at the upper primary school (and I mean real sex education, not the hocus pocus of reproduction lessons). This should include education on the use of condoms as a means of prevention (these days, it is not only pregnancies that are prevented with it). The children should be made to understand that it is very important that anyone engaging in premarital sex use it (let us face it, even without this education, neither men nor women marry virgins these days). I don't deny the fact that this measure would make some children start earlier than they should have but even if they do that, they would be doing it in a responsible manner. Think of the advantages of these children accepting condoms as part of their day to day objects, the girls would grow up insisting that their boyfriends use them. The boys too would be free of the misconception that make our men shy away from using them today and, if we are lucky, they would even introduce them in their marital lives. We may even witness the era where preventive tools would not only be with chemists and family planning officers but will be sold in all shops. Then I won't need to go furtively to the chemist to buy a packet of condoms and come and hide it

in the bottom of my drawer where I will prevent my child to go but I would be able to go shopping with him/her and buy it knowing that there is no mystery surrounding it.

Whilst waiting for an education policy maker (maybe one of you out there) to introduce this, I have decided on how to contribute to the sex education programme in my own small way). I am soon going to Ghana and I am shopping for things to take to my young relatives. Any 10 year old who receives a present from me will also receive a 15 minute lecture on sex and means of prevention. I know people are going to be 'shocked' or mad at me back home but that will not deter me. Maybe, if all the people on the net would start something like that (i.e. assuming you share my point of view) there would be hope for the family planning programme in the near future.

2.02 Re: Sex Education, by *Andy Kusi-Appiah, Carleton, Canada*

James, I like the way you are tackling the sex education issue. Indeed, you have my support on the line of action you intend to take when you go back to Ghana. I'm very much convinced that in this small way, you'll be confronting a very important part of the "system". I have taken note and I shall surely do the same if I go back to Ghana on holidays. I know it won't be easy but it is worth trying.

2.03 Re: Sex Education, by *Ben Adu, Guelph, Canada*

James, making love (whether in a movie or real) is not sex education and I seriously feel that the kids understood the issue better than you did. What the kids were saying by their reaction to the scene you described was that making love is adult stuff and should not be thrown at kids. Personally, I think your friend was acting irresponsibly. She should be sensitive to the feeling of her kids.

The truth is that sex education as defined and executed in western societies is practised back home but we have sex education of our own. With all the sex education in the western societies (the one that you wish we copy) young girls are still found ignorant about what to do in their first few periods of menstruation. However, their counterparts back home could be found to know more about menstruation than they do. Immediately a girl menstruates back home, responsible mothers teach them all that they need to know including how to take care of themselves and when to expect the next menstruation. Whether what they are told is sufficient may be debated. I used to work in a hospital in Britain where adult females came purposely to be cleaned by doctors.

We have our own values back home and if values were money, we would have been among the richest on earth. I have a difficulty accepting that everything done in western societies is the best so we should use the West as a yardstick to access how well other cultures are doing. If anything at all, there are greater social values at home than here. Some of us will work with pride to guard them.

2.04 Sex Education, by *Charles Awasu, Syracuse, New York*

James' essay on the need for sex education is interesting. The last time I was in my village, I saw a host of teenage mothers and was so sad that, I promised to do something about it. But What? Asking them not to have sex is less doable than eradicating malaria in Ghana. I shall lay out my opinions in the following points:

1. Sex education is good but studies have shown that it neither reduces the frequency of unwanted pregnancies nor the occurrence of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Evidently, parents will have to be very much involved in the lives of their kids and educate them about sex accordingly. This is especially important for those absentee fathers. The number of single-mother households in Ghana is very high.
2. Our marriage laws will have to be given another look. This idea of friendship before marriage, etc. is too loose and encourages irresponsible sex.

3. Poverty and ignorance are twin ingredients of this menace. Poverty because some parents intentionally allow their kids (girls) to flirt so as to make some money. Ignorance because parents assume their kids are sexually innocent. (Parents often live in their 'Kuntannic' adult world and forget about the problems of being a teenager).
4. Condom usage does not solve the problem. Back home the dating experience is very complicated. There is lack of communication on the part of both females and males. Rape is the norm, because there is no explicit admittance or approval to have sex. Condoms become useless under such circumstances. This ties into the Kuntannic behaviour of the males where they see the females as unequal partners.
5. Telling kids about condom usage amounts to approving sex-outside marriage. What happened to our culture? Our moral values? There is a lot of misbehaviour on the part of adults. Publicly elected officials, ministers, teachers use their positions to flirt with teenage girls. What happened to the law? Is having sex with under 18 year old against the law? Is this law applicable?
6. To date there is no better safeguard than abstinence. The example in the US shows that sex education has accomplished very little. Get the kids to concentrate on education and get them to ABSTAIN.
7. To James: you might have realised some benefits from being chaste. My advice is instead of countless visits to the chemist, buy BIBLES and go and spread the WORD. That is the one surest way to curb sex invasion. The fear of GOD at least puts up some brakes. Get them BORN-AGAIN.
8. Another way of course is to get the government to invest a lot in education and social programs. This means cutting military expenditure to invest in PEOPLE. The Ghanaian enemy can be found in POVERTY and IGNORANCE. (not in Togo, Burkina Faso, or in any dissenters or so-called subversionists).
9. For public policy, men or boys will have to be held responsible for pregnancies and babies out of wedlock. This should include tough laws about remittances and monetary benefits to the mothers etc.
10. Overall, we need to emphasise the value of education. Those of us who travel home should make it a point to visit some elementary or secondary schools and give talks about the importance of education.

2.05 On Sex Education, by *Francis Dodoo, Tulane*

In response to the recent postings on sex education, my inclination is that this needs to start even earlier and at home! I agree that it needs to be taught at schools also but I guess I am hooked into this belief that the home can give it the most credibility. On the other hand, I disagree with some others in the sense that teaching what they suggest to be the western notion of sex education does not mean we have to get rid of our traditional concepts. I don't perceive it as an either/or scenario. I am sure we all agree that our family structure (including the aspects that suggest that "children should be seen, not heard") does not facilitate a free flow of ideas across generations. A concomitant of this is that many of us can not address the issue of sex with parents. This, I think, is dangerous. Because we look elsewhere for responses to our human and normal inquiry. Where do we look? To equally unqualified sources (peers) who 'con' us into believing they know so much. We all know the result. Even when we are in trouble we lose valuable time because it is difficult to approach parents for help. And, by the way, I see sex as a universal activity, not a western one and thus do not believe we should isolate western versus traditional aspects of it. In the event we attempt to tackle negative aspects of the lack of knowledge of, and communication regarding, sex. We owe it to our children to do away with the barriers to their understanding and judgement of sex-related issues. It is difficult but we must try.

2.06 Sexual Culture, by *Alfred Opopo, Carleton, Canada*

The debate on sex education is interesting indeed. It raises something that I have been wondering about for a while, as to whether or not we really need to instruct our teenagers on the nuances of sex. Charles Awasu argued, and correctly, that ignorance of issues relating to sex causes a lot of problems for our society, prominent among which is teenage pregnancy. However, it is important to weigh this observation against societies where such an education exists. In the US, for instance, sex education is common in schools and even at home, yet the incidence of teenage pregnancy is high, particularly among black people. Teaching a child about sexual habits and safety measures also raises a moral issue; it seems to say, "do it but avoid pregnancy" especially with the distribution of condoms to high school students in the US. Whilst one cannot ignore the fact that teenagers do have sex, it is morally wrong to condone it by providing protective mechanisms such as condoms and abortion clinics. Herein lies the dilemma of the Catholic Church!

I am not a Catholic, and I may not agree entirely with that church's views on such matters, but I do know for sure that these matters cannot be resolved by legislation or even by moral persuasion. It certainly raises a big dilemma for every society and I agree with Ben Adu, that in the case of Ghana, and many other African countries, our traditions may serve a better purpose on this issue than a total adherence to western views on sex education. Where do we start to tell children about sex, what exactly should be told and what should be left out? I know for a fact that children are curious and always want to know the mystery behind everything; so when you tell them about sex, how it is done and the possible outcomes, they want to experiment and see for themselves. Can we afford to let them know?

2.07 Sex Education, by *Paul Agbedor, Victoria, Canada*

I think Charles, Ben Adu and Francis Doodoo have made very useful contributions in response to Essegbey's posting on sex education. The reaction of the children mentioned in the posting was the right one (at least to me). The sex act is regarded as a sacred act and must not be made public. I think that is the message the children were trying to put across. The fact that those children may already be aware of sex does not mean it should be publicly displayed. Sex education, as suggested by others, is quite different from what the children saw on the screen. In teaching children to handle sex problems, we should also not forget how sacredly we regard it. You can imagine what people in Ghana would think of you if you are seen kissing each other in the street. I think one solution to this problem of sex education, which is linked to our population problem, is the provision of social programs as suggested by Charles - programs that would take the minds of young people away from sex to more useful activities. And to import sex education as it is done here into our system would even be more disastrous. We have to weigh the benefits of such a program against the disadvantages before we plunge into any such thing. Most parents do not care what their children do after school. But if parents can pay more attention to their children and plan something for them in their spare times, we might see some improvements. It is up to those of us who "have seen the light" to set the good example for others to follow. I think the social program suggestion is quite a strong one.

2.08 Contemplating Sex, by *Francis Doodoo, Tulane*

Some questions:

1. There have been a couple of references to the availability of sex education in the states and it's coexistence with arguably the highest levels of teenage pregnancies. A couple of things we must think about before we condemn the availability of (our notion of the western concept of) sex education as the culprit for teenage pregnancy levels are: (a) what are we defining as sex education ...i.e., are we calling advocating condom-distribution sex education? I don't believe even Americans consider this to be sex education. They may be stuck with this because parents (who refuse to teach their kids) are kuntannistic (wow, I didn't think I'd ever get to use that in public) about others (i.e., schools) teaching their kids. I'm arguing that all things being equal, sex education includes significantly more than the condom distribution we are made to believe it comprises by the media. Nevertheless, it should. (b) On this same theme, I wonder whether under-privileged America where we find most teenage pregnancies has access to 'real' sex education? I would argue not. And then with the hopelessness of that aspect of American society's situation. One has to understand (and that does not mean condone) the helplessness that teenage pregnancy reflects.
2. On the morality of providing condoms and sex education...i.e., are we condoning misbehaviour? I argue that the youth will indulge in sex. We did, and they will...whether we give them condoms or not, whether we teach them how to treat or interact with the opposite sex or not. The question for me then is whether we are acting morally by not providing them with as much information as we can give them...information which will save lives, save futures, etc..
3. As for the western world versus us divide...what can I say? Whether we like it or not, the kids are learning about sex even from "western" films. Anyone who has been to Accra lately probably knows of the video hall syndrome; halls in which many of our youth congregate to watch pornographic films from the West. So, we can not stop that and should meet it with whatever resources we have available (be they from our culture or from the West). I guess what I mean is, let's not restrict ourselves to non-western cures (if western ones will help, and don't conflict with our culture). Recall that I argue that our culture has already been "invaded" by the western culture (or lack of it). So, how can "western" style sex education hurt our culture anymore given that our kids are, for example, already

watching “western” pornography, and can be expected to act (irresponsibly) on it? Even if we restrict it to condom distribution, it is difficult to say (convincingly) that that will cause significantly more kids to indulge in the “pleasures” of sex. The world has already gone global that way. Kids everywhere are “doing the hustle”. Even 12 years ago...they (we) were. Non, ou oui?

2.09 Sex Education, by *Francis Akoto, Tampere, Finland*

I'll like to make a point in the form of questions/answer/suggestions on sex issues. (SOM: stands for “Sex Outside Marriage”):

Ques: Is SOM a crime in Ghana (against the state) ?

Ans: NO and never has it been.

Ques: Is SOM morally right ?

Ans.: Moral issues are relative ; Although there are some generally accepted standards of what is morally right or wrong, NOBODY can claim to be an authority on this. Your high morals may be somebody else's low morals !

Ques: Is SOM wrong “religiously” ?

Ans.: I know the Christian (and maybe Islamic) faith does not allow it. Some religions don't condemn or condone it.

Ques: Does the giving out of condoms, sex education to minors encourage SOM?

Ans.: To a certain extent. It depends on how one views it. But refusal to distribute condoms and absence of sex education do not discourage SOM.

Ques: Is Ghana a religious state ?

Ans.: A high percentage of Ghanaians are religious, but the state laws are not based on any religion, which implies Ghana is not a religious state (and I wish we never become one).

Ques: Should the state encourage the distribution of condoms to minors ?

Ans.: Yes. Besides encouraging abstinence, the state should also encourage the distribution of Condoms. The state cannot rely on one policy to discourage something as tempting as sex. If that is the case then the state can preach the ill-effects of crime and simply abolish the crime-police.

Ques: Should we have sex education in Schools ?

Ans.: Yes, we should, and at an “early age”. It may not stop SOM (which BT is not a crime), but I don't think it in any way encourages people to go and have sex. It helps us to be a little bit more open about it.

2.10 Re: Sex Education, by *James Essegbey*

I have enjoyed the various contributions from netters on my essay on the above topic. I'm glad some people feel my idea is a good one. I'm also glad that others have given good reasons for thinking that it is not a very good idea. We are all learning and as the process continues, allow me to discuss a few issues raised by some contributors:

Ben Adu and Paul think that the children I mentioned were reacting that way because they knew sex is for adults. My question to that is, if the children know this, do they really leave it for the adults? I am more inclined to think those kids were putting up that show for our benefit. It is said that, until recently, psychologists believed that the child, during the process of maturation, did not display any interest in sex until puberty. Recent studies have, however, revealed that the kids were only being smart. They knew adults would not want them to know so they kept the knowledge from them. I remember when I was in class five, a mate of mine narrated a sexual experience he had to me in such vivid detail that although I have forgotten the boy's name, I haven't forgotten his narration. He may have been lying, but he seemed to have an explosive knowledge of it!

I think Francis (Dodoo) addresses a lot of the objections raised by some contributors in “contemplating...sex”. I think we should distinguish between Sex Education and distributing condoms “by heart”. And we should all cast our minds

back to when and how we first got into contact with the topic, Sex, inspite of the forbidding silence of our parents and teachers.

I think Charles also mentions interesting alternatives. I don't think, however, that legislation to force fathers of unwanted pregnancies to remit to the kids will solve the problem. Most of the time, they do not have enough to eat themselves. There is a law now that enables mothers take their husbands to Social Welfare courts if the latter fail to cater for their legitimate children but what comes out of such cases? These fathers usually shirk the responsibilities in the first place because they don't have the money. As to the benefits of being a Chrife I will not give them up for anything. Chrife values kept me from being a statistic somewhere along the line but I saw what was happening among my own group. That is even the more reason why I do not think we should make one exclude the other: i.e.. either chrife or sex education. I would rather have the two go hand in hand. Teach the child the values of purity but at the same time let him/her know the second half of what happens on the other side of the coin. Then the child would abstain until such a time as..... and fall on the other.

Finally, Charles and Paul mention social programmes. I think that will be a very welcome alternative. But what kind of programme will it be that will keep the mind of our children off sex? Those from the small towns and villages (where we don't even have videos for the kids to watch blue films) should cast their mind back to what happens after supper when tired parents relax and leave children to play in the "black darkness" of the Ghanaian night.

Let me conclude with the following statistics. A recent program by TV5 revealed that in Uganda, over a million people suffer from Aids related illnesses. I don't know the statistics in Ghana. Norway is a country that introduced sex education in schools inn the late 1940s. (It wasn't without a fight though). Today their 1992 statistical yearbook has it that an average of over 80% of women use contraceptives. (Condoms can be bought in grocery shops here). The 1991 Aids report lists 58 homosexuals, 13 Drug addicts and 18 heterosexuals! Now, after almost 3 years stay in this country, nobody is going to convince me that the boys and girls here are less promiscuous than the ones back at home?

So why the low statistics? I don't think they are hiding any figures either.

2.11 Towards a Culture of Sex Education, by *Adams Bodomo*

The Issues:

While most of us are privileged to realise that overly large family sizes and teenage pregnancies are serious problems to be solved there are still people in the country who do not consider these as any serious problems, let alone to look for solutions. I refer, for instance, to the group of people, mostly men, who 'litter' children all over. Such men even consider it as a sign of virility on their part to have as many children with as many women as possible, irrespective of the latter's age.

The Common Ground:

This picture reinforces the need to have an intensive educational programme to raise an awareness of the problem across all sectors of the population. This is virtually agreed upon by all in the debate.

A Statement of the Problem:

But the problem then is what form(s) should this education take? Who should do it? Should government officials, community leaders, and parents gather the youth and show them the way to the drug store? Should religious leaders preach against sexual medication and for sexual abstinence? What about chiefs and other traditional leaders? Should they refuse to talk about sex to the youth for fear of traditional upheavals? Or are there, after all, some cultural practices which encourage sexual education which we do not know of and which we ought to research? Do we have a Culture of Sexual Education?

An Integrated Solution:

Obviously the problem is hydra-headed, encompassing all facets of the 'system'. Teenage pregnancies seem to be a direct effect of promiscuity. Promiscuity knows no social class boundaries in Ghana. The 'top brats' practise it. And the 'down trodden' too! Therefore to solve this problem everybody has to be involved. All hands must be on the deck!

And I dare say all means too: preaching, medication, parental summoning, observation of traditional moral values, laws and decrees!

All hands, all means, but what is the cost? In most areas of scientific study there is always one issue with integrated theories and approaches: the cost. From the cake sharers point of view, using so many resources, both human and natural would stretch the budget. In the case of sex education in Ghana, a concerted and integrated approach would have serious effect on our already over-stretched budget. A few months ago, I was talking to a social anthropologist who mentioned how a country was so preoccupied with birth controls that it used half of its Norwegian development aid in one year to sterilise its population.

But won't the cost of not doing this be too high? It will, I believe and in any case, I have always favoured integrated approaches for they are the surest way not to put ones eggs in one basket. In the long run the chances of success are always higher.

But do all sectors of the population need all the means for sexual education? Obviously not. Given the diversity of the Ghanaian population in terms of education in, and exposure to, western values, access to condom and other medication facilities, religious beliefs and cultural practices, all of which are marks of a free and democratic society, I think we need different appropriate methods of sex education.

It would be unfair for a government van full of condoms to go and wait for a catholic congregation and begin to distribute these condoms as they come out of church. It is obvious that what this group needs is a strong and repeated programme of preaching at church and elsewhere. And certainly no attempt should be made to do so in front of a mosque.

With respect to condom facilities and other forms of western medication it is clear that this strategy will have a greater impact in cosmopolitan areas because of the availability of drug stores at each corner and because there will be less resistance with respect to traditional values. As someone said they would have already been exposed to all kinds western sexual attractions such as pornography so why not use western means?

A Culture of Sex Education?

Sex education is an important national goal. But where do we look for all the means to this end? To the west, the east, the north, the south or to our culture, our own ways of doing things, past and present? Is culture a liability or an asset for achieving this national goal of sex education? Certainly, if there are any of our cultural practices, both material and normative that prevent us from letting our young ones learn about sexual practices and their consequences then those cultural practices constitute a liability.

At this point let me mention that if sex education means making all categories of our citizens aware of the problems, pleasures, results or consequences and responsibilities of sexual intercourse and other sexual activities, then Ghana certainly has a traditional culture of sex education. Let me submit here that sex education is there in our cultural practices, both everyday and periodical. It is there in the songs we sing, the proverbs we speak, at story-telling time; it is there at the festival, at the durbar, at all puberty rites, at initiation ceremonies.

For want of space, time and energy let me take puberty rites. At most if not all traditional puberty rites, sexual education is a sine qua non. For instance, no young girl comes out from puberty rites, to the best of my knowledge, without knowing about menstruation and all the implications of sexual maturity attached to it. Let me dare say here that there is no single educational programme in the West that can beat the thorough-going nature of sexual education practised during puberty rites in most traditional Ghanaian societies. Sometime ago, a fellow netter reported from Britain how some young girls not knowing what menstruation is come up to doctors to be cleaned. In that case then a graduate from a puberty rite ceremony in any of the villages in Ghana can be a UNICEF consultant on sex education in the British society! My dear countrymen, why do we then have to import all the sex technologies and the costly sterilisation experts to Ghana? At least, why always? Most of us know that mothers-in-law in most Ghanaian societies are among the best sexology consultants when new wives come into the family. When are we going to start exporting these consultancy experts as development aid workers to the western societies where people who have either failed in their marriage or have declared celibacy occupy important offices as people solving sexual and other marital problems?

Our normative culture places a high premium on moral and ethical issues when it comes to sexual practices. Our normative culture prohibits sex in public places, on the farm, along the rivers. For instance, in the Brong Ahafo region it is forbidden to have sex along the river Pra, at least, around towns like Prang. In most areas of Northern Ghana sex is forbidden on the farm, else the rains will not come. Sex is considered sacred in most parts of Ghana and therefore should not be public. A few months back it was reported in the Norwegian papers that in a moving train in Britain, a couple decided to have sex in the midst of on-looking passengers who did not protest. It was only when they started smoking in that non-smoking compartment that they protested. When is this couple going to come to one of the villages in Ghana and undergo a summer course in sexual moral values? Or at least when are we going to stop considering sexual values in such societies as models to incorporate in our sexual education? In my own small society a man that cannot feed his family and keeps producing more children is ridiculed in all kinds of proverbs and other verbal indirection as not being a 'man'. This cultural practice is an appropriate form of family planning. It seems to say 'don't go about 'littering' seeds on (teenage) girls if you can't water the plants that will grow'. It says 'produce only the children you can feed.' Is this not the philosophy behind all family planning programmes? This small independent society does not need a (western type) law to prescribe an upper-limit of children in the family. Such Ghanaian societies do not need expensive development aid workers to come and prescribe to them how to practise sex education without considering how they also approach the problem.

So what educational strategies do we need in the case of these societies to achieve our goal of national sex education? I will say :involve them! Study these people! Do research into their ways of approaching the problem. Project this into 'modern' technology. Reform it. Propose it back to them as an integrated modern package. I bet you they will accept it. Because there is an element of them in it. You will accept it because there is an element of you in it! Everybody is beginning to try it. Cultural and technological integrationists are trying it. Medical anthropologists are trying it. Literacy experts are trying it. I have tried it. Literary experts are trying. Ngugi Wa Thiongo is trying it!

To illustrate the above: Ngugi is one of the most effective literary writers in Africa because he goes to the rural people, studies their cultural practices, writes them down in the form of plays, makes them participate in these plays in their own languages. And finally translates this rich cultural heritage to the outside world. This was a literary example.

A literacy one: in a rural setting we find that class attendance was poor. What do we do? Take a cultural practice of traditional hospitality, show how a literate farmer can practise this more efficiently by writing down what he wants his functional literate wife to offer his seated guests without the latter knowing of it. This is a simple example of integration between culture and modern writing technology. I tell you attendance increased dramatically. This is a real case, a personal research experience!

And now a possible sex education one: take a few everyday cultural sexual values. Get characters from the cultural environment to act this. The protagonists by following these values succeed, while their opposite characters fail in life. I tell you this will be one of the most effective sex education programmes in the village. Far more effective than a few sex educationists from town visiting the rural set-up once in a blue moon and going back the same day richer with ten tubers of yam. Send this play to our mass media. Play it over the rural FM radio, publish it in the rural local language newspaper. You are combining culture with modern communications technology to solve a national problem, to reach a national goal! This will create a vast awareness if we realise that probably more than 60% of us are still in the rural cultural set-up!

This is an appropriate form of sex education for more than 60% of young and old Ghanaians. If this is done before these young ones get exposed to western ways of doing things they would have been better equipped to approach the problem. They will not only think of western ways. They would know where they are coming from and therefore try to know where they are going. Please, Minister responsible for Sex Education, don't distribute condoms to these people in this setting. They don't need it so much. Try the cultural parameter first! Please, development aid worker, don't bring down your dagger technologies and sterilise my people. Try the cultural parameter first. Please, demographer, anthropologist, sociologist, medical officer, educationist, literacy and literary consultants ask my people what to do first. Study their ways of doing things, of talking about sex. Research into my people's strong cultural heritage of sex education.

Is there a culture of sex education in Ghana? Yes! Can there be a better culture of sex education in Ghana? The answer depends on what you and me do !

2.12 Re: contemplating...sex, by *Alfred Opoku, Carleton, Canada*

My good friend Francis (Dodoo) has raised a lot of interesting arguments on the merits of sex education. I do share his views and concerns, regarding the dangers involved in keeping children in the dark, on sexual issues. Many of you have taken my reference to condom distribution, as the central issue in sex education. No! I know it goes beyond that, and a good sex education program may not even involve condom distribution to kids. However, distributing condoms is a logical sequence to teaching children about sex. Adams (Bodomo) did a great job in espousing the advantages of the traditional sex education which our parents have handed down to us. The question is, if it is so good, why the high incidence of teenage pregnancy in our society? Before one attempts to answer that question, perhaps one needs to put it into perspective, if sex education (Western style) is so good, why hasn't there been a significant decline in teenage pregnancies in these countries? Voila!

Maybe, we need to let children know about this, but as I asked in my posting yesterday, where do we begin and what do we tell them? I believe strongly, that the traditional education has good values, as several contributors have mentioned. To answer the question as to why it has failed to prevent the incidence of pregnancies, I would say that we have neglected the values of that system. How many of us today went through puberty rites? The fact is, we have abandoned the traditional system and therefore the first contact some of us had with sexual issues was either in the biology class (where a great many of us squirm and fidget at the mention of some body parts) or on television. Many of the rites of passage, which were designed to initiate us into adulthood have been branded obsolete or demeaning. Traditional sex education was done by parents and the members of one's family where one is assured of trust and sincerity. If we really intend to teach our kids, maybe we need a revised sex education code within the cultural boundaries of our traditional systems instead of, importing wholesale, confused values from the west.

I have a problem linking sex education to promiscuity! Are promiscuous people really the ignoramus on sex habits? In this damn age of aids etc., people who have all the knowledge on such things also have all the knowledge on prevention and therefore you see all sorts of people sleeping indiscriminately with others (both sexes). Teenage pregnancy has little relation to promiscuity, it is the result of ignorance and risk taking!

2.13 Confused About Sex, by *Francis Dodoo*

More questions, more thoughts about this sex education thing. Maybe it really is me, rather than our youth, who need this sort of education.

Alfred Opoku I think sums up my prescription better than I do: "...Maybe we need a revised sex education code within the cultural boundaries of our traditional systems instead of importing wholesale confused values from the West." This suggests (to me at least) that we need to consider what the West has to offer also. Again, I don't think anybody has even suggested that we replace our cultural ideas with Western ones. We should be looking for the "best" solution whatever mix that may be.

After all, I think we haven't even conceptualised sex education...How can we then operationalize it? Adams (and I may be misinterpreting him) continues to talk about sex education as if synonymous with condom distribution. When I suggest that, potentially, the most integral part of any such policy should include talking to our own kids even before they get to school, I cannot be talking about distributing condoms.

The problem with our not having conceptualised sex education leads us to suggest that it appears to have failed miserably in the States. Yet, I don't believe what many of the kids here get is sufficient to pass as sex education. Although condoms are distributed these kids learn about sex (or what they think that is) on the street or schoolyard. The flip side is...They must be doing something right in Norway. As Adams (I think) points out the teenage pregnancy figures, among others, are noteworthy. Is there any sex-ed. going on there? What does it comprise? So we see that "western" sex-ed. may be working.

I had a similar response (as Alfred) to one of Adams' statements...If we have these wonderful sanctions on immoral activity (e.g., Men being ridiculed about littering the planet with kids they cannot raise, how come the problems with

such childbearing as well as teenage pregnancy continue to rise? Could it be that our cultural sanctions are losing their potency? Forgive me, but I feel like I'm continuing to hear unqualified condemnation of everything Western en masse: for instance we condemn Western sex education in a manner that suggests that it is the Western aspect of it, rather than the sex-ed. component of it in a particular setting (e.g., America) that makes it fail. Couldn't it just be the way it is done in America that is wrong, as opposed to the fact that it fails because it is Western...After all the Norwegian system may be working there and could be incorporated into our "revised" (quoting Alfred) system to work for us. So that Western may not necessarily be bad. I hope I mis-read (Adams) because I hear him advocating an "integrated approach" up until we get to the Western point. Then he seems to indicate that the Western approaches will fail us totally and also that we already have our own cultural system. My question is why not an integrated approach here also? After all, we do have our own cultural education set up which is really rich, yet, for some reason we all have come out for "Western" and/or "Eastern" education. Hopefully, this pertains to our recognition that we can benefit at least from Western or a combination of western-cum-our-culture influences.

Yes, we do have our traditional forms of sex-ed. Adams points out that mothers-in-law are phenomenal carriers of immense knowledge to impart to wives brought into the family. I pray for a day when by the age of marriage both wives and husbands do not really need coaching from in-laws. I think that is a bit late (although better than never). Finally, I suggest that we be cautious in our superimposition of what we believe to be moral on the activities of people of other cultures. The example of sex in a train I think strains the boundaries of morality because I think even in Western society people frown on such (even though their concept of rights may prevent them from interrupting). Since smoking was banned in the cabin, of course, people had grounds to challenge that. They have their morality and we have ours. Our judging them by our barometer is tantamount to them coming to Africa and calling us uncivilised because we did not carry out many activities the way they did.

The interesting question for me is: given what we already have in our cultural arsenal and what the West has to offer what should sex-ed. comprise? What and when should we be teaching kids? I'm working on the premise that sex-ed. does not necessarily have to include condom distribution, although my personal inclination is that we have to address the problems and myths associated with condom use.

2.14 Re: Sex Education, by *Adams Bodomo*

I appreciate very much the critical analyses of Francis Doodoo, Alfred Opopu and many others on the issue of sex education, especially with respect to the cultural contribution. It is certainly very important that we question the way things have been done in our society, in our traditional set-up. In so doing, we can see the weaknesses of this system. After all we have the problems of teenage pregnancies and large family sizes etc. and rather than being ashamed we ought to discuss these.

And after all the problem is still there in many other countries too. And rising! Indeed few countries are satisfied with their own levels of national sex education. New ways are still being evolved to solve the problem. I have had the opportunity of being a part-time staff member in a Norwegian school for sometime. The problem of sex education has been in constant focus at staff meetings. Parents are worried too. There are advisory facilities available for these young boys and girls. There are indeed teenage mothers in Norway and other parts of Europe. Some are wanted, some are not. So the problem is there for them too. The proportions may be different but the sex education problem is there in most societies, African, European, American, etc. Which means that we need co-operation. We need conjugated ideas. We need to come together and see how we can approach the problems. Probably we have tried this before.

But have we done this as equal partners, as positive partners? As wanting to learn mutually from each other? I don't think I am happy with the donor - recipient dichotomy. I am tired of being at the negative pole and they at the positive. I now hope each of us could go to the round table of discussions with our own experiences and possible solutions. It is time we started moving from the negative and the positive poles to the centre. It is high time we started INTEGRATING ideas, methods, human resources etc.

But you see, my dear sisters and brothers, we can't integrate with empty hands. You run the risk of being a recipient, of being run over. We run the risk that they will see us as having nothing to offer, hence all the negative ideas about us.

That is why I am suggesting that before we go to the conference centre in Geneva, New York, Vienna and Nairobi to discuss sex education let us take up our torch lights and go into our traditional systems. Let us look round and separate the gold from the dust. Let us research into our cultural practices and see how best they can help us, how they can help the world community with respect to sex education and many other issues.

There are bad parts of our culture but we agree that there are good parts too. We do not know all of them yet. But knowing them depends on what you and me can do. In short, those people of this opinion are asking for a comprehensive social research programme involving our traditional beliefs, institutions and practice.

Sex education is a fruitful exciting debate, like most other debates on this net. It is interesting to note that few people are apathetic on these issues. We are constantly contributing diverse opinions. My posting: 'Towards a Culture of Sex Education in Ghana' is one of my humble contributions. I thank everybody for the comments, corrections and additions.

2.15 Sex Education: A Discussion with Opoku, by *Adams Bodom*

Alfred Opoku writes:

Traditional sex education was done by parents and the members of one's family where one is assured of trust and sincerity. If we really intend to teach our kids, maybe we need a revised sex education code within the cultural boundaries of our traditional systems instead of, importing wholesale, confused values from the west.

Adams Bodom responds:

Yes, I agree with you perfectly. We need a REVISED sex education code taking into consideration CULTURAL practices on the issue. Most of us have forgotten about this culture but some are still practising it. Why don't we go back and see if there is anything left which is useful 'arsenal' to help us in this fight instead of being just mere recipients of Western values of sex education. Maybe with both Western and our Traditional values we can do some combinatorial mathematics. After all our whole history is full of this combinatorial mathematics (slavery, colonialism, new nations emerging, new ways of doing things, new marriage laws, inter cultural clothing etc., etc.). We are integrating. We are trying new ways of doing things, sometimes successfully, sometimes ridiculously. That is why you probably sometimes see a Ghanaian in a three piece suit with a tight tie running after a 'trotro' at temperatures of 40 degrees C and rising! We are trying! We are looking ahead into the skies, into the future. But it is not enough to have beautiful branches and leaves overlooking the skies. The tree ought to have deeper roots too to resist the storms.

Alfred,

I agree with you perfectly.

Alfred writes:

I have a problem linking sex education to promiscuity! Are promiscuous people really the ignoramus on sex habits? In this damn age of aids etc., people who have all the knowledge on such things also have all the knowledge on prevention and therefore you see all sorts of people sleeping indiscriminately with others (both sexes). Teenage pregnancy has little relation to promiscuity, it is the result of ignorance and risk taking!

Adams responds:

Promiscuous people are not necessarily sexually educated. They do not always protect themselves nor their victims. They are part of the problem. Think of a promiscuous director vis a vis beautiful teenage girls queuing for employment. They could be queuing for babies in his office. Promiscuous people do not always have time to calculate the risks. Teenage pregnancy has an appreciable relationship with promiscuity in our society. In matters of sex education people with promiscuous tendencies ought to be one of the target groups!

2.16 Re: Sex Education, by *James Essegbey*

I think those who argue for an inclusion of the cultural parameter in the above have got a point. So could anyone out there with a first hand experience of our initiation/puberty rites tell us what goes on (or went on) behind the curtains?

That way we could evaluate what our people are taught and see what needs to be retained and how it could be improved upon.

The fact is these things have disappeared in Keta where I stayed. I know it is not at Atebubu either and I don't think these places are all that urban. I know from the general paper I took at A-levels that they are supposed to exist and sometimes I tell a few whites they exist but.....

Could anyone with first hand experience say something? And by that I don't mean someone who has read it from a book or been told something by the old lady.

2.17 SEX/CULTURAL EDUCATION, by *Korku Dayie, Harvard*

A lot of ink has flowed on this topic and for good reasons. While all agree that sex education is necessary and a must, the form this education may take is not yet agreed upon. The different opinions here can be categorised into 3 camps as follows:

Camp 1: Emulate what the West has so “successfully” done.

Camp 2: No, do not import any western constructs; go back to Tradition.

Camp 3: Integrate the best elements of camps 1 and 2.

While my inclination is towards camp 2 and 3, I run into the problem that we might not even know how our societies functioned; but worst still, we might not even be in full command of what the so-called successful West has done.

So I'll like to add my voice to Mr. James Essegbey's query: "...could anyone out there with a first hand experience of our initiation/puberty rites tell us what goes on (or went on) behind the curtains?"

Secondly, as Mr Adams Bodomo has so eloquently and thoroughly pointed out: "Study these people! Do research into their ways of approaching the problem. Project this into 'modern' technology. Reform it."

Finally, I will like to ask : are there Ghanaians out there seriously and critically studying our society--the past and present--? And when I say Ghanaians I mean all those who at one point or another may find themselves in decision/policy making/advising roles. After all, the success of the West that we so pine after evolved from serious study of their respective societies from legendary Greece to Super power USA.

2.18 SEX/CULTURAL EDUCATION, by *Yaw Oheneba-Sakyi, SUNY, New York*

I have been following with keen interest the debate on Sex/Cultural education. I salute my dear friend Francis Nii Dodoo, and others (Alfred Opopo, Adams Bodomo, James Essegbey, Korku Dayie etc..) for their analyses. I too believe that the best approach to the issue of cultural education in general in contemporary Ghana (of which, I must say, sex education is only one) is the "Camp 3" approach of Korku Dayie, i.e. integrate the best elements of western constructs and the Ghanaian traditional constructs. Sadly enough, as Bodomo pointed out, our scholarship has failed in various ways to lead us into the study of our own cultural practices.

It might be fair to say that a large number of Ghanaian academicians (both at home and abroad) do not know enough (and/or care less) about the diverse Ghanaian cultures, and therefore could not adequately articulate how the indigenous cultural practices (norms, values, beliefs, taboos, proverbs, language, songs, rituals & ceremonies, etc., etc.) can best help us to solve some of our social problems. I think it is about time that we DEMAND the valuable aspects of our culture be taught to our children where ever they may be. We owe it to them to save as much as we can of what is

uniquely Ghanaian, while at the same time making it possible for them to borrow (and adapt to fit their circumstances) ideas from today's multicultural world in which we live. For Ghanaians abroad, organising week-end schools for the children (with parents and older siblings volunteering their time) to learn about their heritage and cultural practices is surely a good way to start. I know for a fact that Jewish parents in the United States send their children to Hebrew schools on Saturdays, so do Japanese parents, Chinese parents and Korean parents just to name a few (I would like netters comments on this idea of Ghanaian schools abroad).

Concerning the issue of Ghanaians critically studying the Ghanaian society, I am all for it. Almost all the research work that I have done in the past 8 or so years have been on the social demography of Ghana; and I know Francis Doodoo has also been seriously engaged in this area. Collaborative work (what Adams Bodomo calls "conjugated ideas") is very much needed to bring some of our research findings to light. I have worked on contraception, breast feeding, birth intervals and fertility in Ghana. Currently, I am working on a Rockefeller Foundation-funded study on the impact of women's autonomy on fertility behavior in Ghana (I am collaborating this work with three professionals affiliated with Universities in Ghana). I sincerely hope that the Okyeame network will provide us with a forum for forging collaborative research, as well as avenues to apply for funds to do the kinds of research folks are talking about.

Finally, it would be very beneficial if a seminar or even a conference could be organised somewhere in Ghana, the U. S. A., Canada, Norway or Britain for all Ghanaians in academia, business, industry and other establishments to have the opportunity to meet with each other and dialogue on these and other issues.

3 KUNTANISM

compiled and edited by *Adams B. Bodom o*

3.00 Editorial Note, by *Adams Bodom o*

In this part of the Yearbook the reader is presented with a neologism: Kuntanism. According to the initiator of the discussion, Kuntanism is etymologically related to the Akan word “kuntann” and may be used to refer to “so many attitudes including ‘pride’ and what we call ‘big shot’ in Ghana.” The subject is taken up by others with illustrations and the ensuing is a fruitful debate about the nature of this social cancer and how to eliminate it in Ghana.

3.01 KUNTANISM, forwarded by *Amponsah Fordjour, Dartmouth*

Hello Countrymen and women,

It is sometimes good to have an interlude of fun as we discuss and read. I send below a message from a fellow member of the WUGY (World Union of Ghanaian Youth) network for a dual reason. Firstly, to sensitise you on this attitude of our people back home and its socio-politico-economic implications, and secondly to generate some humour for you. There are a couple of deletions but NO additions. Over to you now:

“I am not just trying to introduce another topic in order to kill what is on the table for discussion. Probably we can shelve this for discussion next time. I think what I call “Kuntanism” is killing a lot of potentials in the youth of our country and must be addressed by all.

“Kuntanism” is a Ghanaian English word (don’t laugh please, I am serious) which needs a few years to be incorporated into the Queen’s English Dictionary. It has its roots in the Akan word “kuntann”. The adjective form of the word is “kuntannic”. It emerged in Ghana in the early eighties and it can be used to describe the majority of people in management positions in almost all high places in Ghana. It is an embodiment of so many attitudes including “pride” and what we call “big-shot” in Ghana. I know “bossy attitude” is part of “kuntanism”. If someone can come out with the real definition of this word in Akan I think it will help to explain what this mighty word is doing in Ghana.

If I had not left Ghana I would never have known the extent of the benefits of cordiality between the “ruling” and the “ruled” in all spheres of life. The closeness of one with his/her professor, supervisor, lecturer, director, manager or boss

facilitates the mutual co- operation between the two and fosters greater achievements in the goals of the two. Unfortunately, this gap is filled by “kuntanism” in Ghana and it is very difficult for one to approach his/her lecturer or boss. I know how difficult it was to get to my director in Ghana but here I simply walk into my supervisor’s or head of dept’s office for discussion without even bothering the Administrative Assistant. In Ghana, who am I to mention the name of my boss without “Prof.” or “Dr” so-and-so? I would be his enemy for ever and my promotion will only be over his dead body!

Well, I hope netters have now understood this “kuntannic” word called “kuntanism”. If we have, then we may have to tackle it sometime, for it is choking the system. Thanks very much. Yaw.”

3.02 Re: Kuntanism, by *Alhassan Manu, Davis, California*

I think many of the ‘kuntanic’ people in Ghana who exhibit all the attributes of ‘Kuntanism’ are simple people like you and I who came abroad and returned to Ghana and wanted other ‘not-been-tos’ to worship them. I remember an incident in Legon when a student called his lecturer Mr. X. This man got furious and yelled “If you do not believe my academic qualification, go to X [he gave the name of the University from where he obtained his PhD] and ask Prof. Z, if I did not receive a PhD under his supervision”.

“Kuntanism” is an interesting topic for discussion. We should first of all ask ourselves: Are we also going to be “kuntannnnnnnnn” or are we going to behave ourselves as simple ordinary people - like the professors, directors, managers we have come into contact with over here.

3.03 Re: Kuntanism, by *Amponsah Fordjour, Dartmouth*

Amanfour,

I was just “roving my mind around” to find the synonym for Kuntanism in case it is adopted in the English Dictionary one day. The best sister word I could guess out was ‘kokotiism’.

It’s unfortunate that some of our professors back home who had their training somewhere in the US and Canada are still engulfed in their kuntanic attitude. Go to the University of Ghana; I just don’t want to mention names. Maybe I’ll have to mention departments: Is it that Koo Daki at the Biochem, or that Kokonut head at Archimedis Dept., or those two almost, always frowned faces at the animal kingdom or those socio guys? The situation is no different at UST. The late Azi something, that RRR woman at Biochem, not to mention the Engineering dept. All this retards progress.

Over here graduate students call professors by their first names. In fact everything is informal. Who are you to sit down whilst the professor stands in Ghana? But over here you see professors squatting whilst undergrads sit. And who are you to rest your head on your girl/ boyfriend in Ghana whilst standing in the vicinity of a LECTURER but undergrads do this in the lecture room. The informal relation between the professor and the student creates a conducive atmosphere for the two to work together, and you find good results coming out. Are we over here going back home to practise Kuntanism? Over to you.

3.04 Re: Kuntanism, by *Adams Bodomo, Trondheim, Norway*

Here is an alternative opinion on the following observations by a netter on the issue of ‘kuntanism’:

“Over here graduate students call professors by their first names. In fact everything is informal. Who are you to sit down why the professor stands in Ghana? But over here you see professors squatting whilst undergrads sit...”

I doubt whether the fact that the above may not be an acceptable behaviour in Ghana should be linked with the issue of ‘kuntanism’. I would want to see a ‘kuntanic’ person as a consciously bossy fellow who does all he or she can to

frustrate others so that they would realise how important his/her position or personality is. Calling someone with titles such as Prof. X, Dr. Y, Opanin Z etc. does not by itself make him/her 'kuntanic'.

And I wouldn't want to see a professor squatting while a student sits in a chair in Ghana (especially if the Prof. is older than the student) because this is incompatible with our cultural upbringing. It is a mark of respect in Ghanaian culture to offer a seat to a more elderly person in a situation where there are not enough seats. This cultural practice should not encourage any bossy attitude.

If we feel that making students call professors by their first names would create conducive atmospheres for learning in Ghana, then we have to encourage them to start this from their homes. But then that is where the cultural parameter begins! It is very much easier for students in some (though not all) Western societies to practise this at the universities because they can even call dad and mum by their first names. It is difficult for the Ghanaian student to do this because it is culturally unacceptable in most, if not all, parts of Ghana. To expect him to do this as he gets into the university would be difficult. I know a Lecturer, who on returning home from a Western society insisted on being called just 'Sam'. This did not happen, however. He has since then always been called Dr. Obeng by his students. Yet, to me, he is one of the most informal lecturers I have come into contact with.

In any case there are other Western societies (e.g. France -the French are or can be very formal) where titles such 'Professeur' and 'Monsieur' go hand in hand with professors' names without compromising conducive atmospheres of learning.

I suggest the problem of 'kuntanism' would be better addressed from some other directions and not so much on issues such as calling people by their first names or not and offering or not offering seats to others. Let us distinguish a general systematic cultural behaviour which is very much cherished by our traditional system from personalised deviant behaviours by isolated individuals (the 'kuntanics'). If a professor wants to be 'kuntanic' by all means, no amount of calling him by his/her first name will change that behaviour. We should continue to make people in responsible positions more and more aware of the fact that they are there in the service of the people and not to promote their 'kuntanic' desires. Lets keep up the good work on the net. Thank you.

3.05 Re: Kuntanism, by *Amponsah Fordjour, Dartmouth*

Adams Bodomo wrote:

"I would want to see a 'kuntanic' person as a consciously bossy fellow who does all s/he can to frustrate others so that they would realise how important his/her position or personality is. And I wouldn't want to see a professor squatting while a student sits in a chair in Ghana (especially if the Prof. is older than the student) because this is incompatible with our cultural upbringing. It is a mark of respect in Ghanaian culture to offer a seat to a more elderly person in a situation where there are not enough seats. This cultural practice should not encourage any bossy attitudes."

Ask yourself the manifestations of a bossy attitude. The kuntanic lecturer will eat you up by even addressing him 'Mr' instead of Doc or Prof. or boss. So imagine calling him by his first name. I understand that it is a sign of respect to give your seat up to an elderly person back home BUT it will be an abuse of universal human rights to label someone as disrespectful for not vacating his seat for an elderly person to sit.

Let me deviate briefly to culture. Our culture demands that the household duties like cooking, washing, etc. should be the work of women. Woe betides you to be seen by your mother or friends washing the dishes whilst your wife sits. They will call you by all sorts of funny names. Culture should not be placed above fundamental human rights. It makes more sense to vacate your seat for the weak one.

He continues:

"If we feel that making students call professors by their first names would create conducive atmospheres for learning in Ghana, then we have to encourage them to start this from their homes. But then that is where the cultural parameter begins! It is very much easier for students in some (though not all) western societies to practise this at the universities because they can even call dad and mum by their first names. It is difficult for the Ghanaian student to do this because

it is culturally unacceptable in most, if not all, parts of Ghana....I suggest the problem of 'kuntanism' would be better addressed from some other directions and not so much on issues such as calling people by their first names or not and offering or not offering seats to others''

You should not get me wrong. I never meant we should adopt the way these Western people address themselves or things like that. I was only trying to emphasise the way professors bring themselves down to the level of students whilst still maintaining their dignity. This makes them approachable and the student is not afraid or does not harbour any shyness to present his problems to him. And more to that I wanted to emphasise how our kuntanic men and woman would make you feel their importance.

“Calling someone with titles such as Prof. X, Dr. Y , Opanin Z etc. does not by itself make him/her 'kuntanic'”

I did not mention the use of Opanin. My example was on the Kuntanic Prof. or Doc. He will [not] accept Opanin. In fact the illiterate is even forced to learn how to say Prof. or Doc. This is what I call academic bullying. I'm not saying we should cease addressing them by their qualifications. But if per chance one slips and uses 'Mr.' it shouldn't be taken as a sign of disrespect.

And know that Kuntanism has a broad sense. It does not only involve the donation of a fat sum of money at a church harvest or a funeral celebration. Infact ACADEMIC BULLYING is a form of Kuntanism. Thanks

3.06 The How and Why of Kuntanism, by *Charles Appeadu, Washington*

I am excited that at least a few Ghanaians are realistic and open enough to admit that some things are wrong with our system and need to be addressed and changed! I am referring here, specifically, to the ongoing discussion, on this network, of KUNTANISM in Ghana. One of the first positive things that many a Ghanaian student abroad comes into contact with is the respect that the broad majority of the population enjoys. By and large, people are judged on the basis of what they contribute to society and not on the basis of their titles per se! I am not being acritical of this society they have their problems. I am only trying to identify those positive aspects of this society we can learn from. There will be room for the discussion of the negative aspects which we will do very well to distance ourselves from! My personal opinion on Kuntanism is that “when any group of people are not engaged in any productive work, there is no essence to which they can point to and, as such, titles and ‘appearances’ become the measuring stick!” This is the reason why a professor is offended when he is referred to simply as Dr. so and so; and a Dr. M is offended when he is called Mr. M. The only thing he can hold on to -- his title -- is being threatened! He has no other contribution to society he can rely on for a good name and if he has, the chances are that nobody will recognise it because the people are used to using titles and appearances to measure status. The behaviour described above is bad by itself because it creates disrespect for those without titles but it is more than just morally bad ... it is economically destructive. Infact it is so destructive that if I were to point out one single reason for our economic depravity, I will go for that! The term, in its broadest usage, permeates the whole society.

In what follows, I attempt to outline some of the critical areas where this behaviour surfaces and its impact on the society. Please do not think that I am anti-Ghanaian or too white-washed to see anything good in our system. I made most of the observations I am discussing here long before I left Ghana. I must admit (and I am grateful) that I have learned a lot of good things here. It is needless to say that I miss Ghana on many other issues!

- (1) Kuntanism begins at home. When a father eats about 50 or 60 percent of the meat in a family of 8, the father's behaviour can be described as KUNTANN!! When he is the only person who eats on a dining table, he is KUNTANN!! When he does something wrong and even his wife cannot give him advice, isn't KUNTANISM on display? Sorry, I am not saying that our kids should show the type of disrespect to their parents that is producing the guns in American classrooms! No. I don't think reasonable sharing of meat with the rest of the family produces guns in the classroom. I don't think doing things to foster a closer relationship in the family will make a child disrespectful. If we look at this simple problem, we can see immediately that it is not going to help the family ... there will be so much fear of Mr. KUNTANN that he is not likely to extract any benefit from the rest of the family. No opinions will be coming from them and there is no opportunity for them to try their ideas. Economically, apart from the fact that the children will be malnourished and so in the long run unproductive (second or third order

effect), there is an immediate consequence. If the society were to emphasise the use of dining tables for the whole family, carpenters will be employed and Opanyin KUNTANN's cocoa money will circulate in the economy. I am not talking here about western style dining table! I am talking about a dining table similar to the one Mr. KUNTANN or Opanyin KUNTANN is currently using only this time I want him to aim at buying a bigger one so his one or more wives and ten children will sit together with him and eat their simple meal each having reasonable share of the dinner. I am convinced that a family like that will be stronger and happier than the status quo family!!!! Also, imagine the input that will be generated in this family. Very soon, there will be a healthy competition among men and women to get the best dining tables for their families. With such a high demand for beautiful dining tables, we all know what will happen to the dining table manufacturing industry....it will begin to rival the coffin industry!!!! What a pity that Mr. KUNTANN is prepared to spend lavishly on a coffin for UNCLE but not so for his children. You will do well not to focus on the dining table and reply me on that but to see the wide implications of what I am discussing here!

- (2) Mr. KUNTANN does not leave his KUNTANISM at home. It follows him to Work. The general Ghanaian child learns the "importance of being in power" from home as he looks at his daddy and the absolute power he wields. He is unaccountable to anyone; and Mrs. NOTHING, after many years of being pushed under, finds it fitting to give Mr. KUNTANN all the good things in the house to the detriment of the children's well-being and her own well-being. To put the blame on Mrs. KUNTANN is to woefully misunderstand what is really happening, for indeed the society (ruled by people such as Mr. KUNTANN) calls her action respect. Mrs. NOTHING establishes her nothingness equilibrium by her so-called actions of respect, even though this action is an attempt by her to be noted as somebody. Is it any wonder to you that when the child becomes Mr. KUNTANN at work later in his life, he wields absolute power and that his subordinates help him establish this equilibrium? And that when the subordinate later becomes Mr. KUNTANN himself, he continues the tradition? You see, if society were to work in the reverse, Ghana would be the most productive. But unfortunately, God made man such that the more talented you are or the greater the endowment you have, the greater your potential contribution. Thus it is expected that the boss be the one who contributes greatest to the well-being of the company. But if the boss is a Ghanaian boss in Ghana, the one we refer to here as Mr. KUNTANN, then he goes to work latest and leaves earliest. He thinks that the work should be done by the subordinates....he should only enjoy the choicest meat which in the working milieu, is the salary and other pecuniary and non-pecuniary benefits. This is the surest recipe for the underdevelopment of any economy!!
- (3) If Mr. KUNTANN behaves as in (2) above in the work place where his sphere of domination is restricted only to the company, how do you think he will behave in political office? Are you kidding? How dare you talk back to him or monitor him in any way now that his name is in all the papers as the Head of State or the Minister of so and so, or..... Here, more so than the home or the office, he finds it easier to enforce his KUNTANNIC equilibrium. The military and the police are there to ensure that....remember these people in uniform were not brought from MARS. They were raised in Mr. KUNTANN's home, and moreover they have guns! Also the NOTHINGS have more incentive to do their part as the failure on their part will mean greater harm!!!

Now that I have touched (and I know that this is just touching the surface) on some of the effects of this negative behaviour, the question is "have we learned anything"? Did those who came before us learn anything? I mean all the UST and Legon and Cape Vars. profs and many more in the offices who studied abroad and observed the same attitudes that we are currently observing. How come they did not change? I know some netters have provided opinions about this but it won't hurt to exchange ideas on this again. My opinion is that there are two-fold resistance to any meaningful change.....resistance from oneself and resistance from the society. Each of these resistances is powerful! The resistance from self goes like this: If any group wants to break this cycle, that group, like any pioneers, must be prepared to sacrifice. First you were deprived when you were a kid and now that it is your turn to "enjoy" you have to give that up!!! This is very difficult to do. What makes it more difficult is that the society accepts the status quo and will even not recognise your efforts initially. So first you give up this apparently-feel-good KUNTANNIC behaviour and then the people you think you are giving the respect to don't appreciate it. They think and say that you are a fool. Why? Because they are looking forward to the day when they will be in your position so they can exercise KUNTANNISM!!! You seem to be wasting a golden opportunity. So what will it take to offset this? I believe it takes a person who knows that what he is doing is beneficial to the society and will do it not to win the praises of the people but to fulfil his desire to make a contribution in the long run. And positive contribution he will make, even though such a contribution may only be appreciated long after he is dead!!!! Jesus Christ did the same and I hope many will do likewise!

We don't have to be as passive a society as the above scenario seems to suggest. I believe that if we get enough wise, selfless people in key positions in the country (and I believe we are gradually cultivating such people), they can design a direction very wisely.

3.07 Aggressive Solutions: Kuntanism (Part 1), by *Charles Appeadu*

Please, allow me space to follow up my earlier article on this destructive Ghanaian (infact African) human behaviour -- KUNTANISM -- with simple starting points to try and solve it. Nature tends towards greater entropy so it is more difficult to build than to destroy! Also, we need to consciously design programs to push against the tides albeit with wisdom and love not with UNCONTROLLED EMOTIONS which are themselves destructive --very destructive --- as we see all over Africa. If you don't see what I am talking about, direct your attention to the military coups in Africa!!!

I will begin with the Churches and Schools. I believe you will agree with me that the pastors and priests are not free from the influence of their KUNTANNIC environment in Ghana. I observed in many Churches that the pastor acts, and is helped by the congregation to act, as a KUNTANNIC Boss, contrary to the teachings of Jesus Christ. Jesus taught that Christian leaders are to serve the congregation. This service is not restricted to preaching. Infact, the pastor is to set an example for the congregation to follow. I believe that we are to respect our leaders, be they in the Church or in the office or in the home. However, this respect is consistent with a leadership that truly serves those under him. Pastors should visit the poor members of the congregation (what we see is that the pastor's friends are the rich in the church!), eat with them, etc. When there is a function in the church, the pastor should set an example by helping to arrange the chairs etc. Please Sir, I am not a communist! I am not even a Socialist! I am talking about being a simple, responsible human being who is prepared to serve! This works and it is a joy!

We should also emphasise the practical aspect of Christianity in the Country --- dedication to hard work, integrity, humility, and accountability and we should consciously recognise those who exemplify themselves in such laudable attributes. These should be actively preached in the Churches.

Also, talks should be given in the Secondary Schools and the Universities and even in the Primary Schools by members of the society who are recognised for their contributions in the society as good fathers, teachers, managers, and political figures! It shouldn't be the case that every corner of the Daily Graphic is infested with pictures of the President and his wife. No wonder, when a person becomes head of state, he doesn't want to hand over to anybody!!! Nobody outside that office is anybody! The ruling party must actively look for other people who are contributing to the society to honour. This is not idealism. We can do it!!

We must educate our people against jealousy, envy, hatred and, in general, destructive emotions. Why are people angry at the rich? One might answer that it is because the rich do not get their money in the correct way. It may very well be true but the solution is not a revolution against the rich. We should be honest ourselves and then bring the thieves to justice. We can humiliate them publicly and let the people know that such and such is in prison for his theft. But the prosecutor must not be a thief himself!! The rich are necessary for every economy. They can do valuable service. They can establish enterprises that will employ many people. The rich people who do that should be noted and praised. No jealousy. Praise!!

There are some things we call culture which are not culture at all! They are there for want of a better alternative! If we don't identify such things for what they are and work to change them, but instead continue to perpetrate them because we think it is our culture, we might be doing ourselves great damage. If you get lost in the forest and as a result do not have any cup to drink water with, you will very soon find out you can be ingenious by using your palm to drink water. Then you will improve upon that by folding a large leaf and fetching water with it to drink. Suppose I come across you in the forest and offer you a cup to drink water with or better still teach you again how to make and/or use a cup to drink water, will you reject my offer saying that your culture is to drink water with a leaf? Wouldn't you be a fool saying that? Sometimes (not always for there are things that can legitimately be dubbed culture) this is what we do! There are times too that attitudes and actions that are indeed cultural need to be improved upon or changed/uprooted altogether. It might be that such things have outlived their usefulness. In that case we have to be wise and brave to

change them! The fact that a father does not look after his children but directs his own children to their uncles is destructive. It is a bad culture that we don't have to be proud of. We have to work hard to uproot it.

The extended family system has very many GOOD things about it. We have to promote, improve and preserve it. There might be some destructive aspects of it but we shouldn't blindly and unwisely throw the whole system away just because it is not being practised in the West. We should open our eyes to the loneliness and suicide and individualism of the West. I don't believe that the West developed because of lack of extended family system. I believe they developed inspite of the lack of it! How many of you don't say that there is no happiness or joy here in the US? Why, even with your apparent better living conditions (materially)? There is joy in sharing with others!!!! It is our culture, and a very good one, to respect our elders. We should preserve that. However, this shouldn't be confused with being bossy over your subordinates. I believe there will be respect with honourable fruit if the elders become open with the young and the subordinate and respect their views. Culture is not everything and it is not everything that is culture! I hope other netters will discuss their views on this issue! Let's learn from each other and be prepared to do away with bad culture!!!

3.08 Re: KUNTANISM! by *Nii Adote*

NAA103@PSUVM.PSU.edu

Sometimes I wonder if after living in this country we lose our focus of tradition. Do not forget that in our culture, you do not call an older person, even if it happens to be your brother/sister by their first names. You qualify it with either "bra" or "sister". That does not make these people "kuntann". Therefore calling someone by the title "Dr." "Prof." etc. does not necessarily make the studying atmosphere unbearable. I remember when I first got to Legon, I stood up in class to ask a question, the lecturer asked me to sit down and ask my question. These formalities are part of our culture and I think it goes a long way in shaping our regard for old age. It is a really different matter when someone goes into a rage because you accidentally referred to him without his title.

Ever read the book or watched the play "The Blinkards" by Kobina Sekyi (I may be wrong). In it a young man decides to propose western style to a young lady forgetting we have a traditional way of doing things. Let us not try to import some of these western cultures blindly. Please let us be careful, in our desire to live as "freely" as we do in this country, let us not forget that our culture places some limitations on us, whether good or bad is open to debate.

3.09 Re: 'Kuntanism' by *W. B. Owusu, Queens University, Canada*

Netters, I have followed the current discussion on 'KUNTANISM' with interest and would like to add to it. 'KUNTANISM' should not be admired, and therefore I see the need to attempt to reduce (if not eliminate) it in Ghana. 'KUNTANISM', as it prevails in Ghana now cannot be tackled effectively in isolation from the broader perspective of the current efforts towards achieving national self-sufficiency in many, if not all, spheres of life.

Education (both formal and informal) should improve the chances of having a 'united' family, depicted by passion, co-operation, tolerance, togetherness, and due recognition for all, irrespective of what one has achieved, or what one has done.

Inextricably linked to the education factor is the financial welfare and security of households. I want to believe that with basic levels of economic guarantees in more households, there will be 'peace'-- a prerequisite for livelihood. This can provide incentives and the desire for doing things (including dining) together with all family members, and thus, hopefully, lessening 'Kuntanism'. I know of a considerable number of instances in Ghana, where fathers and mothers, even though viewed family togetherness (and presumably in a 'non-kuntanic' environment) as a cardinal feature of a happy marital and family life, actively avoided being present at home in order to 'dodge' any foreseeable 'money matter(s)'; s/he may have to go and play 'dame', or sit in a bar right after work (if applicable). Before he comes home he will most probably be 'Kuntann' and assertive. The above pertains to the household situation, but may be worthy of consideration in the workplace or in an academic institution.

In short, I personally think the best approach to reducing (if not eliminate) 'Kuntanism' will be to focus on ensuring that the majority of Ghanaians have at least basic education (O-level??), and with increasingly widening and affordable avenues for higher education for those who show promise. With this, titles such as 'Dr' or 'Prof.', hopefully, will not be as mythical as they seem to be in Ghana now. Perhaps I need to add that NOT all the professors and lecturers in Legon (and probably Tech and CapeVars) are 'Kuntann'; many are very approachable, 'generous', and simple. In any case, I don't see anything wrong if Dr. X or Prof. Y expects to be, and ensures that s/he is, referred to as such so long as that expectation does not infringe on the rights and privilege(s) of anyone.

3.10 Re: 'Kuntanism', by *Adams Bodomo, Trondheim, Norway*

In my contribution to the above topic, I sought to:

1. Draw attention to the wider cultural perspective of the issue
2. Show that two examples given earlier were really not illustrations of the problem of bossy ('kuntanic') attitudes in Ghana.

And I am happy we are trying to look for solutions in this direction with the in-depth analysis of the problem by someone right from the family. That is my point! To get students change certain practices, if we think they are bad, we must look down into the cultural system in which they grew up, into the village, the family. If we want students to call lecturers freely by their first names, it can't be overnight, it has to start from the family. This was a culturally-oriented contribution I suggested in response to the question of how we can solve the problem of bossy attitudes on our return. And I am happy the discussion for solutions is going in that direction.

But there were also a few misinterpretations of the contributions. I should not be seen as defending all aspects of our cultural upbringing. That would be unfair. I am one person that have always argued for a dynamic interpretation of our culture. I have always stressed that we should insist on the GOOD parts of our culture to solve our present-day national problems. I often look at development from the cultural perspective. This must have come up already in some of my earlier postings on this net. Even though I believe that some of our cultural upbringings have had bad repercussions on our economy, I do not believe that it is the issue of addressing people with titles and giving older, especially, elderly people due respect that is one of them. I don't think this is at loggerheads with any issues of human rights.

On the direct issue of 'kuntanism', it is important for us to remember that it is not only people in 'higher' positions who are 'kuntanic'. Don't forget the popular saying in Akan: 'Obiara wo ne ofis' (literally: everybody has his office). Typists, messengers and labourers can also be bossy. I am sure most of us have met with the 'kuntanic' behaviour of the gateman in many an embassy in Accra. You see, the problem cuts across from 'top to down' and we need more global efforts in the entire system to solve it. I do believe however that issues such as formal addressing, offering seats to older people and holding girlfriends in front of lecturers are just among the weakest examples to illustrate 'kuntanism' in Ghana. In doing so one might run the risk of exhibiting a lack of understanding of Comparative Cultural Analysis.

3.11 Re: Kuntannism, by *Charles Awasu, Syracuse University*

The discussion on kutannism is interesting. This is to add to the cultural framework put forth by Appeadu, Adams etc. I do believe that Kutannism has something to do with ADULTISM. Where the adult person is always right.

1. Now, changing adultism will directly impact on our cultural beliefs. But I believe adultism has to be altered to reflect changing socio-economic factors. I know this might not be culturally correct, yet even as we give the elders their due respect, they should not let go fallow all the talents in the youth.
2. Through education and training, there are times when the young can have better, fresher alternative ideas than the old.
3. The old might have bad experiences or limited experiences which might cloud their ability to be right.

4. To make this modification to our culture, it behoves on those of us who by dint of our training and exposure, to share our intellectual abilities our knowledge, to pursue solidarity instead of selfishness, all in non-kuntannic manner.
5. This is why we need to press it on our leaders that education and knowledge are to be shared by all, not to be monopolised by a few.
6. That the “system” and its kuntannic trappings will change when the leaders realise that to govern is to educate, and thereby promote the use of knowledge for the good of all.

3.12 A-Kuntannism, by *Judith Danquah*

JDANKWA@TURBO.kean.edu

I have followed all discussions on kuntannic behavior and I find them quite amusing. Now, can the originator of this word (or any English experts out there) help provide an antonym for kuntannism? Perhaps it will help me to know how to classify/categorise Legon professors who do not care being addressed by their first names, or a father who comes home to eat all the meat, unconcerned as to whether his kids ate or not. Thank you.

3.13 Re: “KUNTANISM”, by *Dankyi*

OSEIDAN@Meena.CC.URegina.ca

The discussion on “KUNTANISM” has been interesting but it’s definition is not clear to some people. Well ‘I am not going to define this word but rather going to cite an experience I had at UST some 7 yrs ago. It was a day after a professor had taught a topic, when I approached him in his office to explain further something I did not understand in class. When I knocked and was allowed in, the following took place between me (Dankyi) and the Prof..Dankyi: ‘Good afternoon, DOC.’Prof.: ‘Who are you referring to as DOC? There are some rogues on the sea who call themselves doctors. I am a Prof., if you don’t know. Go away, I will not listen to anything from you.’You see, poor Dankyi met this Prof.. at the University some years earlier as a doctor and did not know he has been promoted to a Prof. some three months then. Such profs in my opinion, can be referred to as KUNTANNNNNN. They make it difficult for other young profs and students to approach.

There was another incident when I went to the Sr. staff club at UST with my supervisor (a graduate from MIT) after the day’s field work to have some beer. I took my seat at one of the tables and he said, “Hei Dankyi, let’s go to the other table. I’m told those tables are meant for those OXFORD & IMPERIAL COLLEGE guys. I don’t want anybody to tell me shit. The other time one of them told a guy who graduated from RUSSIA that they the Russians just add up to the number.” He went on to say that one of them asked him why he is so free with students, “for these students if you become free with them they don’t respect you”.

These examples illustrate how some KUNTANIC profs behave which is detrimental to the society. It doesn’t bring about development. ANNUANOM, LETS SACRIFICE TO BUILD A BETTER GHANA FOR OUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN ELSE, ASEM BEBA DABI..

3.14 Re: Kuntanism, by *Cornelius, Brown University*

There has been quite a lot of discussion on this subject, and there is no doubt in my mind that this is a really important issue. While I agree with many of the things that have been said, I must say that I found the discussion a bit biased. So far the discussion seems to suggest that it is fathers and for that matter males who are kuntanistic. Let me say that simply because the behavior of certain categories of people in our society is more visible (and as such their errors are more readily seen) does not mean that the rest of us are without fault. Back to the issue of kuntanism. There are kuntanic lecturers just as there are kuntanic students. Also there are kuntanic fathers just as there are kuntanic mothers. I can still recall my first three years in secondary school. All the senior students did was to make we the juniors feel less human. They made it look like we could never get to where they were!

Certainly there is a problem with how people in authority treat those over whom they have some control. But I think that both parties have to bear the blame. Let us face it: how much respect do we give to lecturers who queue with us for food at the popular food spots on campus? Very often we tend to think that there is something wrong with such lecturers.

The problem obviously has deep roots in our society, and we cannot solve it by blaming those in authority. In fact I dare argue that it is the expectations that we have of people in authority that give rise to their kuntanic attitudes! Simply lower our expectations of them e.g. with respect to where to eat or drink, what to wear, whether to take trotro or drive a private car, etc. etc., and they will be less kuntanistic!!

3. 15. KUNTANIC WOMAN, by *Amponsah Fordjour*

Amanfour,

Somebody sent me this personally to begin with the KUNTANIC WOMAN stuff. She is a woman but for security sake I withhold her name. Over to you now:

“Kuntanistic Woman.

She is not friendly towards her male counterparts because she thinks she’s better than them. She gives her men admirers a tough time when it comes to dating. She wants her boyfriend or fiancé(to marry her as soon as possible with the \$5000 ring she saw in the window. She prefers men with alpha romeos or any nice cars and so to hell with the man who has the Adams taxi. She is the boss on the job. If you are a man you better not be late. She always has on a kuntanistic face. Her posture and stride, very kuntann. If you are a man you wouldn’t look at her twice. Okay Amponsah, does that answer your question?”

Amponsah responds:

It was a question for all of us. This sets the pace for an intensive discussion and hence your answer is just the tip of the iceberg. Millions of thanks for this beginning.

Editor’s Note:

Though the discussion did not continue much further than this, most readers will realise that a major problem in the Ghanaian society has been highlighted and a lot of its implications discussed. It is interesting how this problem, which is not new at all in our country, has been seen from quite new and different perspectives. These new perspectives are probably due to the cross-cultural experiences we have undergone abroad, mostly in Europe and America.

4 MOXON AND OTHER CHIEFTAINCY AFFAIRS

compiled and edited by *Stephen Agyepong*

4.00 Editorial Comments by *Stephen Agyepong*

On Monday May 3 1993, Jama Barreh posted the following message on Okyeame Network:

“I saw the most unsettling thing on Sixty Minutes this past Sunday . I saw a white man being carried by Africans. They say he is a Ghanaian chief. As such, he is a royalty in that country. Why,in the name of God , would Africans give a foreigner such an honor ? Any comments ? Any Ghanaians on the net ?”

He asked for comments and got a lot! Infact the ensuing discussion on this topic led to other topics such as Inferiority Complex exhibited by Africans in general, and Ghanaians in particular. As the articles below testify, most of the responses were against making Moxon a Ghanaian chief. In order to give readers a background of what the 60 Minutes TV program was about I produce below the article by Jude Banahene, which summarized for members of Okyeame the program, as the first article. The articles that follow are the ones that were deemed to have captured the essence of the debate that ensued and are therefore reproduced below with very little editing to preserve the content and spirit of the debate.

4.01 White Chief (Facts from the 60 Minutes interview), by *Jude M. Banahene, Webster, New York USA*

(Friday May 7, 1993.)

Amanfour,

After receiving a number of messages via okyeame regarding the white chief, I took it upon myself to watch the show again last night (had the show recorded) in order to bring you the following excerpts. My intention is not to tilt the ongoing discussion in any direction but to give netters the facts as stated during the interview. Statements attributed to

both CBS and Mr. Moxon in this message are exactly as they were stated in the 60 minutes interview. The statements put forth are what I think are pertinent to the discussion at hand. Here we go.

CBS: What are your duties as a chief?

Moxon: My main requirement is that I serve my senior chief as one of his advisors and if you want the meaning of the title Ankobea (spelling): It means the advisor who looks after the chief's wives when he goes to war. It is a very honorable position. Unfortunately, now a days chiefs don't go to war so I haven't had to exercise my privileges.

On the topic of riding in a palanquin during the harvest festival (one of about 30 other chiefs), this is Mr. Moxon comment: "The first time I ever sat in my palanquin was when I was lifted up the lot and that was the most terrifying event in my life. Because I didn't know how the people would take it. To see this white figure lifted amongst his peers and colleagues. Infact, it was wonderful."

CBS: And there hasn't been a group that has gotten together and said why do we have a white man in that position of honor?

Moxon: This is totally unGhanaian. Absolutely unGhanaian. They don't think in those terms. I think anybody who have lived or worked or even visited Ghana has recognized that they have the most remarkable traits where color means nothing. I don't feel white when I am in my palanquin. I may look it, but I don't feel it. I feel like one of the crowd.

CBS: What are your privileges as a chief?

Moxon: Well, a chief is obliged to have a lot of wives and of course I have a lot of wives.

CBS: You do have a lot of wives! How many wives do you have?

Moxon: I have about six but I have almost lost number. The fact is these are honorary positions you see. Some of my wives have children or even grandchildren but I can't accept much responsibility for it.

CBS: Are they your children?

Moxon: No.

CBS: They are not really your wives.

Moxon: Well, they are really my wives. I have been given them. But you see marriage in Ghana is very different from marriage in the west.

CBS: Oh, do explain this to us.

Moxon: Africans are polygamous. They are not stuck with one wife. They have lots concurrently. As many as your purse would bear. That means if you are blessed with many children, and the dynasty continues.

This was his comments on the issue of slavery:

"The Gold Coast made more money out of the slave trade than any other field."

CBS: There must be a lot of Americans who came from there.

Moxon: Well, I don't think it is really understood that Black Americans with all due respect to them, I think misunderstand the situation. They think it was purely a white man's trade. It wasn't. The slaves were the lucky ones in a sense. They were the ones who were not executed. Because after a tribal warfare, there were a vast number of prisoners most of whom had to be executed, but if you got something you could sell you sold it.

CBS: So after a tribal war, the tribe that won would sell their prisoners.

Moxon: They would sell to the Portuguese originally, then the Dutch, the British and the Danes and the French came into it at various stages. Because the slave trade extended right down the West Coast and even into Central Africa. It was big business in it's day and it is not something that any West African people should be ashamed of because it was business. Three hundred years ago, our values were different. It wasn't only blacks who were enslaved. It was whites as well. It was the habit of the age.

CBS: Are you still an Englishman?

Moxon: Yes.

CBS: Are you a Ghanaian?

Moxon: I am. A chief must be a Ghanaian. A Ghanaian chief has to be a Ghanaian.

CBS: So you really are both.

Moxon: I am.

CBS: Equal parts?

Moxon: I think so. I would find it very difficult to make the ultimate choice and that choice would have to be made for me.

Below is Moxon's closing remarks:

"So far as Ghana is concerned, they were very happy to have me as a chief but I am the first and almost certainly the last. I hope they would remember me for being something quite unique."

4.02 White (Ghanaian) Chief? by *Charles Awasu, Syracuse, New York USA*

(Tuesday May 4, 1993)

I saw the 60 minutes show. Those who installed James Moxon chief should have watched the show. The guy came off as a true colonialist, when he tried to explain away the slave trade. He also justified his chieftancy by stating that Ghanaians are color blind.

This is what I know about James Moxon:

Moxon was part of the colonial administration and decided to stay on after independence. He was quite influential during the Nkrumah period. He was involved in the initial negotiations on the Akosombo project. He later wrote a book about the project. One of the Aburi towns, if I'm correct, Owinase installed him chief, the reason not very clear to me.

James Moxon owned and operated the BLACK POT restaurant which used to be on Ring Road, between UNDP and Danquah Circle. It's now been moved to Riviera Beach Hotel. Moxon owned the Moxon Paperbacks, a bookstore that was merged with Atlas Bookstore.

Moxon is considered in some Ghanaian circles as a philanthropist, having helped several Ghanaians through education and employment. He owns farm property around the Aburi area, by courtesy of his chieftom. Moxon lives on Castle Road to Marine Drive (Osu) For most of the period, he spends half the year in Britain and the other in Ghana.

P.S Moxon is a real chief not an honorary one. Whether he bought the chieftancy or he earned it, is something worth finding out. Maybe those familiar with Aburi traditions can shed some light.

4.03 White (Ghanaian) Chief?, by *Alhassan Manu, Davis, California USA*

(Tuesday May 4, 1993)

This is in furtherance to Charles Awasu's piece:

True, true, James Moxon is not an honorary chief, he is a real chief as Charles Awasu noted. Well I did not see the "60 minutes" program netters have been referring to. Last year I watched a full one-hour documentary on him which was aired by the Discovery Channel (I think) - or perhaps a Scandinavian channel. [I was at the time living in Norway]. Netters in the Scandinavia who saw the documentary may shed more light on this or correct me

I recall that he was made a chief when one Nana Dankwa?? [the Aburi guys we need information on this] was about to die. James had lived in the town for a very long time and the people decided to make him a chief. He performs all customary rituals and ceremonies. He wears traditional cloth for all ceremonies, at least as shown by the documentary.

He has a local football team or youth club which virtually "worships" him. The documentary portrays the club as a group that carries him in the palanquin and does all sorts of "recruit" jobs for him. The documentary showed a despicable scene where the boys had lined up in his big courtyard in Aburi collecting money - something like "Kwasi broni ma me simpoa" [begging]. He wears cloth for all ceremonies [the documentary portrayed him].

In one scene, he had gone back to England and was 'bragging' to British school children that he was a chief in Africa [that set the scene for the documentary].

Well, he is not the only white chief in Ghana. In Techiman in the Brong Ahafo region there is another Obroni Chief. I think this one is honorary. He is something like "Mmranteehene" - Chief of young men. [I have to check my sources if he still is the "Mmranteehene"]. He is a Portuguese who has stayed in the town [God knows for how long] - at least when I was born 30 something years ago he was in the town. He [unlike James] is married to a lady from the town, and has fathered many children with other women from the locality.

Why he [the Portuguese in Techiman] was made the chief, I have no idea. The point I am trying to make is that at least it is not only James who is an Obroni-chief in Ghana, there may be so many others elsewhere we are not aware of.

How about the two white ladies who held [I don't know if they still hold] very sensitive positions in the Castle under the PNDC government? One was in charge of Castle Information Services or a position like that. How about the white lady personal secretary of Kwame Nkrumah (our first leader)?

It is not only traditionally have we given sensitive positions to white people, our governments have been making similar choices.

By the way, this is meant to be a late: A Nigerian Head of State asked the World Bank for an expert to help him with economic planning. The World Bank decided to send a Nigerian expert at their Headquarters to Nigeria [thinking that he would understand the problems of Nigeria better and give better advice]. The Head of State got furious when he saw a black World Bank staff in his office. He turned to his Economic Minister and yelled:

"I said I wanted an Expert".

Even though this might sound funny, probably that is the reason why we give those sensitive positions to whitemen [the experts!!!!]

4.04 White (Ghanaian) Chief?, by *Kwame Owusu Danquah, Copenhagen, Denmark*

Tuesday May :4, 1993

In response to Alhassan and Charles, Kwame wrote :

Please let us be a bit careful about what a real chief is and whether the said James Moxon is a proper chief or not. What I know is that the guy is an advisor to the chief of Aburi. What you term real chief is hereditary so Mr. Moxon cannot be a real chief. Please remember that advisors who are often “Odikro”s of villages/settlements are also carried on some occasions. The only thing peculiar about this particular “chief” is the color of his skin. Maybe the chief of Aburi likes the pieces of advice Mr. Moxon gives him. This man, I remember was Osagyefo Kwame Nkrumah’s Director of State Protocol !!!! what is then wrong with his being an Odikro of some small village near Aburi?

4.05 White (Ghanaian) Chief?, by *Francis Dodoo, New Orleans, Louisiana, USA*

Tuesday May 4, 1993

Alhassans’ points below are pretty relevant to my sentiment regarding these expatriate chiefs. first, of all are we against the idea because they are white, or because of specific problems with the individuals? what does it say about the people who chose them as their leaders? are we being “eurocentric” in thinking we know better who their subjects should (or in this case, should not) have as leaders? might they not be deserving of these positions? on what grounds do we think Moxon should not be a leader in Aburi? how many people think it is ok (or actually revel in the fact) that we have Ghanaians elected into the British parliament (or whatever it is)? don’t we even fantasize that one day this Ghanaian chap could lead Britain?

I guess my question is: What is the specific issue?

I missed the program (60 minutes) because I was flying between a conference in San Francisco and home (New Orleans), but I got ‘briefed’ about it the minute I walked in the door, and again an hour later when I called San Francisco to tell friends I had arrived safely. The impression I got is that 60 minutes could and should have done a better job...looked at the deal from other perspectives, etc.. But, what I’m hearing on the net is a different objection; one in which we believe the choices of chiefs are wrong. is this true? who’s decision in it? Finally, can we convince ourselves that many of our ‘own’ Ghanaian chiefs do not look down on their subjects, and think of them in a similar vein? let’s examine our prejudices in light of what we profess to be!

4.06 White (Ghanaian) Chief I?, by *Alex Nana-Benyin Dadson, San Jose, California USA*

(Monday May 3, 1993)

We need some serious libation to pacify the ancestors for we have wronged them. I also saw this lily white chief being tossed about in his palanquin yesterday on 60 minutes.

This white guy is the Obonyah of Onyase in the Central region. He wields quite a bit of power (similar to Nana Ayebiakwa of the Efutu) reporting directly to Nana Mbra of Oguaa. These days the whole hierarchy thing is completely messed up so this guy can get away with murder.

I caught part of the 60 minutes program. Apparently this Cambridge educated White man stayed behind after Ghana’s independence in 1957 and somehow found his way to the throne. Unfortunately, in our massive blindness, we willingly give leadership positions to the very people who helped make the mess we find ourselves in today. In Briwa (also in the Central region), a German road contractor by name Klienebudeh (??) was made honorary chief for filling a couple of craters in the downtown area of Briwa. How easily we profane the highest offices within our gubernatorial system!

But all this is not at all surprising. What else would you expect of a people who have very little concept of their own history? We forget what the Europeans did so easily; in fact we accept nonsense about ourselves from them!

Back to this white man - anyway it so happens that he became sick with malaria a couple of years ago and returned to his native England. He now returns to Ghana only on ceremonial occasions. When asked whether he had had any problems being white he actually spoke the truth about how color blind Ghanaians are and how much he enjoyed being

amongst Ghanaians. He also considered himself a Ghanaian citizen (like our main man). Did this guy have to sleep outside the Ghanaian Embassy in London to get a visa?! HE did remark that Ghanaians were polygamous and that he had some 6 or so wives for himself. He later admitted that he had actually lost track of the actual number. Poor soul!

Despite his looks, he insisted that a Ghanaian chief had to be handsome with no body parts missing including his foreskin. (Vandals what do we call such people? Just kidding!! I beg!).

HE made one remark that struck me. He said that the Gold Coast made a lot of money from the slave trade and that African Americans should not think the slave trade was just an evil white man thing. Now that's when I realized that the American media was trying to pull yet another fast one. Infact in no time my phone started ringing off the hook; a sister I know demanded an explanation and so did a brother. I told them that for as long as Ghana was called Gold Coast, the white man was in control. This obonya and his "bronyi kariah" counter-parts grew fat from those profits if any. That is not to say that a few cheap Ghanaians did not make money. Consider the fool John Hammond of Komenda who was paid by the Dutch to come out of retirement to supply more slaves!!

Well, what do we do? I can assure you that the African Americans who watched 60 minutes yesterday are pretty pissed off. I am thinking that a couple of us should write a letter to 60 minutes. Okyeame what do you think?

4.07 White (Ghanaian) Chief II?, by Alex Nana-Benyin Dadson, San Jose, California, USA

(Tuesday May 4, 1993)

It is the color of his skin that ought to disqualify him from ever holding such a high position in Ghana! It does not really matter what kind of advice he can give the other chiefs; the important thing is his allegiance - is it to the white queen of England or is it to his African counterparts in Ghana? When allegiance cannot be explicitly determined we ran into very serious potential problems. In the Mafia you don't stand a chance to get anywhere if it is not clear what side you are on.

Conclusion: A white man should never come close to a chief's throne. I personally don't care whether he is Einstein or Gauss, they are all the same. If I can catch hell for my skin color in Massachusetts or Germany, skin color definitely becomes very important.

Until we stop giving outsiders sensitive and privileged positions in Ghana, we should not be surprised about the information they have about our national security, economic strength etc. This is the kind of information that can be manipulated to discipline us whenever they decide that "we have stepped out of line". Why can't we stop the cycle of being underdogs to other people by cutting out all this "Ghanaian niceness"! Look at what it buys us - on national TV, this "handsome" chief tells African Americans that we made money from the slave trade when he was the one in control!!! Do we know the damage he just did to the process of uniting people of African descent?!

How many Ghanaians abroad can honestly say it has been an all round good experience to have left Ghana? But guess what? People like Moxon won't give up their Ghanaian citizenship along with the extra privileges that come with it based on skin color for anything in the world. And as for us, we will continue to do the unthinkable to become citizens of other countries only to be treated like n-gg-rs!!

It's simple. If I do not stand a fly's chance of becoming the governor of a racist state in the south even if I could conjure golden stools from the heavens at my leisure, why on earth should Moxon dance adowa in front of me in my own home?? UNACCEPTABLE!

4.08 Color Blind, by Paul Agbedor, British Columbia, Canada

(Tuesday May 4, 1993)

Amanfour, I read people's reactions to the 60 Minutes program on Sunday. Unfortunately, I didn't watch the whole program. But I saw part of it. What I remember Moxon saying is that to Ghanaians, color does not mean anything. I am not sure, but I don't think it implies that Ghanaians are color-blind. I understood that statement to mean that Ghanaians do not discriminate about the color of the skin. He went on to say that he does not feel like a white man among Ghanaians. Maybe he said something else I didn't hear, but from what I heard, he is not portraying Ghanaians as being color-blind. What do others think? I think it is a compliment. For the statement that Africans also participated in the slave trade, I don't think that is a lie. It is true to some extent. It only strengthens the point that we Africans have been playing second fiddle to the whiteman for quite a long time, to the point that some of our great grandparents allowed themselves to be coerced by the white man to capture their own people and sell them into slavery. That mentality is still with us. There are still Ghanaians today who would find every means to get what they want (no matter what the cost) even if it jeopardizes the safety of their own people - selfishness. So don't let us be too mad at Moxon. We should rather ponder over these things and ask ourselves whether our mentality is changing. I rest my case, but please, don't attack me too hard.

4.09 James Moxon, by *Charles Awasu, Syracuse, New York, USA*

(Tuesday May 4, 1993)

To further the discussion on the Moxon issue, I fault the guy for the way he presented the slave trade issue. Lets consider this points:

1. Moxon for all his Ghanaianess portrayed himself a White man. For that matter he was a poor representative of the country on 60 minutes.
2. Being a chief, he is a public figure and therefore we have the right to critique his actions.
3. How come Moxon a chief is able to retain his dual citizenship. From his performance on 60 minutes his loyalties are purely towards Britain. We cannot be fooled into thinking that with all his generosity he will put Ghana first.
4. The question for me is not so much about eurocentrism. It is about how much damage someone in Moxon's capacity can do. The guy qualifies as a Ghanaian analyst. His utterances will therefore have far reaching effects. It more so terrible if he stands on the pedestal of chieftancy (the bedrock of Ghanaian tradition) to pronounce those eurocentric views. That is the wicked aspect of the whole scenario.
5. Furthermore there is nothing wrong with being anti-eurocentrism, given the damage eurocentrism has done to Ghana and Africa etc. The same nice attitude (the so-called Ghanaian hospitality); Moxon calls it color blind: was what got us into a colonized situation in the first place. If Kwamina Ansah and his folks weren't nice to those colonizers...
6. As an ideology, eurocentrism is based on absolute sense of superiority and no amount of favoritism from whites will change that. Allowing the likes of Moxon etc. into our institutions without any serious evaluation of the consequences is repetition of past mistakes.

4.10 White Chief, by *Kwadwo Osei Dankyi, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada*

(Tuesday May 4, 1993)

There is one thing which bothers me about this Mr. Moxon issue. What I want to know from fellow netters is; Is it customary for someone of Moxon origin to be installed chief or even Odikro in our society? Does our tradition allows that? I think there is something wrong with king makers of the area being ruled by Mr. Moxon today. I wouldn't have been surprised if Mr. Moxon was made the "MMrantehene" (that is Chief of the Youth) but to be installed a chief raises a host of questions about the character of our traditional leaders.

Before I quit let me ask this funny question. Will any of the blacks or foreigners living in Britain today be considered for a common janitorial position at the Queen's palace. Does their tradition allow that? If some people could be fooled by someone's generosity to make him king over them then I think there is something seriously wrong which we have to address to. What I want netters to look at now is to forget about the statements Mr. Moxon made and think of his

qualification as a chief, because if he made any statement that is uncalled for, we have to know that it is the king makers of that community who have given him the mandate to do that.

4.11 James Moxon, by *Francis Dodoo, New Orleans, Louisiana, USA*

(Wednesday May 5, 1993)

Charles wrote, “As an ideology, eurocentrism is based on absolute sense of superiority and no amount of favoritism from whites will change that. Allowing the likes of Moxon etc. into our institutions without any serious evaluation of the consequences is repetition of past mistakes,” I agree that the history of euro-african relations indicates that we MUST seriously evaluate “incursions” by westerners. fine, but let us do that FIRST before we criticize ANYONE. that is., let’s evaluate Moxon’s position then indict HIM if need be. It may be possible that he has done more for our folks than we have or ever will, knowing the mentalities of some us.

I still say we can indict 60 minutes (and that does not mean we MUST “absolve” Moxon of any blame) for the way they dealt with the issue. BUT we must recognize that the media CAN AND FREQUENTLY DOES put a slant on things that presents them in a totally different light than they actually are...I guess what is bugging me is how quickly we are jumping on Moxon who was not on 60 minutes to represent Ghana so I see no reason why we should evaluate him on that score.

On Charles assertion that “How come Moxon a chief is able to retain his dual citizenship. From his performance on 60 minutes his loyalties are purely towards Britain. We cannot be fooled into thinking that with all his generosity he will put Ghana first,” if he retains dual citizenship that means the laws permit it, don’t blame HIM for that. As for the comment “don’t be fooled into thinking he will put Ghana first” .obviously the people he “reigns” over must be benefiting from him more than they do from you or me, even though we are Ghanaians AND BLACK. What has Moxon done? Let us identify this and then lynch him if we have to; but not before that!

4.12 White Chief, by *Francis Dodoo, New Orleans, Louisiana, USA*

(Wednesday May 5, 1993.)

While you are criticizing our king makers and traditional leaders for a decision they obviously deemed appropriate, why don’t you give us reasons why you believe there must be something wrong with their characters. In fact, why don’t you outline for us what the appropriate guidelines should be in the selection of leaders in Aburi. Maybe one of our United Kingdom-based netters can verify the fact that there is a Ghanaian in the British parliament...true? if this is so, then I guess we have gone at least a step beyond what Dankyi refers to as “common janitorial position at the queen’s palace”.

Look, my fellow people, it is okay to have negative opinions about others but let us try to provide reason when we openly criticize others. Stereotypes have hurt us all as blacks and Africans and we have to remain above that. such is the sign of culture. again, I will say Moxon may be a poor choice BUT if we think so let us please provide valid reasons (which i don’t think race is) otherwise how much better can we be than the racists we see everyday? Our own national leader has some white blood, and regardless of whether you think he is or is not doing a fine job, it has nothing to do with the color of his skin.

4.13 White (Ghanaian) Chief?, by *Eddie Kwabena Amoakuh, San Jose, California, USA*

(Wednesday May 5, 1993)

It’s hard to believe that any blackman could justify this Moxon guy being a Chief in Ghana. I didn’t see the 60 Minute program, but I’ve been reading the discussions with interest and telling myself, well I always knew we were fucked

(freedom of expression here) and this whole story is just another slap in the face for all the injustices that have been visited upon us by Europeans. A slap on top of many others. I would have let it rest at that until I started reading responses from people who were actually trying to justify the whole thing. Then I started feeling very sick to my stomach. I wish I was in the same room with them so that I could vomit all over them.

I could not agree with Nana Benyin more on his assessment, so I won't go much more into that. But note that when it comes to time to infiltrate our institutions and our very beings, whites have a broad choice of Ghanaians who they can utilize. This is how it has always worked. I don't know whether these people pretend not to see what is going on, or perhaps fantasize that one day whites will accept them on an equal footing. Perhaps in their wild efforts at trying to sound objective and professorial they come to believe in their fantasies. The point is that we didn't make up the rules of engagement. They did, and we therefore have to apply it to them in equal measure. And as such, no white has any business being a Chief in Ghana. Period! We don't need any wannabees to try and justify it. Whites have done enough damage to our people, and the greater part of it is psychological.

4.14 White (Ghanaian) Chief by *Paul Opoku-Mensah, Trondheim, Norway*

(Wednesday May 5, 1993.)

I have been enjoying the discussions on the said topic and would want to make a few comments (hopefully without repeating what others have already said).

I object absolutely (actually I detest) the idea of having a white who is a REAL chief in Ghana not because he is white per se, but because of the psychological hangover this development is likely to result in.

In our determination to develop as a nation, we need (and must seek) help from which and whatever source. BUT we must guide against policies and practices which go to reinforce the already established notion that the blackman is not capable of developing unless LED by the whiteman? For all the good Moxon might have done the people of Aburi, believe me his choice as the real chief has succeeded (I hope not!) in reinforcing the idea that they need the whiteman to be their leader before any meaningful development of their area can be achieved. Changing this mindset is going to take ages, if it can be changed at all. In this respect, I have no choice but to reiterate that I would prefer self determination (IN POVERTY) to this kind of psychological enslavement (ALBEIT IN PROSPERITY).

Having said this, let me emphasize that people like Moxon who are genuinely helping in the development of our country (and there are surely a lot of them in Ghana and elsewhere in Africa) need to be acknowledged and honored, and it in this respect that I will support making them "HONORARY CHIEFS", irrespective of their SKIN. I liken this to the Queen of England knighting a Foreign national or better still a University conferring an honorary degree on a philanthropist (although the said philanthropist might never had been to any formal school). Mind you, the University does not go so far as to make such an individual the vice-chancellor. That is just the mistake we have made in making Moxon and his likes "real" chiefs. This kind of thing can never be justified.

1. I don't want to comment any further on the issue of Ghanaians being color blind. I rather want to know if it is not SUICIDAL to remain color blind. Come to think of it, in being color sensitive, we are just returning the compliments
2. As to a Ghanaian being a member of the British Parliament, forget it! The guy might have a Ghanaian father but he got to Parliament because he was and still is a BRITISH citizen. With Ghana not allowing dual citizenship, I wonder if it is worth "deceiving" ourselves that "one of us" is in the Commons. Furthermore we should make the all-important distinction between being a member of the "House of Commons" and being a member of the "Royal family"

4.15 White (Ghanaian) Chief, by *Kwame Owusu Danquah, Copenhagen, Denmark*

(Wednesday May 5, 1993.)

I will detest the idea of a white person being a REAL chief in Ghana because we would be making a mockery of our traditions. Please let us use the facts in our discussion. The man is not a REAL chief, he is just an Odikro (a non hereditary position) of a settlement he himself started. The Aburi people have their own chief who is also the Adontenhene of Akuapem.

4.16 White (Ghanaian) chief, by *Paul Opoku-Mensah, Trondheim, Norway*

(Wednesday May 5, 1993)

Kwame Danquah's reaction to my first posting on the said issue seems to indicate that Moxon is not a real chief. My question is: Why should he wait all this time when Charles Awasu and Alhassan have all come on the net to confirm that the guy is a real chief.

Correcting some of these things immediately they come on the net would do a lot of good in the future.

In the meantime, let me state that my arguments were based on the "facts" supplied on the net before Kwame Danquah came with his objection. While we are at it, can anyone confirm (finally I hope) whether Moxon is a "real" or "honorary" chief.

And finally, finally please "Odikro" is not a "honorary" appointment. It is hereditary! Could some cultural experts help us here. Titles like "Nkosohene", "Mmranthene" etc. are honorary.

4.17 The Moxon Affair: How wrong you all are!, by *Isaac Thompson, Pittsburgh Pennsylvania, USA*

(Wednesday May 5, 1993)

For those of you foaming about the mouth over Moxon and wondering if a Black person could have insinuated himself into such equivalent place of power in England, let me remind you: Prince Charles recently broke tradition and hired the "first Rastafarian" as a royal shepherd--yes, you heard me, a shepherd, as in someone who tends goats and sheep. Now, if that is not "progress" I don't know what is! They are celebrating it in England as evidence of Old Boy Charles' "political correctness" and indeed of the entire Royal Family. The Gods willing--and the honorable prince permitting, of course--the Brother could be promoted to "garden boy" next year (or the year or some years after that). Which would be even more "progress"--beats driving a cab in New York City! And then who knows, 60, 70, at most a hundred years from now England could have a Rasta king (or queen). Probably a little sooner, if we consider the member of the Royal family (about 600th in line for the throne) who some years ago, while studying Rastafarians, fell in love with one and married him. In either case, when the Day of Rasta in Buckingham Palace arrives we shall have avenged Moxon's uppitness! And speaking of "foreigners" in high places: Some years ago, I wrote a letter to Rawlings airing my views on some issues. A lady--with a Sackey last name--wrote back in his behalf as his Director of Public Information (or some such title). Later, friends told me she was European of some sort. I have never been able to verify that, but I thought then and still do that it was interesting. I could only imagine an Adjua Manu or Akosua Afriyie answering Bush's letters for him! Hmmm....

4.18 White Ghanaian Chief, by *Ebenezer Annan, Halifax, Nova Scotia Canada*

(Wednesday May 5, 1993)

It was interesting reading the various responses on the above issue and I wish to add a few thoughts. I personally missed the show on 60 minutes but putting together what I have read from the net I think we are talking about James

Moxon, the author of a book entitled “VOLTA: MAN’S GREATEST LAKE”, published by Ebenezer Baylis and Sons Ltd., 1969.

I do not have to repeat many of the points raised in Awasu’s rather informative piece but if we are talking about the same guy I can vouch my neck to say that he does not deserve the laurels awarded him as a Ghanaian Chief. This is not so much because he is white but more importantly due to the fact that he is a clear effigy of “colomentalism” with all the brutish representations.

The problem I have though is not with James Moxon but with the institution of chieftancy in Ghana and the reasons for which someone like Moxon would be enstooled and treated with so much glamour. Does Chieftancy as we (as one time students of Ghanaian history) know it still maintain its relevance or significance in our society? Does Moxon’s enstoolment give an indication of lack of knowledge or some form of ignorance (not in a negative way) on behalf of our people. After all it was not that long that Moxon lived and worked in Ghana. Do people have to be enstooled just because they claim to be part of the society even though they may be known to have played on the same society’s ignorance to literally perpetuated the enslavement?

Well, I guess I’ll hold my fire here but sincerely I do not think that James Moxon deserves to be a chief in Ghana if Chieftancy would retain (and I believe it would in the future) its importance in our society.

4.19 James Moxon, by *Charles Awasu, Syracuse, New York USA*

(Wednesday May 5, 1993)

I still cling to my initial position that we are right to critique Moxon.

1. It is sad that those who didn’t watch the show come out so strongly to defend Moxon. I wonder what they are defending.
2. I know James Moxon. The guy has done some good in Ghana. Actually until his performance on 60 minutes I had nothing against him. I always thought of him as a good model. I’m critiquing him not as a person but as a chief. Those are two different roles. that is if I meet Moxon today, I’ll shake his hand but will point out to him that he was a poor representation of a chief.
3. Did Moxon appear on 60 minutes because he was a chief or because he was a British? What was the motivation of 60 minutes in giving the part to Moxon other than the Asantehene or any other chief? Why was Moxon given the part on 60 minutes?
4. I fault Moxon on the following points: a) his narration on the slave trade (which was an eurocentric view) b) his justification for being a chief (color blind Ghanaian attitude) c) his answer to the question: “Do you consider yourself a Ghanaian?” He answered: “I am a British citizen...(long pause) and I also consider myself a Ghanaian.” (to me that is a show of true “color”).
5. I concluded that Moxon was on 60 minutes not because he was a British itizen but because he was a Ghanaian chief. Based on that, I think he was poor representation of the institution. (Others can attribute that to media anipulation or whatever)
6. If Moxon is an honorary chief, who gave him the right to be carried in a palanquin? Honorary chiefs don’t get carried in Palanquins. The show depicted him being carried in a palanquin on more than 3 occasions. From my area sub-chiefs don’t even get carried in a palanquin.
7. As to his generosity, the guy is very kind. But besides the point. Where did he get all those resources? How much resources did he exploit? How much land did he appropriate? How much cheap labor? Who buys his farm products?
8. The point by Isaac Thompson is ludicrous. The employment of a Rasta shepherd is just another reinforcement of serfdom, just like the Aburi soccer stars who carry Moxon in a palanquin in exchange for Adidas boots. (Is that an exchange of birth right to ...)
9. Lest we forget: a Fante proverb, literally said: “If you are fighting an enemy who has not laid down his/her weapon you don’t lay yours down” The problem in Ghana and Africa is either we have not yet identified the enemy or we have laid down our weapons prematurely.

10. If you want to know why Moxon's succeeded, you should ask the same question why the most successful in the scanty private sector in Ghana are Indians, Koreans, Chinese and others of Middle Eastern origin. The question: Are private Entrepreneurs in short supply in Ghana?
11. In a country where foreigners are given precedence, even our culture is better represented by outsiders. The next time a "true" Ghanaian chief gets a part in 60 minutes, we can continue the discussion. Meanwhile let the FREAK SHOW continue.

4.20 White (Ghanaian) Chief, by *Francis Dodoo, New Orleans, Louisiana USA*

(Wednesday May 5, 1993.)

Paul provides a first argument for excluding expatriates that I can relate to; that of POTENTIAL adverse psychological effects. However, I don't think it in anyway indicates that no "blackman" (and I hope he will extend this to black women also) is capable of ruling themselves. I can't believe the people of Aburi picked Moxon as a statement that there were no black people capable to rule. I don't believe that is the determining criterion... meanwhile, I must state that I too BELIEVE IN THE NEED FOR SELF DETERMINATION but I am scared of the hatred that derives from racism engulfing all of us, as we become racist. is it possible that we can guard against the psychological diminishment of having a white leader by EDUCATING our sisters and brothers, many of whom are in the rural areas, who have little knowledge of the history of euro-African relationships, that way they can make more informed choices about their leaders, and we won't have to "judge" their choices. Maybe, we the educated have let down our comrades as much as the white people have, by not sharing knowledge with them. We learn and then we run off and leave them in Aburi. They make what we consider to be uninformed choices and then we holler at the white folk. They (whites) have hurt us; no doubt, but what have we the educated done to alleviate the situation of our folk? Time for some introspection here.

And while I am on this issue of psychological whatnots; do we as male Ghanaians consider the psychological effects of hoarding leadership (and other opportunities) to ourselves. What do we have to say about what this does to the mindset of the female half of our country? Are we just concerned about getting the white man out so we can assume the role, or will we (as we must) share chieftancy with women? Or is this against our CULTURE?

I have been the most vocal of the minority (and I do recognize that I am in the minority, if not alone, on his issue), YET EVEN I HAVE NOT DEFENDED MOXON. what I have done is asked us to have more reason than merely race to discredit an individual. I did state at the outset that I missed the show. How could I then defend him. what I'm trying to do is get us above and beyond race. My problem then is with the issue of disqualifying anyone (not just Moxon) on the basis of skin color. you provide the sort of rationale I have been asking for So Moxon's loyalty may disqualify him, not all whites should be disqualified. Does anybody from Legon remember Van Landewijk (the man with the beard)? Like you all, I believe in self-determination. however, I detest racism (even against whites).

The second fear I have is this. are we the out-of-africa educated, becoming colonialist when we insist that we know what is best for the Aburi folks than they do themselves? Strikes me that was the same argument the British had when they came yonder. no? We are not better than our partners at home, and they are just as rational as we are. Our king makers are very wise, and they can make decisions themselves. Guess what they may be using Moxon to develop their area, recognizing that he will pay for the post. If so, none of us is qualified to make a counter judgment for them.

4.21 James Moxon, by *Isaac Thompson, Pittsburgh Pennsylvania USA*

(Wednesday May 5, 1993)

I was going to call it a day, but Francis Dodoo got me! Francis, I think you were doing well with your belabored apologia until you got around to comparing anyone speaking out about the Aburi-Moxon affair to a "colonialist". (Which incidentally makes you one, more or less). How could you? How could you, in good conscience, compare a Ghanaian legitimately debating issues affecting his people to a colonizer whose sole aim was to better himself at the expense of others? In a sense, we--the so-called "educated" (or the Beautiful Ones), are in a more privileged position to see through Moxon and realize the larger implications of his purported charity, whatever they may be, than our

kindred back home are. Why? Not because we are superior and feel so (the Gods curse those who do!), but because we have been to the White man's land and discovered that the mythological superiority which he so carefully cultivated in us through colonialism and whose effects linger on is just that: a mythology. (read, for example, Edgerton's "Mau Mau--An African Crucible" and see how the British took pains to avoid being seen (and thus perceived) as capable of manual labor, their fear being that we would discover they were mortals like us. This of course reinforced the aura of superiority which they had succeeded in planting in our minds through Caucasian religious objects and through their dominance in all positions of authority). I remember how as a kid growing up in various parts of Ghana we (kids) traded myths among ourselves to explain why we thought the White man was "better" than us, with all his fancy homes up the hill, fine cars, and stuff. (A typical one--and this was popular in Agona Swedru, where I spent some time--was that God first created the White man and when he was finished he used the left-over clay to create Black people. Thus our poverty and their relative affluence!) No wonder later in Accra when I saw a White man drunk and falling all over his face I convinced myself that it could never be; WE, the children of a lesser God, were capable of such public misbehavior, but certainly not a white man! How many times did I not hear Older folks look at a radio, say, and marvel either in Twi, "Abrofo beyie" or in Ga (Brofo aye). (White man's witchery) without the slightest thought that ANYONE could build a radio if they so choose to do. And how many times have you not heard your friends here say how shocked they were when they came to America and saw a White man eat from a garbage pail! I can go on and on, but I'm sure you get the picture: We were all brought up in one form or another to view the White man as God. And there are many in Ghana TODAY, including people in leadership positions, who still do. As an avowed Garveyite, I consider this mind-set our biggest obstacle to progress and self-sufficiency. And in removing this obstacle, one need not be a racist, one need not create some mythology or claim some form of biological superiority over anyone else. Instead of superiority we assert our (latent) ability. I hate no White person in my desire to seek the interest of Africa; it's a waste of time. All we say (those of us who appreciate the full dimensions of this problem), is that we can do, as Garvey said, what others have done we can do, too. Whatever help we get from others, and we are bound to need some help along the way, should be premised on mutual respect and devoid of dependency and fawning...When I speak of Aburi, I speak of Ghana, I speak of Africa, and I speak of everything African. If that makes me a "colonialist", then I plead guilty--without remorse. And this, Anuanom, will be my rambling for the day.

4.22 White (Ghanaian) Chief, by *Paul Opoku-Mensah, Trondheim, Norway*

(Thursday May 6, 1993.)

I never intended coming to this issue again but for Francis Dodoo's rejoinder. The use of "blackman" in my posting was and is still meant to be interpreted in the generic sense. (I think that was obvious in my posting). Let me further add that much as I agree that woman in our society have (and actually are still) being neglected when it comes to leadership, I don't think we should just pick words out of context to pontificate on the issue. At this stage what we need are concrete suggestions as to how the situation can be improved. There has been enough description of the situation (both by academics and politicians).

I thought Charles Awasu had done enough to convince all of us that some of us are seemingly "attacking" Moxon not because we hate the white race but because our history has shown us that seemingly harmless things like having a white chief can be disastrous in the long run. In crying out, we are only trying to prevent a repeat of history. A critical look at the TV program will undoubtedly show that our fears are not unfounded. Just look at the scenario: A Ghanaian chief redefining the history of the slave trade. The next time (who knows) he would be saying the whiteman was "forced" into the whole thing because the blackman was already selling his kith and kin. And where would we be to correct this misrepresentation?

In my original posting, I did enough to stress the importance of recognising the role of "whites" who are genuinely helping in our development and honoring them. I still maintain that there are other ways we can do this other than making chiefs--and hence our spokesmen.

4.23 White (GHANAIAN) Chief? by *Yaw Oheneba-Sakyi, Potsdam, New York*

(Friday May 7, 1993)

I'm really enjoying the discussion on James Moxon, the White GHANAIAN chief. Although I missed the 60 minutes show (one of the only rare occasions I had missed it in several years), I think it's proper to add my voice to the on-going discussion. If indeed Mr. Moxon "... came off as a true colonialist..." (Charles Awasu, May 6:21:07), that should concern us as Ghanaians, as Africans, and as Africana (Africans in the Diaspora) people. I share with Nana Benyin the concerns that some of his African-American friends have raised. My critique is not so much centered on the man Mr. James Moxon himself, but the forces that he represents. Critical questions have to be asked of 60 minutes and what they sought to portray. If anybody had read the Paul Johnson's article "Colonialism's Back - and a Moment Too Soon" (New York Times Magazine April 18, 1992) as I have, one begins to wonder the timing of the 60 Minutes piece showing a white man being ridden in a palanquin in Ghana (supposedly on one of the cultural centers of Africa), and being given the mandate to rule over his subjects.

Now, due to lack of space, I'm not going to go into any details of this New York Times article, but will only highlight some few quotes from it. For example, Paul Johnson writes: "We are witnessing today a revival of colonialism, albeit in a new form. It is a trend that should be encouraged, it seems to me, on practical as well as on moral grounds." He continues "...it is obvious that Africa, where normal government is breaking down in a score or more states, is the most likely theater for such action." It is Paul Johnson's view "that the appeals for help come not from Africa's political elites, who are anxious to cling to the trappings of power, as from ordinary desperate citizens, who carry the burden of misrule." His whole argument (if I understood him correctly) is that Africa benefited enormously from the white man's domination, and that since the white man was forced to leave, the continent has been besieged with problems to the point where only the HOMECOMING (my own emphasis) of the "Kwasi Obroni" could save the sons and daughters of Africa. Anyway, if netters haven't read this article yet, please do.

In reading about Mr. Moxon's chieftancy and who it was portrayed on the American national TV, I can help it but put it in a wider context of the New York Times article and the whole talk about "The New World Order". I believe we owe it to ourselves to explore further and look for some underlying motives and explanations. Is it sheer co-incidence?? Or is it designed to discredit Ghana and show the vulnerability of its cultural institutions and symbols (among which is the Kente cloth which in some quarters has become a symbol of Black African pride among African Americans) ?? Let's keep on talking.

4.24 White (GHANAIAN) Chief?, by John Düwu, Guelph, Canada

(Friday May 7, 1993)

Could it be that Ghana is being considered as a highly possible point to start the "re-colonization", since she championed the independence/emancipation campaign some years back? Your questions are worth pondering about, but how do we start to tackle the problem of "re-colonization" since some of us have sold our conscience out and would not see anything wrong with whatever a "whiteman" does? WE ARE IN A VICIOUS CYCLE!!!

4.25 White (GHANAIAN) Chief?, by Stephen Agyepong, Lowell Massachusetts USA

(Friday May 7, 1993)

I have been following the discussion on the 60 Minutes program, which I watched, with interest. At first I thought it was no big deal, the people who made him a chief have every right to do so. I was thinking why should we, though Ghanaians but non subjects of Chief James, pretend we know better than those Aburi King makers and allocate to ourselves the right to decide for these people who should or should not be elected to lead them.

After reading Oheneba's recent article which referenced The New York Times article and what it was purported to portray, and from what I know, I think those King makers, probably do not know any better. What do I know?

1. I know that some Ghanaian journalists, academicians, etc. have been approached by such organizations such as the BBC TV, etc. to do documentaries. The theme will be, a call for Re-Colonization of Africa.
2. I know that the US and mostly other western countries went to "liberate Somalia."

3. Reading Oheneba's article, I know that one Johnson writing for the New York Times has already called for colonization of Africa.

Putting 1 and 2 together, it seems to me that the 60 Minutes program was meant to portray the fact that being ruled by whites will be acceptable to us, color blind folks. May be it was a call for Colonialists, showing how they, the colonialists will be treated if they decide to go and "liberate those Africans." Maybe The 60 Minutes program was one step in their systematic march towards building a case for Re-Colonization of Africa. Well they are already making us their Chiefs so what is the problem with us going in and doing it ourselves. They have plans, short and long term plans. Who knows if one of their long term plans were to give us "independence" but make sure we don't do well so they have reason to come back.

Folks let's watch out they are coming and they are going to use our King makers, Leaders and the People as they did during the Slave Trade, and other times. Chief James discussion of the Slave Trade should not be taken at the face value as I did when I first heard him.

Africa is crying out for a few good, honest, dedicated Leaders and King makers who know what is going on in the global village. People who are willing to help him find the way and if they cannot help will not sell her short. Are we going to answer her call?

4.26 White (GHANAIAN) chief?, *Yaw Oheneba-Sakyi, Potsdam, New York USA*

(Friday May 7, 1993)

I do agree that race should not be used as the sole criterion in making judgments about anything. However, I also feel strongly that when it comes to issues like "the Moxon Guy episode" that might have serious implications for national pride, then we have an obligation to search for more answers. Further inquiries may help some of us to determine the motives of such a broadcast on the American National TV with prime time audience. What was the theme of the broadcast? What message was it trying to send? What sorts of varied interpretations emerged out of the broadcast. [For instance, I first heard about the story from my departmental secretary who had her own interpretations about the situation, and wanted some clarifications from me (perhaps to re-affirm her assumptions and long-held stereotypes...)]. How much did this story help/hurt the "Black Soul"?

Your point about not weeding out every white person because they happen to be the wrong color is well said. I couldn't agree with you more. But what agitates me is the psychological impact of seeing black folks (I don't care where ever they might be) carrying a white person shoulder high in this day and age in the name of Chieftancy. In spite of all the problems that are apparent in the institution of Chieftancy (which by the way could be another topic of discussion), we should not make mockery of what is left. My critique of "the Moxon Guy" is not solely based on race (although race plays a part), but largely on the fact that there is more to the institution of chieftancy than just riding in a palanquin. As many of us are aware, chieftancy has with it a set of beliefs, mythologies, ceremonies, rituals, etc., etc., that guys like Mr. Moxon who are not indigenous to the area would not fully comprehend or might not even care to. That is what worries me but not necessarily his skin color. Let's keep the vigilance!!!

4.27 James Moxon, by *Francis Dodoo, New Orleans, Louisiana*

(Friday May 7, 1993)

Unfortunately few people seem to understand my position, but I am standing by it because that is my conviction.

I know many white people who fought on the side of the nationalists for independence in Ghana; many who fought for civil rights in this country; many who are fighting to end apartheid in South Africa. on the other hand, there are those of our skin color who fought to reverse these (independence, civil rights, apartheid, etc.); real uncle toms. there were many more blacks who, although they didn't fight against reform, stood by passively. So, on this basis, I cannot in any true conscience stand up and say disqualify Moxon, or any other white character, for that matter BECAUSE they are white. I simply cannot. I believe that if we evaluate individual cases MOST whites will get disqualified anyway, and

they will deserve to be; but for other criteria than race. By using race, we stand to hurt ourselves by alienating potential allies (and I use that term, for this development issue is a war we are fighting). I understand most others on the net believe this is a price worth paying to eradicate infiltration and pollution of our purpose. for me, I just cannot see things that way. I just cannot. call me whatever, but I don't think we ought to fight racism with racism. It is amazing that you know Moxon personally. If you think he is (or was) such a good guy, can you fathom why he would come across as he did on 60 minutes? Again, I didn't see the show so I'll ask...could 60 minutes have manipulated the product? I don't know him; neither do I have any personal feelings about him as an individual. but, to reiterate, unless we have reason to get rid of him, i...

4.28 Still on Moxon, by *Charles Awasu, Syracuse, New York USA*

(Saturday May 8, 1993)

This is not an effort to crush Jim Moxon but it is a pure reaction to some of the points raised by Fancis. It seems to me that, Francis does not think that the actions of Moxon on CBS outweigh any sensitivity to white folk.

1. First, It should be clear that anyone who thinks criticizing Moxon is a racist act is not being sensitive to the harm caused to those who have been colonized. Moxon presented viewpoints which were purely eurocentric.
2. The idea that by critiquing Moxon one is being paternalistic towards the Aburi people is wrong. If by so doing we come off as knowing better than the Aburi chief makers then so be it. Knowledge is progressive and in that case we might now know things that the Aburi chief makers didn't know at the time. It is as well that a generation from now, knowledge will increase to the point whereby some will think the okyeame discussions were really antiquated. That is reality. We are living in enlightened times and therefore our reasoning now might tend to judge past mistakes.
3. Paternalism and colonialism are not synonymous. It is therefore wrong to suggest that being paternalistic is like acting colonialist. That is a faulty illustration. The former is misguided goodwill and the latter is barbaric invasion with the intention to subjugate and exploit.
4. There is little in the arguments that some whites are good. That whites took part in nationalism, civil rights etc. That in itself is just an apology for whites. Can one compare the good action of whites to their bad actions? Can the goodwill by Moxon and others atone for the somewhat permanent damage done to the colonized? No one is suggesting that there are no good whites. I hope the whites can also acknowledge the good the Ghanaians and Africans have done.
5. The comment that some are more interested in anti-colonialism than in discussing feminist issues is also faulty. Faulty, because colonialism is a major contributor to sexism in Ghana etc. The capitalist mode of production which took the males to gold mines and farm plantations far away from their wives and children. The division of labor which made men rich whilst women remain poor by allowing men to plant cash crops is just another.
6. Some will say colonialism is over. Yet the eurocentrism is alive. That is the enemy. Unfortunately that is going to be with us until we collapse that European myth. I have not arrive at the point to cancel the wrong of eurocentrism by the good. There is no balance.

4.29 What's Color got to do with it?, by *Sampson Dankyi Asare, Oslo, Norway*

(Saturday May 8, 1993)

I can never foresee the Aburi people (or for that matter any other tribe) choosing another tribe member to be their chief. One netter said "there is nothing wrong with him --Moxon, the only thing being wrong is his color" I guess we still have a long way to go, when we as Ghanaians still consider that there is no difference in color.

Take the following that came up all through the media:

1. Soon after the Los Angeles riot there was a program on CNN people could phone and just add their voices to what happened. One "white" (because they are not white --they have pink and spotted pigments) SAID: " Who is Koo Dakey to ask for equal rights?? It is all the faults of Kennedy (former US President.), by giving them equal and civil Rights"

2. A Ghanaian working at a Norwegian factory was asked what were our forefathers doing when they (pinks) came to our country? . Didn't they (our forefathers) have guns to fight them?
3. Discovery Channel showed the Slave Trade with special emphasis on the Gold Coast (Ghana) -- Christianborg castle. One of the issues raised was that to make us "black" (we are not blacks) submissive they "whites" encouraged us to attend Church Services.

Where are we going when we still have some "blacks" who are ready to give their beds and seats to these pinks! And more insulting allowing them to rule us in the open light .

4.30 What's Color got to do with it? by *Kwame Owusu Danquah, Copenhagen, Denmark*

(Monday May 10, 1993)

In answer to Mahamudu's question "What chance would a Ga, Ewe, Ibo , Mamprusi,.....person, no matter how well meaning, have stood of being made a chief in that area?" I have an example. D.K. Poison (I think he is a Ga) was made an Ankobea of Akropong last year. That position entitles him to be carried in a palanquin during the Odwira Festival. That is the same position Mr. Moxon has in Aburi where he is also the Odikro of a nearby settlement.

I do not understand why netters still keep on referring to this Moxon as the chief of Aburi. HE IS NOT A REAL CHIEF. The Aburi people have their own chiefs and a number of Ankobeas who are advisors to the chief. Some of these advisors are also Auditors of nearby villages.

4.31 What's Color got to do with it? by *Alhassan Manu, Davis, California USA*

(Monday May 10, 1993)

Further to Kwame Danquah's piece on the above subject. I think Kwame Danquah will be in real trouble if he goes to his town/village and regards the Ankobeahene or Nifahene or Benkumhene or Odikro as not a REAL chief. That is the impression I gather by reading his latest piece that because Moxon is Ankobea, he is not a real chief. The fact that Moxon is not an Omanhene does not mean he is NOT a real chief.

From the transcript supplied by Jude, Moxon himself does not understand the title "Ankobea". Ankobeahene does not mean the chief who looks after the chief's wife when the chief goes to war.

The Nifahene (literally right-wing chief) for example is supposed to take the right wing of a war field. Benkumhene (left-wing chief) takes charge of the left wing. Twafohene (fore-runner) boldly faces the enemies head-on. Ankobeahene (literally 'does-not-go-anywhere' chief) stays behind, while all the rest have gone to war. His duty is to defend the town, [not just the chief's wives], in case the enemies come from behind.

Why wouldn't Moxon believe Ankobeahene is only to protect wives. Having lived in Africa for all these years he still maintains all "Africans are polygamous". People who cannot stick to one woman. What a shameful representative.

My message is: We should be very weary of neo-colonialists. It's time we put our records straight, by the right authorities. Not opportunists. And when the records are being twisted we should quickly point them out and make the necessary corrections.

4.32 White Chief, by *Yaw Afrane-Okese, Cape Town, South Africa*

(Monday May 10, 1993)

An example of Kwame's analysis:

President Rawlings has at least one title of a chief in northern Ghana, if not more, as far as I can remember. How about that? Is he from any of the northern tribes, Mr. Mahamadu? Remember that he can hardly speak even his mother's tongue or any other Ghanaian language meaningfully, yet he speaks his father's tongue like a parrot. Should he therefore qualify as the chief of the whole country and an honorary chief of some parts of the country? Why not if he is capable and the people genuinely prefer him?

I do agree that we should be cautious of tricks of re colonization but like Francis has been saying the yardstick with which we measure one's qualification for a chief should not necessarily be the darkness of his skin. The chief's capabilities to rule are far more important. He must be well versed in the functions of a chief and his deep knowledge of such traditions are crucial.

In this modern world in which development is very essential rather than wars, it appears very imperative to explore ways of overhauling the whole chieftancy tradition to make it a functional part of our developmental process. Honestly, times have changed and the earlier we thought of redefining the role of a chief the better. They must be made active leaders of their communities and this is where capabilities become important. If we continue to respect them in their present dormant positions, there will always be the tendency for them to be used as stogies by the government of the day.

Point of correction: Kwame, I think your example should have been Prof Azumah and not D K Poison. Is that right?

4.33 Moxon, by *Thomas Yaw Owusu, Toronto, Canada*

(Monday May 10, 1993.)

I did not watch the CBS feature on Moxon, but thanks to fellow netters I now know some of the views he expressed.

For me the issue is not what Moxon said or did not say. That is irrelevant. He may have showered praises on Ghana and Ghanaians, etc. That is not a big deal. What did we expect him to say anyway?. Were we expecting Moxon to say Ghanaians were racist or what?. Obviously he is an astute "chief" and he said what he had to say. In fact Moxon should have added that Ghanaians are the most generous people in the world. Why not?. We have generously offered him a prestigious traditional position.

Let me point out that I am not looking at the Moxon issue from a color perspective. This is not to suggest that the black/white dichotomy is not useful for analytical purposes. Here, however, I would like to argue that if a person is connected to a stool or throne by birth (not naturalization), it would not matter if the color of his skin is green, blue or pink. Of course a foreign national can naturalize as a Ghanaian and stand for election to political office. If he is good and popular enough to be elected through the democratic process, so be it.

Unfortunately, this is not the case with our traditional rulers. I am not an expert on chieftancy in Ghana but I understand that such traditional positions are inherited. The question then is: on what basis (es) did Moxon qualify as a chief?. If it is unacceptable for, say, a Ga to become a chief in a town or village in the Volta region, Or for that matter an Ewe to become a chief in any Ga traditional area, how acceptable can it be for a foreign national - irrespective of the skin of his color, and no matter the length of residence in Ghana and his contribution to the development of the area - to become a chief in any part of Ghana?

4.34 The Moxon Affair, by *Alfred Opoku, Carleton, Canada*

(Monday May 10, 1993)

The debate on the acceptability of "Nana Moxon" (is that his stool name? anyway,...) as a chief in Ghana is quite educative. I seem to sympathize with both sides on different issues, and maybe it's because prior to watching the "60 Minutes" program, I had not envisaged the possibility of this ever happening. The central question seems to revolve

around the fact that Moxon is a white man. So, should it be possible for a white person to be a chief in Ghana? My simple answer is NO!

The explanation to my answer is couched in several issues, some of which have already been discussed on the net, but I'll mention a few. First of all, not every Ghanaian has the "right" to be a chief. If my traditional knowledge is any good, then I remember that this institution is hereditary (whether that is right or not is besides the point). Sure, he was given that title as an honor for his contribution to the town, but is that contribution significant enough to override the fact that he is an "alien". If you listen to his interview, he states that he is both a Ghanaian and a British, sure! Can anyone tell me since when the constitution was amended to accept dual citizenship? If this guy is a dual citizen, the only thing he can be is an honorary chief. To be a chief, a servant of the people, one has to know the customs and also be physically accessible. I don't believe Moxon qualifies under any of these criteria. One thing he said which baffled my mind was his statement that Akan chiefs are not supposed to be circumcised. Other Ghanaians around me quickly looked at me for confirmation. All I could say was, that is not true in Ashanti (am I wrong?).

On the issue of color, I believe it sets a bad precedent for us to look whilst this guy openly belittles our intelligence. In an era of sensitivity of attitudes towards children, he openly displays (obviously staged for the cameras) child abuse by making these little children carry him after what seems to have been a competitive football match. Ghanaians have tolerance for race and color differences and that is a good thing, but when that tolerance is taken advantage of, we need to raise eyebrows. Why was the story carried at all? Is it not strange that at a time when OAU leaders are meeting and taking of demanding reparations for slave trade, CBS shows this lily white person who has been made a chief in what obviously is the most progressive country, this side of the world, and who shamelessly castigates indirectly, our ancestors for benefiting from slave trade. In these matters, it is always essential to read between the lines.

I believe that those who defend Moxon are doing so out of a genuine desire for us to stop assessing people just by where they come from or by the color of their skin. We should be tolerant of their views.

4.35 White Chief, by Ben Ababio, Canterbury, New Zealand

(Monday May 10, 1993)

I think it is the western political structure which has made our chiefs nothing more than white elephants. Would anybody agree with my suggestion that we should create a two-chamber parliament with the Upper Chamber constituted the various (district, regional, national) house of Chiefs?

This way, we would have brought them back to "active" service, I think.

4.36 Africa's Only White Chief, by Adams Bodomo, Trondheim, Norway

(Tuesday May 11, 1993)

This seems to be an almost belated contribution to the Moxon affair. Though I haven't been in much contact with my electronic mail for some time, I have tried, of late, to follow parts of the debate on Moxon and his chieftancy with some interest. I feel there are some issues in the debate that are better belatedly responded to than never.

It has been stated by some netters, notably Kwame Danquah, that Mr. Moxon is not a 'real' chief, that he is only an 'Odikro'. I should however like to mention here that I have a documentary video on Moxon's chieftancy and I have watched it several times over with both Ghanaian and Norwegian friends. Since documentaries, as a film genre, are built more on facts and reality than imagination, I assume that what I saw in the film are hard facts about Moxon's chieftancy and should like to share them with you to help clarify a number of issues.

The title of the documentary itself is enough to tell us that Moxon is a real chief. It is 'AFRICA'S ONLY WHITE CHIEF'. I don't know whether white dominated African countries such as South Africa are also included. In any case, it is explained in the film that there are several white chiefs in Ghana but that Moxon is the only one RECOGNIZED BY THE GOVERNMENT AS A CHIEF.

Further still, or rather to reinforce this recognition, Mr. Moxon, who was the colonial District Commissioner around Aburi, is or can normally still be officially present at durbars in his area. As a matter of fact, in this particular film, there is a durbar scene and the characters there are not imaginary but include contemporary Ghanaian political figures. Even the then, and still, Head of State was physically present and shook hands with Mr. Moxon as one of the chiefs and dignitaries.

The documentary ends with Moxon contemplating whether he should travel the full length as a Ghanaian chief and sanction the mortuary and other postmortem cultural rites for royals of the area to be performed on his dead body.

All these are facts to show that Mr. Moxon is a real, and not an honorary, white chief in Ghana. Mr. Moxon may be an 'Odikro' but by my understanding of this aspect of Ghanaian culture, 'Odikro' is not necessarily only an honorary title. Many Odikros are real chiefs, however small the settlements which they head may be. The political/cultural institution of chieftancy in Ghana is quite hierarchical. That is why we sometimes hear of paramount chief or divisional chief etc. but all these are 'real' chiefs irrespective of the level of their title. You can compare this to all hierarchical systems. In the army, you may have a General, a Colonel, a Corporal, etc. but these share a thing in common: they are 'real' soldiers. And then in the academic system you may have a Professor, a Senior Lecturer, Assistant Lecturer etc. but there is one thing common to them all: they are 'real' lecturers. And even among us students, you have Ph.D. students, M.Phil, MA. undergraduates, Freshmen. But there is one thing we all share in common: 'real' students! Within our chieftancy institution, there are also honorary titles. Most traditional set-ups have them. That is why the Head of State has been conferred a 'Naa' (of something) in Northern Ghana. Other political figures, etc. have got this. These are NOT real chiefs. They are honorary. If they were real chiefs, Rawlings would take so many skins and stools with him to the castle! Honorary titles are by the way quite universal. In that sense it is not only whites who get honorary traditional titles in Africa. Africans have also gotten honorary traditional titles in Europe before. The former Head of State, Hilla Limann got an honorary title in Britain on his state visit there in 1980/81. I remember the Ghanaian papers teasing him as 'Sir Limann' on his return home.

It is however another whole argument when we go beyond the honorary thing and begin to dish out our sacred skins and stools to people who have not crossed the GENEALOGICAL and CULTURAL parameters that must be crossed to become a chief. In the documentary that I talk of, Mr. Moxon did not say a single word in the language of the ancestors of Aburi. How can this chief, this custodian of our cultural heritage, the link between the present and the past, ever communicate with these ancestors? Wouldn't Mr. Moxon have been more appropriate as an honored, respected Philanthropist living peacefully in Aburi than as a real chief?

4.37 The Moxon Affair, by Alfred Opopoku, Carleton, Canada

(Tuesday May 11, 1993)

I believed I tried to argue on two counts, on the bases of nationality (race, if you will) and symbolic significance, why Moxon does not qualify to be a chief. I did not finish my arguments on the second issue, but I believe that the point was made, albeit half-heartedly. First, let me admit that No one I have read, has "defended" Moxon, in the ordinary sense of the word. What I meant to say was that there are some of us who feel that better arguments can be made against Moxon without tying into it the fact that he is a foreigner. I have nothing against the call to refrain from "racist" arguments because I believe a lot of our problems today result from a delineation of the human race into color bars. On the other hand, it is precisely this fact of racial differences that has been used in several instances to demean our intelligence as a people. I have many friends who are not black (chocolate, if you will), and we get along very well. However, there are certain things which identify every society as a unique entity. For Ghanaians, and Africans for that matter, our traditional institutions (including customs, chieftancy, kente etc.) marks us out anywhere we go. While some of these things need to be reformed, they are nonetheless the basis on which we build our pride and heritage. As such, we need to treat them with honor, not demean their significance. It is our duty to defend our institutions and we must begin by ensuring that they don't fall into the wrong hands. Many a time, we try to show our appreciation to others by giving them our prized possessions. In some cases, it is good, but in others, especially where a foreigner is involved, we need to be careful (In this case Kwaw Ansah's "Heritage Africa" can serve as a good example of what we have just done with Moxon).

When Ackah Blay-Miezah “bought” his chieftancy, cries were raised in lot of quarters in Ghana. Why? Because, he was not a rightful heir to the throne. If someone, who is an indigenous son of the land, faced the wrath of the press and even JJ Rawlings for the “crooked” way by which he acquired the title of Nana Ackah Yensu, how can we look on when someone who does not even swear allegiance to the Ghanaian state, is given a free ride in a palanquin. If Rawlings was carried in a palanquin today, I am sure many of us would be openly disgusted, because he has no right to any throne.

To answer Francis, not even black Americans can be given the right to our thrones, unless and until they are fully integrated into our cultural society.

4.38 White Chief, by *Daniel Ashitey, Montreal, Canada*

(Tuesday May 11, 1993)

Allow me to add some more kerosene into the MOXON fire. I heard from a Ghanaian friend here in Montreal that, they say (they say, they say) sometime last year during a conference of black American artists that was held in Accra in which stars like Steve Wonder and Tina Turner attended, Isaac Hayes was made an honorary chief in one of the small districts in the Ada area. The move was to get him to pump money into the stool set up in his name to be used to finance the development of certain projects. He was to visit the place once a year to see how far those projects are going. The Tina Turner was also said to have been made an honorary queen mother in another village in the eastern region for the same purpose. If this is really true, then I am wondering why no one has really brought this up because it falls right within the context under discussion and as such I am inclined to side with Francis Dadoo in believing that probably people are disapproving MOXON as chief based solely on his color.

I think Ghanaians are color blind and money alert. So long as you can dip your hands into your pocket, you can be chief. All you have to do is to prove your Earthly citizenship (we do not want Martians, they are too long to be carried anyway). This is probably what should be looked at, you know that “money dey talk” attitude.

4.39 Moxon Reaction Surprising! by *Charles Appeadu, Seattle, Washington, USA*

(Tuesday May 11, 1993)

I must say that I am surprised that many Ghanaians on this network seem to be surprised and angry about the white Ghanaian Chief. I am surprised because I expect that most of us would know that there are many Ghanaians who, if asked to vote anonymously as to whether we want the whiteman to come back and rule us, will vote yes! Now, don't get me wrong! I am not saying that I agree with those Ghanaians! Infact I DDOOOOONNN'T!! But that's not the point. I must ask myself why those Ghanaians (and I bet they are not few in number) make such preference. I must also ask why most well educated and well-to-do Ghanaians would vote NO (my assumption) to the hypothetical question even though their actions tell a different story. Of course, even if I come to agree that their behavior can be supported by their individual rationality, I would not say that it is RIGHT for a white to be a chief in Ghana (maybe it is not right for anybody to be a chief in Ghana the way chieftancy operates now but this is not the point of this article), but at least I will appreciate their action and, if I really want to change their thinking, will have to improve certain conditions to make it rational for them to vote NO!

Most of us on this network are angry mainly because of our knowledge and experiences of the white man's attitude towards the black man (irrespective of their location on the globe), and also we have lived and studied with white people and convinced ourselves (not necessarily consciously) that we are not different beyond the surface of our skins. But can the average Ghanaian say that confidently? Even the educated Ghanaian still makes the white man his chief by actions which are more destructive to Ghana than the actions of the people who made Moxon chief! I wrote in an earlier article how many educated well-to-do Ghanaians paint every good thing in Ghana bad ... some go as far as saying that potatoes are better, more delicious than yams (PONA YAMs) and that spinach is better than Kontomire etc.

etc. Why are you surprised that some Ghanaians would want the whiteman himself and not only his potatoes or his? Or do you envy them because they have more of the white man than you do?

Of course, I was being sarcastic in the above paragraph but really when you look at things at a deeper, objective level, you should point the finger at us and those of our ancestors who have been in various leadership positions in Ghana in the past. We have thrown away our confidence and have not desired to work towards improving the conditions of our folks. This talking and complaining about Moxon will not do any good for the country except if it reveals to us that, indeed, in a very subtle way, we have all been making white chiefs in our actions and our thinking, and that as long as we keep doing that our mothers and fathers are not expected to do any better they are only being good students (of their learned kids)! What do you say? I know I am making many of you angry but if this anger will lead us to make better decisions in the future, then I don't apologize!

When the learned Ghanaian doesn't want to have anything in common with the uneducated folks, what do you expect his(the uneducated folks') reaction to be if a whiteman (on average perceived as a more "learned" being) relates freely with him and helps him (subtly or otherwise). He will make the white guy a chief! Can you blame them?

Also remember that Ghanaians do not have access to the type of information you have about how the Europeans treat black people. When the been-to-the-whiteman's-lands go back they never mention the suffering they experienced at the hands of the whiteman. Meanwhile they bring cars, electronic goods, money etc. etc. The only thing that is conveyed to the folks is that the white man must be generous ... his country is full of honey! I am not saying that these are necessarily false statements but didn't they experience any other things? Of course you know that it is because of Kuntannism that he conceals those other facts! Shouldn't we change this behavior before we talk about MOXON?

If we really want to see changes in our country for the better, we have to act right from the President right across the population to "common people" like ME. We should act real and not in a fantasy world. Almost everything in Ghana is the reverse of reality. It is everywhere! Remember the typical female UST or Legon student? Her attitude towards clothing, shoes, etc. are not real! Probably it is wrong to lay blame on her. After all she is a product of Ghana! How many of you guys, as poor TAs in Ghana, would even wear runners ("canvas" shoes) to school or to Accra central? Aren't things upside down in such a nation? Isn't it ironic and reverse to reason that the poor always-walking student or TA would despise the comfortable, inexpensive running shoes and instead go for the hard, expensive, Italian shoes? What do you say about this. You want the real problems of Ghana? You have them! You may not see the connection but this same behavior (reverse to real) is that that produces intolerance in our leaders ... they are not real!

Probably, we should learn from the MOXON affairs rather than just talk and get angry. The making of MOXON a chief is consistent with the reverse-to-real Ghanaian attitude. This attitude puts confidence in appearance, and remember to many Ghanaians the pink color has a better appearance than the dark brown color! What DO YOU SAY ?

"WHERE THERE IS NO PRODUCTIVITY, APPEARANCE TAKES THE PLACE OF ESSENCE"

4.40 A Moron for my Chief?, by *James Essegbey, Trondheim, Norway*

(Wednesday, May 12, 1993)

I happen to be someone who has a lot of trouble accepting the chieftaincy institution as it presently is and it is in that light that I add this contribution to the Moxon affair.

There was a time when aging chiefs with no heirs (that is no sons) had a variety of pretty and young "damsels" brought to them in the hope that one of them would arouse the ebbing virility of these chiefs long enough for the latter to sire a baby boy in order for the royal lineage to continue. Some such attempts were successful with the result that one "lucky girl" begot a baby boy at the expense of a speedy dispatch of the then exhausted old chief to his ancestors. These children are then made chiefs even before they are old enough to distinguish between their mothers and grandmothers. If the people are lucky, these children grow up to be responsible leaders. If they are not, they the people find themselves saddled with morons or "rogues" who only sell the stool lands and jewelry.

It is with the above in my mind that I have been following contributions on the Moxon affair which has almost degenerated into an “insult a white man affair” (making Moxon a chief is bad because the white man is a thief etc.). I watched the Moxon documentary without that part where he commented on the slave trade and read the transcript which a fellow netter most thoughtfully provided. My impression is that the documentary paints a good picture of Ghanaians. At least it was one feature in which I didn’t hear the mention of starvation nor civil war nor AIDS. As to the things Moxon said, the one about color is not negative. It just shows that our hospitality does not have any color boundary. As to chiefs having to be uncircumcised, its true isn’t it? And its no crime here to be uncircumcised. And when he says we are polygamous, well, that is not a lie is it? What about his saying that Africans also benefited from the slave trade. Well our forefathers didn’t exactly give these slaves out as “cadeau”. But then people will say that it is a political miscalculation for a chief to say that at a time when we are trying to get some reparations out of the slave trade. I say, it is equally reprehensible for people to come out and document all horrid tales about their country just so that they will get political asylum. And what Moxon said, any other Ghanaian chief (in fact several of them would welcome the opportunity) would say that for a few dollars. So the issue isn’t really what Moxon said. It is whom he is - a white.

Having been in the whiteman’s country for almost three years I have been given cause by several of them to dislike those several. Yet I don’t think these people are worse than some of my fellow blacks. On the other side of the scale, I have encountered whites who have earned my respect because of their honesty, integrity and generosity. Some of these people leave the luxury of their homes to live in the slums somewhere in Africa so that they could help a fellow human being. Should we trade the latter for our reprehensible characters (the Mobutus and his like) just because they happen to be whites). Moxon lived at his place for a while before he was made a chief. To all intents and purpose, he had become one of them (and a better one, judging the people’s choice of him). The king makers are the real people who know the options they had. Maybe besides Moxon, their only other option was either a Moron or a not too reliable “rogue”. I considered the fact that they broke from tradition and chose someone who was not the son of the previous chief a positive one. If they had followed that procedure, Moron would not have inherited the previous chief. And if Moxon’s son turned out to be a moron, the people could reject him just as they rejected the son of his predecessor. Isn’t that progress -breaking from a tradition that isn’t very beneficial? I guess I have said too much (apologies Amiki) but I think I support the part of Appeadu’s contribution that says we should offer people a better alternative before we criticize what they choose (I hope I am not misrepresenting him).

4.41 Moxon chieftaincy affair, Part I, by Alex Aboagye, Trondheim, Norway

(Thursday May 13, 1993)

Charles Appeadu’s latest posting on the Moxon chieftaincy affair is a brilliant attempt to tackle the root cause of some of the problems facing us as a nation and the blackman in general. I Also wish we focus on the underlying motives and reasons for choosing Moxon as a chief rather than whether Moxon is a real chief or not. I think the motives and reasons behind our actions have far reaching consequences than we often are aware of.

Listen to these experiences. These are in no way as big issues as the choosing of Moxon as a chief but nevertheless they exemplify some of the blackman’s complexes. Last two years when I was traveling from Norway to Ghana through London in a plane full of Norwegians, (a Sierra Leonean-Norwegian and I were the only blacks), we were detained by the immigration officials at Heathrow Airport for almost 30 minutes whilst they presumably checked our names against whatever list. The 50 or so white Norwegians filed through immigration whilst the black Norwegian and I stood there waiting for our passports.

Juxtapose my experience at Heathrow with the following. On the plane from Gatwick to Accra, I happen to sit beside a German exchange student who was going to Kumasi. At Kotoka Airport, this German guy and the other whites on the flight went through immigration much faster than me and most other Ghanaians did. The German guy came back to the arrival hall several times to see what was keeping me.

We met a couple of weeks later and went shopping at UTC, Accra. On our way out the security man at the gate allowed him to pass but when I got there he stopped me to search my bag.

On my way back to Norway, my most unpleasant moments were at Kotoka Airport again. I had to wait - even though it was my turn - whilst some Chinese guys were served first. When I tried to draw her attention to the fact that it was my turn so I didn't understand why she was serving others before me, the immigration officer hit the roof, pushed my passport aside presumably as a reprimand for my "impatience" or maybe insolence. The British Airways officials had to come to my rescue before this lady put the departure stamp in my passport.

I believe these are not isolated cases. Many of us have probably had similar or worse experiences in our OWN COUNTRY, GHANA. That worries me more. Whites get better treatment than Ghanaian nationals in our OWN COUNTRY. I am just narrating this so that we reflect a little about why we, as blacks, almost invariably give first rate treatment to the white at the expense of our own people. We shouldn't put all the blame on the whites. They often don't force us to treat them better at the expense of our own people. When our ancestors gave place to the whites to live on our land in the colonial days, they had no choice. The whites had superior guns. But Moxon didn't go to Aburi with guns. The Aburi people wholeheartedly gave him the position, (honorary or real).

So whilst we unleash our anger on Moxon for being a poor representative as a chief, let us save some for the Aburi king makers and even greater portion for ourselves (all Ghanaians) because we do the same things everyday, sometimes in small ways sometimes in big ways. The problem lies deep down within ourselves, in the minds of the blackman and we should tackle it from there.

4.42 Moxon chieftaincy affair, Part II, by Alex Aboagye, Trondheim, Norway

(Thursday May 13, 1993)

I agree that we should honor people in society who have distinguished themselves and who merit such honor. In that case I don't have any qualms with the Aburi king makers choice of Moxon as an honorary chief. It may be true that Moxon's statement about Ghanaians being color blind can be interpreted as a compliment about Ghanaian hospitality. But do we honestly think that this warm hand of hospitality will be extended to every other Ghanaian if he so distinguishes himself? We should honestly question whether the Aburi king makers will give a similar honor to a Mamprussi or Dagarti man who has likewise distinguished himself. Do we earnestly think that those subjects will carry one of our countrymen from the north in a palanquin assuming he has distinguished himself in likewise manner? The isolated cases of people of other tribal origins being made chiefs in other parts of the country other than where they hail from should not be made to look like the norm and that Ghanaians live above reproach when it comes to treating all peoples equal. Ghanaians are hospitable. Fair enough. But our hospitality should not be limited to whites only. Nor should it be expressed more in favor of one group of people than to others. I personally feel that this Moxon chieftaincy affair is just one and maybe a more glaring example of our bias to give first rate treatment to whites. I can only live with it if I can convince myself that under similar conditions I or any other Ghanaian for that matter, can get the same treatment irrespective of where s/he comes from.

4.43 The Moxon Affair, by Alfred Opopo, Carleton, Canada

(Thursday May 13, 1993.)

The debate continues unabated, with new twists and turns each day.

My contribution today is in reply to the postings of three netters whose articles have raised lots of questions in my mind. These netters are Alex Aboagye, Korsah, and James Essegbey. Each person, in his own small way has given a new dimension to the issues at stake. I believe that Essegbey sums up the debate best when he claims that the issue at stake is not what Moxon said or did not say, it is who he is. I couldn't have said it better! I am sure no netter has challenged the integrity of Moxon per se, and though lots have been said on things that came up in the interview, the central issue has been what he represents. That is my understanding of the debate, and the angle from which I entered the debate. I agree that morons do ascend our thrones by means of their lineage; in these modern times, it is important that we are led by people who know what they are about. But again, in the words of James, that is besides the point. The issue here, as brilliantly illustrated by Alex Aboagye's experiences, is why we overlook non-morons in our midst in favor of people who may or may not be morons. Are we implying that nitwits, are a preferred breed, so long as they are foreigners? Lots of time was spent on the net talking about research and development, when in fact, it is on record

that local experts are “persona non grata” in our development programs. We always seem to prefer “foreigners” to our own kind. No one seeks to “insult a white man” (white people preferred!), we are just concerned that after the best of our resources have been plundered, we seem to be handing over what is left of our heritage to foreigners, on a silver platter.

Korsah (esq.) questions if anyone would care about this issue were Ghana to be rich. My answer, same as Mahamudu’s, is plainly YES! Prosperity is not defined only in economic terms, it encompasses the social, political, and cultural. So even if a country is economically rich, it still pays attention to cultural issues. Only yesterday, there were protests in the University of California by students who are clamoring for a separate department for Latin American studies. Officials of the school, just as those in the other schools where similar issues have come up, declined. Even though they did not state it as an official reason, every Tom, Dick, and Harry understands that it was for cultural reasons. And so I say that though the US is developed and rich, there is no way they would look on for the Asantehene (or Ga Mantse, or the Tolon Na) to be made a mayor of any of their cities. Sure enough, there is the symbolic offer of a key to the city (the Asantehene was given the key to the city of New York on a trip to the city in the late 1980s), one cannot take up any responsible position without first swearing allegiance to Uncle Sam. Even after over 400 years of slavery, people would still snitch at the prospect of a black president in the US (and they are also citizens). That is racism! However, it is not racist to deny a white person the right to inherit a stool or skin in a country s/he is not a native of.

One of the problems plaguing us as a people is that we are too nice!! We show our “32” at the least opportunity, and that is why we have been taken advantage of in the course of our history. Let me be a revisionist for a moment... If Kwamina Ansah had not caved in to the sweet talk of Don Diego D’Azambuja etc., and allowed them to build their fort, who knows if they would have known of the gold we have.. on and on. By challenging the chieftancy of Moxon, people should understand that we are not returning racism for racism; if it were so, we’ll be beating all the white people on the streets of Africa. We are just trying desperately, and maybe fruitlessly, to conserve what is left of our heritage.

4.44 Moxon chieftaincy affair, by Alex Aboagye, Trondheim, Norway

(Friday May 14, 1993)

As a reaction to my yesterday posting on the Moxon chieftaincy affair, someone questioned whether this case is not an isolated one just like the mamprussi or dagarti cases I mentioned. Well, I am yet to hear of such a case. But that is beside the point. I was only asking all of us to question the chances of that happening as opposed to the same thing happening to a white man in Ghana. Someone furnished us though, with information that there are examples of Ewes and Gas who have been made honorary chiefs in some areas other than where they come from. (By a careless stroke of a key I have deleted all my mail and therefore cannot cite references). Anyway, those isolated cases are positive and must be encouraged. It means we are rising above these tribal boundaries. But let us not focus so much on chieftaincy affairs so that we lose perspective of the real issue. The real issue which I think many of us are trying to point to, is the preferential treatment whites get but are denied blacks in their own country, not only in honorary positions, but even in obtaining simple services in Ghana. Like I said this Moxon case is a glaring one but not the only incident. There are uncountable cases of this first-class-treatment-for-whites-second-class-treatment-for-blacks all over the world including Ghana.

There was a Norwegian man who used to work in the mines at Obuasi. He left and came back to Norway. When we the Ghanaians here in Norway used to complain about how the whites sometimes discriminate against us blacks, he used to say, “that is bad”, but adds that he also saw a lot of discrimination and disrespectful treatment in Ghana from blacks towards other blacks, especially from southerners towards northerners. What am I saying? I am saying that we must learn to treat all peoples equal irrespective of where they come from. Yes, we must treat whites with respect just as we want them to treat us with respect. But we must not treat them better than we treat ourselves because when we do that we are unconsciously telling them that they are better than us. And if they then take advantage of us we shouldn’t blame them because we have created that situation.

4.45 Inferiority Complex? by *Charles Awasu, Syracuse New York USA*

Friday May 14, 1993.

This is to build upon the essays of Alfred and Alex Aboagye. I think these two did well in centralizing the issue. I believe that this Moxon affair has brought us full circle from the days of Prof. Ayittey's controversial article. Do we have to blame any one for our woes?

1. Over the period we have discussed several topics on okyeame, including economic development, our institutions, civil service, education, christianization, and others as being westernized. If I can remember there were several comments that even our government with the absolutist central power was derived from the colonial governor. Now we are adding our cultural heritage.
2. I perceive the height of colonialism in the words of Moxon, when he said.. "the slaves were the lucky ones." Moxon who came to Ghana as a colonialist suddenly becomes a patriot, works as Director of Information, informing the British and mis-informing Ghanaians and gets honored as a chief, then becomes an authority on slave trade. (yet most of us don't see anything wrong here)
3. I am ready to bet that Moxon was left in Ghana to deliberately protect British interest. I refuse to believe that Moxon converted from a colonialist to a patriot. Is like a David Duke saying he is an Africanist, or a born again communist. After imposing poll tax etc. on the people of Aburi he suddenly turn to become a philanthropist.
4. The Moxon situation epitomizes what has gone wrong with our society. We forget too easily all the negative effects of colonialism and now we wonder why in our own land we are discriminated against.
5. Some netters have recounted sad experiences. Alex and Francis narrated their experiences at the airport. So why is preferential treatment given to foreigners? The answer is colonialism.
6. One of the most devastating effects of colonialism is inferiority complex that it builds in the people. The colonialist taught us to devalue everything Ghanaian or traditional and to value everything European. That is the European myth/eurocentrism which Moxon and others were successful in planting in Ghana.
7. Being color blind is an attribute of inferiority complex. It is un-Ghanaian If color blind were Ghanaian the Ashantis wouldn't have fought the pinks for over hundred years. Color blindness is a people who have been subjugated. Maybe Bob Marley was right all along.
8. That is precisely why any economic development in Ghana would not work. Others want us to discuss economic development, fine, but how can you develop an economy that is foreign-biased? How can a neo-colonial dependency country like Ghana achieve economic independence?

REASONS:

- (a) we prefer foreign goods to local--that is inferiority complex
- (b) we prefer foreign experts/consultants to local--
- (c) we prefer foreign research to local
- (d) we prefer foreign money to local--borrowing abroad instead of mobilizing domestic resources.
- (e) we patronize foreign businesses to local

9. Non-western nations that achieved economic development e.g. Japan, S. Korea and Taiwan did so because they were able to DRAW THE LINE. They developed by using economic nationalism. These countries saw economic development as more or less a WAR. They therefore pursued policies to that effect.
10. The MITI in Japan employs no foreigners. The Ministry of Finance in South Korea (the equivalent of MITI) does not employ Koreans trained outside Korea. These guys know what they about. These countries re-oriented their people to succeed.

11. Friends, if we want to develop Ghana, we have to DECONSTRUCT all that Colonialism has built, including the inferiority complex imposed on our people. There is skilled manpower to do the building. But until we rid our system with this colonialism tentacles we might not make it.
12. This all doesn't mean we should hate anybody. But we don't have to love outsiders at our own peril. That is why we don't have to let colonialists like Moxon become the vanguard of our heritage, despite their "conversion".
13. In effect we don't wait to achieve economic development before we value our own countrymen. We need that change of attitude to embark on development. That is why we need more education which is relevant to the society.
14. That is why the intellectuals who should know better need to set the tone. That is why we need all our people on board towards nation-building. That is why we need to stop those discriminatory practices. That is why it is sad if the elites themselves are "blind".
15. To sum, all the points raised by Alfred Opono, Alex Aboagye and that by Charles Appadurai (the spinach for kontomire syndrome) and for those Ghanaians who hate the system--colonialism is the culprit. However the color blindness of Ghanaians (an effect of colonialism), the beneficiaries of the status-quo have made the system what it is. Being anti-colonialism is very healthy.

For those who are interested in deconstructing the European Myth, please you can read:

1. Walter Rodney (1982) "How Europe Underdeveloped Africa" Howard University Press: Washington, DC.
2. Samir Amin (1989) "Eurocentrism" Monthly Review Press: New York.

4.46 Inferiority Complex ? by Adams Bodomo, Trondheim, Norway

(Friday May 14, 1993)

According to Charles Awusu, being "color blind is an attribute of inferiority complex. It is un-Ghanaian. If color blind were Ghanaian the Ashantis wouldn't have fought the pinks for over hundred years. Color blindness is a people who have been subjugated..."

'Color blind' as a dictionary entry is a negative expression. In fact, it is a deficiency and I know some drivers have problems observing traffic rules because of it.

But 'color blind' used as an idiom in other contexts may indeed be a positive desirable thing. In choosing a leader to head an international organization such as the UN or the World Boxing Council etc. some of the criteria may be organizational ability, Charisma, Impartiality etc. But it should certainly not be the candidate's color. There I would want the judges to be 'colorblind'.

It's unfortunate that the expression 'color blind' was used by Moxon, our bone of contention. Unfortunately, Moxon was wrong in saying that Ghanaians are 'colorblind'. I wish he were right.

The sad thing is that a lot of Ghanaians are very color sensitive! If we were 'colorblind' we wouldn't have been 'elevating' the 'whiteman' so much, as some people have recognized. I would really have wished most Ghanaians were 'color blind' so that we would stop favoring WHITES so much.

Ghanaians are often heard declaring that we are among the least tribalistic in Africa. We are not so much tribe-sensitive when it comes to important national issues. Have we realized that two of our four elected Heads of State come from minority ethnic groups ? In that sense when it comes to important issues we are 'tribe blind', idiomatically. For most Ghanaians, this would be a desirable thing.

Being 'color blind' might even let us get over our Color sensitive acts like favoring whites at our airports and installing Moxon a real chief when he has not crossed the Cultural and Genealogical parameters to becoming a real chief in Ghana.

'Color blind' shouldn't be un-Ghanaian ! Centralized powers, as I understand, fight INVADING enemies whatever the color of the enemy. A Centralized Power would not hesitate to fight an invading rainbow!

The thesis of attributing 'color blind' to inferiority complex is a thesis I would like to sleep over. In the meantime, in the spirit of a fruitful debate, I submit as an anti-thesis that 'colorblind' is desirable if we are to get over our 'WHITE-CENTRIC' attitudes in Ghana.

4.47 Oburionism and the School Curriculum, by Yaw Oheneba Sakyi, Potsdam, New York USA

Saturday May 15, 1993

First of all, let me congratulate everybody who has contributed something to the "Moxon Affair". If nothing at all, this discussion has helped us as Ghanaians and people of African descent to do some "SOUL SEARCHING". The dynamics of this "Moxon Guy" episode has brought with it several important themes including chieftancy, lineage, citizenship, colonialism, racism, wealth, and now "oburionism".

Someone had suggested some time ago that we halt discussion on this "Moxon Guy" because he deemed it trivial. Given the turns that this discussion had taken, I believe we would have done ourselves injustice had we not continued. I don't mind the give and take; afterall, the exchanges (if they take place in a healthy atmosphere) are part of the processes of intellectual growth.

What I would like to introduce to the discussion at this point by way of the "de-construction of the Ghanaian/African mind" is the issue of CURRICULUM at the various levels of our school system. Granted that changes have occurred, I do not believe these are drastic enough to transform our world view. If a function of the educational system (both formal and informal) is to transfer knowledge about ourselves, our institutions, our systems, and our ways of "knowing" from one generation to the other, we should ask ourselves how effectively this has been done.

In my SOUL SEARCHING, I come up with the following inquiries:

- o How much do we know about our own identity?
- o How much do Ghanaians know about each other?
- o Along ethnic lines, how much does one Ghanaian ethnic group know about the other?
- o How much do we know about the peoples in the countries that Ghana shares borders with?
- o Do we know anything about other countries in the West Africa sub-region, or for that matter other African countries?
- o How much do we know about other Africans in the Diaspora?

The next stage then is to compare and contrast the answers to the above inquiries to the question:

- o How much do we know about Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand?

The bottom line is, we as a people know very very little (and perhaps, have been conditioned to care less and not want to know more) about ourselves and other peoples around us. If we will be true to ourselves, our inquiries will provide knowledge significantly based on the common stereotypes that have come to us for whatever political gains they were designed.

It is these stereotypes, and lack of adequate knowledge about ourselves, other Ghanaians, and other Africans (all peoples of African descent) that contribute to our "dislike" or disrespect for ourselves and others like us.

The solutions to this problems are multi-dimensional. I'll just mention some few, and pause for amanfour's comments. My solutions include:

1. Serious curriculum revisions in our social science studies from primary through university levels to address the concerns I've raised.
2. Academic work to be followed by exchange of students at all levels within the country and within Africa as well, so that they can live the cultures first hand.
3. Of course, it takes money to do these things, but if there are families out there everywhere in Africa hosting AFS and other cultural exchange programs engineered in Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand, why can't these families do the same for "non-pink" peoples within their country or within Africa or in the Diaspora. We just have to sell the idea and motivate people.

Amanfour, let's continue the discussion on OBURONISM and what we could do to deconstruct our minds, and have some respect for ourselves and our own kind (Africans peoples), without necessarily hating those not like us (Aborfo, etc., etc.).

4.48 Charity, they say begins... by *James Essegbey, Trondheim, Norway*

Sunday May 16, 1993.

I thought I had finished all I needed to say on the Moxon issue but Charles' latest contribution raises some issues that I will like to address. First of all he says; "That is why the intellectuals who should know better need to set the tone (....) That is why we need to stop those discriminatory practices. THAT IS WHY IT IS SAD IF THE ELITES THEMSELVES ARE "BLIND" "(caps mine).

I am sure that everyone considers Alex's experience to be very unfortunate. And I am sure that Alex himself will consider it more unfortunate if someone suggests that because of what he went through at Fonebu, Heathrow etc., Ghanaians should pay non-Ghanaians in their own coin. No! I am sure what Alex, and most contributors for that matter want (and a few have been explicit e.g. Africanus), is that they should at least be given the same treatment at home.

One thing that surprises me though is how we are only considering one part of Alex's contribution. In that same article he mentions a Norwegian who had been to Ghana and who pointed out to him that we discriminate among our own countrymen. Let me give you to poignant examples. When I got to Legon in 84, I decided one day to avoid the ponding session for freshmen because the water a wee bit too dirty. So I hid in my room until I thought it was all over. Then I crept out with my coupon and mug, and headed for the dining hall. I managed to get my breakfast and was going back to my room when someone accosted me and said I had to be a freshman. When I admitted it, he said I was too dry and therefore needed a visit into the pond. By then the pond had become so dirty that my resolve not to get in strengthened. I've never before, nor since then managed to put up the act I put before that guy. By the time I was true, he was convinced that I was so ill that sending me to the pond might lead to my hospitalization, if not death. He therefore decided to let me go. He welcomed me to Legon and wished me a speedy recovery. Just as I turned to go, he asked me; "by the way what is your name". Upon hearing it, he shouted to his friends nearby, "charlie, ibi number 9 ooh!" He forgot everything about my imaginary illness. I was in the pond before I could say ... The irony of it all was that although my name sounds Ewe, my father, from whom I got the name is an Ada. I didn't protest though because my mom is an Ewe.

But what proved to be a bane for me turned out to be a blessing for my half-brother. His mom also comes from Ada so he is 100% Ada. One Ghanaian was being recruited to go and teach in Libya, this guy also applied. Then when he went to see if he had been short listed for the interview, he met an uncompromising Ewe man there. In desperation, my brother made use of the little Ewe he had learned from us and said "efo, Afe menyoo" (literally, things are not so good at home). He made it to the interview.

Some people will call the above tribalism or whatever. To me, it is just another kind of discrimination. And I don't know if Charles will attribute this one too to colonialism or a complex. I think Ghanaians have a problem - discrimination, period. This is not good whatever form it takes. I don't know any intellectual who will support recolonisation. Yet I know intellectuals who, whilst wishing that we be on our guard against further attempt to recolonise us, would not want us to make the mistake that the skin-heads are making. They would prefer to start with

the premise that everyone is a human being. Then they would use their laid down criteria for acceptability to choose the ones they would do business (generic use here) with. That way, they could weed out the undesirables be they whites, blacks, yellow or pink. If that attitude is considered to be “blindness”, then I’m one of those who does not mind being blind.

4. 49 Kwasi Broni Chief vrs KENTE Cloth, by *Alhassan Manu, Davis, California USA*

(Friday May 7, 1993.)

When I quickly added my voice to Charles Awasu’s piece on Odikro James Moxon, some netters thought we were being sentimental. At least with the pouring of views on “Odikro Kwasi Broni” I am now convinced that there are many people out there who think it is not proper for our land to be ‘neo-colonialized’.

While we discuss the issue of “Kwasi Broni” the chief, I should like us to shift the discussion to one of the symbols he portrayed - the KENTE cloth. By this I should like to HIGHLIGHT Yaw Oheneba-Sakyi’s comment regarding KENTE. I think Yaw’s linking the timing of TV program on Moxon with the 1992 New York Times article is classic, and

I hope we shall all look for the article to read.

Back to Kente.

My heart always aches when I come to think about the fate of Kente. At times I become angry when I see people wearing it. Angry because NO CREDIT is given to the cloth; angry because no mention is made of where it comes from; angry because the beautiful names of the various patterns of kente are rapidly disappearing.

I remember an incident in Norway when I Ghanaian lady asked her Norwegian friend if she could wear her (Norwegian) National Cloth. The Norwegian became angry. But politely said, if the Ghanaian was going to wear it just to take a photograph, then she will allow her, but if she was going to wear it [in the street] then [sort of you are not fit to wear OUR national cloth].

Another incident: A Ghanaian woman wore her Kente imitation one summer to town. Many people who saw her were full of admiration. Others were bold [Norwegians are usually timid] to express their admiration. When a Ghanaian lady overheard the admiration by another Ghanaian, the former remarked: “WHY ARE YOU SO FASCINATED WITH THIS [cloth]. IT’S MADE IN GHANA. IT IS CHEAP”. [in Fante: Eyia! wo ye ne wo Ghana, ne bo nye dzen]. (those were the right words, in case I am not able to translate it properly).

I use these two stories to make a point. Whereas the Norwegian had pride in her national symbol or identity and would not even allow a “black” person to wear it, the Ghanaian wondered how on earth people should admire a cheap Made-in-Ghana item.

Whatever it is I admire KENTE, real or imitation. For me the most important is the Kente pattern. And it is the reason why I think we should wake up to protect the Cloth.

I have these suggestions:

- * Wherever we are we should be proud to stand up for Kente

- * We should constantly remind non-Ghanaians [our African American friends alike] that Kente comes from Ghana. Since many people don’t even know where Ghana is, we should be prepared to show Ghana on the map to them, or at least tell them about the country.

- * Through newspaper, newsletter, journal etc. articles, letters to the editor we should constantly remind people that Kente is Ghanaian.

* We should us radio and TV programs (talk shows? perhaps Opra) to make our points.

* It is time we document Kente properly (its history, its various names and patterns, and the men and women behind the cloth). Research is needed in this regard. Else the next time all we will hear is that Kente has been traced to originate from America.

* We should be proud to wear the clothes ourselves, and be proud to portray the Ghanaianess in it.

I will pause here and seek netters suggestions on this topic.

By the side way: One word Ghanaians contributed to the medical community is KWASHIORKOR [thanks to Dr. Cecily Williams]. Usually the word will quickly be linked to Ghana and the Children who got the disease because they ate a maize-based diet [kenkey].

Why wouldn't KENTE be linked to Ghana?

5 RECOGNITION OF FOREIGN DEGREES

compiled and edited by *Anthony Sallar*

5.00 Editorial Comments by *Anthony Sallar*

Recognition of foreign degrees/diplomas/certificates should form an integral part of our educational and employment system. It is unfortunate that the issue did not generate enough fire and brimstone like others have on the Okyeame network. The contributors to a large extent agree on the necessity of a mechanism to weed out all potential frauds.

The problem should not lie in what country the individual has his schooling. I know in the United States there are agencies which evaluate transcripts from all over the world. They know the standard and level of education in every country. This can easily be adopted. The problem lies in whether the individual has even attended that college he/she claims to have attended or whether there is a school campus at all.

As regards the question of prestige in the school attended, that should be of no consequence. In my search for schools to apply for a Ph. D programme I learned that most schools, including the top “Ivy Leagues” (Harvard, Yale, Brown, Colombia, Princeton etc.) recruit professors from all schools in America. Most of the professors did not receive their bachelors from these let alone obtain Ph.Ds from these institutions. It is the potential the prospective lecturer has, his preparations, research interests to mention but a few, which count. Why can’t we as a nation do the same rather than confine ourselves to what is not happening in the real world. If a department in Legon is going to be biased to people who had their undergraduate degrees in those departments, what happens to people who did not have their undergraduate education in Ghana. They may even have greater potential than a product of their own departments. Of course the playing field needs to be levelled.

It is imperative to have a mechanism in place. The late 1970s and early 1980s saw a gigantic leap of Ghanaians going abroad to study on their own without assistance from the government or the universities. Thus the future applicant pool in our facilities, be it educational or other, is bound to be diverse in the future recruitment efforts. The authorities would need to devise strategies to weed out the fake Ph.Ds., doctors, and other professionals who got their degrees from some basements in some West Coast states. They are always advertising correspondence courses for Ph.D. Imagine my embarrassment when I asked a fellow Ghanaian what was his dissertation topic and he could not tell me! He could not

tell me the university he attended. I was only told in the West Coast. It was later that I got to know to my disgust it was one of these correspondence courses.

All that is needed is for the authorities to check all the references provided by the candidates from the school and the State Education Departments, and the accreditation agencies. This should be independently verified. Let us beware that no system is foolproof. Even in the United States people fake and practise as medical doctors for many years before they are caught.

Of equal importance and grave concern is the proliferation of the way some Ghanaians “as orderlies” have been sending pictures to Ghana in Lab coats and stethoscopes around their necks as physicians! Of course the folks in Ghana may believe him. The question is does the Ministry of Health have mechanisms in place to certify its medical employees trained abroad? For, in the final analysis, I would prefer a fake lecturer teaching brilliant students in Legon or Cape Vars to a fake physician practising in a remote village. The former, sooner or later will be exposed. The latter can wreck havoc in a whole town.

5. 01 Ghanaian Universities: Recognition of degrees¹ by *Kweku Osam, University of Oregon*

(19 Feb. 1993)

This is a personal opinion and it does not in any way represent the opinion of anybody at Legon or any Dept at Legon. I think that one’s chances of getting a teaching position at the universities in Ghana are enhanced if the individual had his/her undergraduate education in that University or if you went through that particular dept. So I know some people in Norway for example who may not have any problems should they decide to apply for teaching positions in Ghana. The fact is that every university has its own way of assessing people from other places. After all those who have studied outside Ghana (particularly in Norway) know that degrees from Ghana are not easily accepted and I think that is why you go through all the reassessment process.

Secondly if you plan to teach at home it is safer to go with a PhD. Even though that will not guarantee you a position it raises your chances. Right now I know that Legon is not accepting people with an MA without a thesis.

Thirdly make sure that whatever is the subject of your thesis or dissertation is of some relevance, something that others back home can easily relate to. In addition it is important to publish in some prestigious journal, preferably before you apply for a position. Finally remember that the crucial decision rest with the dept you are trying to get into. If the lecturers in that dept think that they want you the appointment board is likely to go along.

People should not be too upset that folks back home are cautious about getting people trained elsewhere. There have been cases where people with degrees from elsewhere seem obviously ill prepared to teach. I know one instance where one guy (who shall remain nameless) with a PhD in linguistics from a country in Europe (no names!) gave a paper. It was so bad that even undergraduate students in the dept who were at the presentation knew that the guy was bad. He could not get basic terminologies correct. It was awful. In conclusion, let me also say that it will help, before you send in your application, to try and contact some of the lecturers in that dept and get them informed about what you have done (papers, research etc). They could be your advocate in the long run. Good luck to all who are trying to get positions back home.

5.02 Recognition of Foreign Degrees by *Vincent Kwapong*

<Kwapong_V@corning.com>

On the issue of foreign degree recognition by Ghanaian universities, I do believe the universities in Ghana need to reserve the right to recognize select universities (per some form of defined criteria).

I would like to state that I am not in a position to judge whether or not Scandinavian universities are inferior to universities elsewhere. There are too many universities in this world with varied qualities: from the non-conventional mail order type to the conventional.

Since our (Ghana) universities are responsible for producing high caliber graduates, there is the need to hold potential lecturers to some standard. (Most professions in Ghana and elsewhere in the world have some accreditation requirement, e.g. for lawyers, doctors, etc.).

Whatever standard of scrutiny there is, should however, be applied across the board independent of country of schooling. I recognize that some educational systems may not be recognized by whatever recognition system there is. But I don't think it would be in the interest of the country to assume any given school in this world meets "the standard".

My suggestion - If a school's program does not meet whatever recognized accredited system(s) the Ghanaian universities use, the applicant should take it upon himself/herself to get professional recognition (as in Professional Engineers license for example). Also, international recognition through published work should certainly get some "recognition".

5.03 Foreign Degrees, by *Eddie Amoakuh*

<eddie@hero.smos.com>

If one judges a Professor's abilities by how prestigious the institution he or she graduated from then I guess your selection criteria would have some merit. But I'm sure you would agree that other criteria could be much more effective and certainly more practical.

Attending a "prestigious" school certainly opens more doors for a graduate, but does not make that graduate any smarter than anyone else for having attended that school. Even in this country there is a regional acceptance of what schools are considered elite. Go down to Texas and many people have never even heard of some of the "prestigious" schools in the northeastern part of the US. They have their own "Ivy League" equivalents.

So not to get off the subject, I think what is more important is what a potential lecturer knows and the sum total of his/her experience. Where they went to school should count, but their knowledge should be the overriding criterion. I say this because I think this is a practical approach for many "third world" countries. We cannot afford to waste anybody by hanging on to the elitist approaches taught to us by the Western cultures. Ours should be a quest for knowledge plain and simple! And those of us educated in the west should not feel intimidated when confronted with the possibility that somebody who attended an institution that we've never heard of could actually know more than we do.

How do the Ghanaian Universities go about selecting lecturers then, for people with foreign degrees? Very simple. By peer review. Look at what the guy has published, check out his references, see if he has any applicable experience in the industry, give him an exam, drill him on a panel discussion. If he passes these benchmarks then I don't care whether he graduated from MIT or Roxbury Community College. As a matter of fact, if you do this, then it will help weed out the quacks who graduated from "prestigious" schools.

5.04 Foreign Degrees, by *Samuel Amartey Laryea aka Roxzii*

<laryea@sfu.ca>

I could not agree more with Eddie Amoakuh's suggestions on suitable criteria for assessing foreign degrees as it relates to employment in Ghanaian Universities.

I also to that the key criterion should be scholastic achievement and merit. Potential candidates should not be judged on the basis of the prestige of the institution. This I believe is bound to becloud solid academic potential.

Academicians should not be stereotyped nor condemned to “prestigious” straight jackets. Ghana and for that matter Africa, needs all the human resources it can. As the sages would say “the human mind is a terrible thing to waste”. We should thus endeavour to put them to optimal use.

5.05 Degrees from Scandinavian Universities, by *Adams Bodomo, Trondheim, Norway*

(February 1993)

I will like to add my voice to the issue of the recognition of foreign degrees back home in Ghana and, in particular, the case of Scandinavia.

Mr. Samuel Bonsu did quite well by bringing up the issue and both Vincent Kwapong and Eddie Amoaku gave quite insightful comments.

In one of the discussions, the unfortunate impression may have been created that Scandinavian degree holders meet particularly bad times having their degrees recognised so that they can take up appointments in our universities at home. The writer did well to disengage himself from what he was writing by stating clearly that he is ‘not suggesting that graduates of Scandinavian universities are half-baked.’ He went ahead to state that he was REITERATING what our universities say. Infact, earlier on, he stated clearly that ‘the only reason being [given by our universities] is that those universities are inferior to most other universities in the world.’

In stating a third party opinion so clearly and emphatically and even reiterating it, one would have thought that the writer would provide equally clear sources to back it. The reader is, however, disappointed when, at the end of it all, s/he realises that this writer ‘learnt’ it from a friend who presumably may also have ‘learnt’ it from another friend who.....

I think that the issue about Scandinavian degrees being rejected or discriminated against back home is only a RUMOUR and not a reality. The problem is further compounded by the fact that people affected in one way or the other give interestedly wrong information.

It may be true that people with degrees from Scandinavia or any other parts of the world, for that matter, may have been refused faculty positions but it is not necessarily because their degrees were from universities in a certain part of the world.

In discussing the issue with a former Lecturer at Legon, now in Norway here, it became clear that the practice at Legon is that every degree is judged on it’s own merit and not because it is awarded by a particular university. A degree with average grades from a well-known university is not necessarily better than one with high grades from a less well-known university. I do not therefore think that if two people graduate in the same area and one is from Scandinavia with high grades and the other from another part of the world with average grades, the latter will be preferred to the former.

Another fact is that most departments at Legon and presumably other universities in Ghana have their own training programmes in the form of sending Teaching Assistants and other Lecturers out on further training. As such, they hedge on taking anybody who suddenly presents himself. I will suggest that anybody about to complete his/her course should first consult the departments they want to work with before applying for a position.

Indeed, facts and upcoming events should even indicate that, on the contrary, the Scandinavian university system and its products are highly valued in Ghana.

One fact is that the The University of Ghana has indeed appointed people with Scandinavian degrees into some of its departments. I have a friend currently lecturing at the department of Geology at Legon. He was trained for the masters

degree in a Danish university. He is very much appreciated in the department. In addition to that there is a research fellow at the Inst. of African studies with a Ph.D in History, also from a Danish university. The dept. of Statistics at Legon has, as one of its lecturers, a Ph.D holder from a Swedish university.

To the information of anybody who has the wrong impression/facts that the Universities in Ghana say that 'Graduates from Scandinavian universities are half-baked' or that [Scandinavian] universities are inferior to most other universities in the world', most of the universities in Ghana have established or are in the process of establishing exchange programmes with Norwegian universities. I do not think that any level-headed university personnel will send their students on exchange to an inferior university or receive lecturers from an inferior university to teach their students.

Lastly, certainly the three Vice-chancellors or their pros from Legon, Cape Coast and Tech who are scheduled to visit the University of Trondheim in the heart of Norway this March do not think that Scandinavian universities are inferior. Else, they wouldn't consider a working visit to this Scandinavian university. And they will not refuse to employ somebody with a GOOD degree from Scandinavia!

In conclusion, I agree partly with most of the contributions made on the issue of recognising foreign degrees and we should more than ever discuss such issues that affect our future as Lecturers or Research Fellows back in Ghana. However, as much as possible, let us dispense with rumour or at least modify the way we present rumour. In my opinion, the issue about Scandinavian degrees being discriminated against back in Ghana is only a rumour and should be ignored. On the contrary, good Scandinavian degrees like any good degrees from any part of the world are highly valued by the Ghanaian universities. Let us therefore work harder and obtain good degrees so that, on our return, we can support our country with good quality scholarship.

Editorial note:

This and some other articles in this short section were reactions to an earlier article dealing with the recognition of Scandinavian and other foreign degrees by Ghanaian universities. Unfortunately, the editorial board was not able to locate the said article in the archives.

6 EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN GHANA

compiled and edited by *Adams B. Bodom*

6.00 Editorial note by *Adams Bodom*

This section of the Yearbook addresses the all-important topic of educational reforms in Ghana. From a close observation of the discussions that took place in the course of the year I realised that this was clearly the longest, lasting for as many as two months (June/July). Central issues relating to the topic are taken up by various contributors: the cost and content of the proposed reforms; the duration and forms of examination at all levels of the educational ladder; and, most of all, the role of the government, parents, students and pupils in the educational process.

6.01 EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN GHANA, by *Kwabia Boateng, Dalhousie, Canada*

Sometime ago an honourable netter raised some issues about educational reform in Ghana and invited netters to present their views. I wish to take up this issue of educational reform in Ghana with the following observations:

- 1) A major part of economic growth and development in any society can be attributed to human capital (education, research, job training and experience).
- 2) Education in Ghana has no clear direction, no objectives. what are we “educating” for- to be better farmers? or better, selfless citizens?
- 3) The cost of education to government is very high but the impact of educational expenditures is low because of the over-emphasis on “institutions” and how to organise them rather than emphasis on the “content” or the “substance” of education. Is the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) necessary for us today? (No) Can’t we save money by decentralising general school examinations? (Yes), why should students bear the responsibility (and many lose their major chance in life because results are cancelled) for exams leakage, and the WAEC go free? (because there is no respect for individual rights? yes. we care less about the lives of other people? yes.) why cant the districts take absolute charge of elementary education, and the central govt concern itself with higher education? (because some civil servants would lose sphere of authority and avenues for embezzlement? yes.) why cant Ghanaian academic writers have their works published? (because it would be a threat to govt? yes. or a threat

to publishing industry in the UK? yes. or there are no works to be published? no.) is it still proper or appropriate to have “free” university education in Ghana (no.) why not? is it because the educated leave the country and do not serve in Ghana? yes. or because we already have too many graduates? no. or because govt resources are limited? yes. well, what do you think? I am going back in august and lobbying for educational reform is going to be one of my pre-occupations.

6.02 Fuel drain...brain drain: A reply to edu. reforms, by Adams Bodo, Trondheim, Norway

Some postings on ‘Okyeame’ are very thought-provoking. So thought-provoking that it is sometimes very interesting to put them in the context of some issues in contemporary Ghanaian politics. Fuel-drain: About two or three years ago, Ghanaians woke up to one of the most controversial, for not to say unpopular, fuel price increases contained in a budget proposal. Probably, the controversy was not so much on the increase than on the reason given for the increase. We were told that the increase was necessitated by the fact that Ghanaian fuel was being drained to other countries because of the higher prices for the same items found in those countries. Not much consideration was given to other issues such as the incomes of average Ghanaians vis a vis those of other countries and also what percentage of Ghanaians were involved to merit this national ‘prohibitive price’ for fuel. I wonder whether a better way to approach ‘fuel drain’ to other countries wouldn’t have been to enforce the law against smuggling. Anyway, the fuel price was increased but to this day the fuel drain problem continues. Preliminary conclusion: increasing fuel prices was a missed attempt at curbing fuel drain.

Brain drain:

Dr. Kwabia’s questions and answers on the topic of educational reform is a welcome attempt to lead or, at least, instigate discussion on an important national issue within the net. I agree with a lot of the issues he raised. For instance, his suggestion for a focus of attention on human resource development, on ‘human capital’, is pertinent. I however have problems with his views on why university education in Ghana should not continue to be free: “Is it still proper or appropriate to have “free” university education in Ghana (no.) why not? is it because the educated leave the country and do not serve in Ghana? Yes. Or because we already have too many graduates? No. Or because government resources are limited? Yes.” While soliciting our opinions on these questions, he quite clearly provides his own (draft) answers. According to Dr. Kwabia, it is no more proper or appropriate to have ‘free’ university education in Ghana because 1. educated people leave the country and do not serve in Ghana and 2. government has limited resources to support ‘free’ university education in Ghana.

We probably have to wait for a clarification of the sort of non-‘free’ university education that he is advocating for. In the meantime I will assume that what he means is that , at least, tuition fee should be introduced in Ghanaian universities because there is a brain drain and because government cannot afford to continue to pay tuition fee. I doubt what else he could have meant since boarding and lodging are hardly free, anyway.

While agreeing with Dr. Kwabia about the problem of brain drain in Ghana, I do not think that we should increase the price of university education for Ghanaian parents and their wards because some people smuggle this education out of the country. I guess to tackle this issue, one would have to have statistics about how many graduates leave the country and how many stay. The price of university education should not be increased for most of Ghanaians just because say about 10% of educated Ghanaians leave the country. Like the fuel case this would be most unpopular. Indeed many innocent people would be denied university education for no fault of theirs. Like the fuel case, a better alternative would be to institute measures at curbing brain drain and punishing only those who default.

The other reason Kwabia gives for advocating for a non-‘free’ university education is that government has limited resources. I am not sure it is more of a question of limited resources than of priorities. There are limited resources for everything, yet somehow all governments have a lot of activities. There are limited resources for grandiose state protocols. There are limited resources for patriot missiles, for the mowaks, for an early morning swoop on enemies of the people, for a 20-man diplomatic periple to all parts of the world on behalf of the people. There are limited resources for everything. That is why governments always set up priorities. If acquiring patriot missiles is higher up on the ladder than national university education, then university education cannot be free but if the priority is reversed then patriot missiles cannot be bought and then government can afford free education.

My response to Dr. Kwabias questions are that education in Ghana should be tuition free right from the nursery to the doctoral level. We in Ghana can afford that. It is just a matter of setting priorities right. What we cannot afford is ignorance of the people of Ghana.

Only culprits of fuel drain and brain drain should be punished. As Dr. Kwabia prepares his lobby programme for educational reforms, I urge him to modify his opinions and accommodate hardworking, patriotic Ghanaian parents and their wards. Hard working Ghanaian parents should be given the opportunity to educate their wards. I humbly submit that it is a bit too extremist to advocate for increasing the cost of university education on all Ghanaians because a few people happen to default. It is too much to the political right to be right.

6.03 Free Education!, by *Charles Awasu, Syracuse, New York*

The points raised by Dr. Boateng and Adams are quite interesting. Personally, I have struggled with such issues over the time. This are few observations.

1. Education is a public good that has both positive and negative externalities positive because an educated society is an asset. negative because some of the educated spill over to other countries (brain drain). There should a research to analyse both externalities before we draw any conclusions.
2. Who pays for education? Tax payers, therefore the ultimate decision will to be made by the Ghanaian tax payer not the policy elites. This could be done through the voting etc. based on cost-effectiveness of education vis a vis alternatives.
3. The arguments for privatising education (fees) are quite legitimate but a wholesale introduction of user charges in education will create a class society, whereby the rich get paid education and the poor none at all.
4. As a developing country in need of educated skills, Ghana can't afford to educate students based on fees. Given the high rate of brain drain, the government can introduce fees selectively (a) those who can afford to pay (b) those to merit need base scholarships. In this case those with scholarships will have to be bonded as usual. The rules of the bond will have to be enforced.
5. Given the past practices, I think the government has failed the Ghanaian tax payers. The rules for the bonded agreements have never been enforced. Students who enjoyed loans were never followed to pay up. Students who enjoyed loans never had jobs to earn money for pay back.
6. The government's inability to eliminate corruption makes nonsense of any suitable remedies. Who will decide who pays and who enjoys scholarships? As stated by Adams, why invest in military hardware instead of human capital? Instead of blaming students who walk out of the country, I think the blame lies with the inefficient policies of the government.
7. There is need to re-orient the education in Ghana to reflect manpower requirements. There is no need to produce graduates who can't function within the environment. The legon-type, civil service education should be redirected to free ideas, free enterprise in view of changing technology.
8. Obviously the Ghanaian education is in crisis and something needs to be done but I think the arguments for free education are still very strong because of the need for human capital. As Adams pointed out, the government will have to designed better policies to contain graduates in the country or let them pay back the monies.
9. In the U. S. the government and the private sector provides loans for needy students. The application system is such that students whose parents make too much money don't qualify. I can't foresee such a transparent system in Ghana, where dishonest bureaucrats will capitalise on loop holes to educate their wards at the expense of tax paying honest citizens.
10. Overall this scenario drives the point home that the government will have to privatise much of the public sector so they can devote the scarce resources to education and research. These are the two items that will propel our economy into the 21st century. Much as I would like to see some reforms in the educational system, charging fees now will be a tragedy.

6.04 Re: BRAIN-DRAIN, by *Sowah Simmonds*

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Netters, how much does it cost to go to school in Ghana? Nobody really knows. My own opinion and nobody else's is this: education should be free through secondary. After that, six form through university should be financed through loans from the banks, backed by the government for everybody who qualifies without exception. I was fortunate that I had people to pay for my education (all private Mission school and Labone, when it was semi-private). After completing O-level, practically everything I wanted to do involved some kind of national service or bond for six (6) years flat, these include the Military, National Institute of Health, Nautical College and the Agric School at Tamale. Not wanting to be saddled with a national obligation I chose not to have the government pay for any training or advance education for me. I have had the misfortune of running into so-called patriotic Ghanaians who have taken advantage of everything the Ghanaian educational system had to offer, yet when it came to fulfilling their contractual obligation and serving the one-one-one-one lousy year of national service they flee. I personally consider these people to be nothing but leeches. You want to go to college, fine we give you the money if you do not have the means to pay. But when you come out, owe the people of Ghana the full amount unless you decide to pay back with an equivalent amount in National service. The one year national service is a b-i-g f-a-t joke. School records of every student should, together with certificates, be kept at Airport police station. Once all financial obligations are met, students will then be given a clearance slip which they can then use to pick-up their transcripts and certificates on their way out. Let us not forget what the US President Kennedy once said "don't ask what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country". A lot of people like me worked our way through college, some who chose not to do what we did got married which opened American scholarships and loans to them. Some of these people were drafted and sent to Vietnam, Korea or Germany. They knew what was in store for them. It was their choice. They made their bed, let them sleep in it. As I said and it is my own opinion, G-h-a-n-a does not owe anybody any education beyond secondary Form five or the JSS equivalent.

6.05 Re: Free Education!, by *Alfred Opoku, Carleton, Canada*

Amanfuor, It is gratifying to know that we have come full circle to the all important issue of education which was raised several months ago, but which did not receive the attention it deserves. I have read with interest the arguments presented on the issue and would like to make some remarks.

1. The idea that we need educational reforms raises these questions in my mind ... Isn't educational reforms part of the so-called structural adjustment in Ghana? If we talk about reforms, are we talking about reforming the "reformed" system or we are still using the "cyto" model as our point of reference. As one of the strongest critics of the so-called educational reforms by the "now reformed PNDC", I suggest that whatever reforms we talk about should not just include the issue of fee payment but, more so, the structure and contents of education. We have an educational system which is narrowly defined, thus technical and vocational schools are hardly within our formal system of education. We need to shape the system in such a way as to direct all these institutions towards particular goals, in which case we can then clearly define what exactly students need to learn.
2. I support Charles in his assertion that the introduction of fees could lead to sharp class distinctions both in access to, and choice of, educational institutions. One netter argues that the Ghana government does not owe anyone education beyond form five. Well, he could well have said the government does not owe anyone anything! What we must remember is that even though individuals reap the benefits of their education, one cannot ignore the issue of externalities to the society at large. If Ghanaians are well educated and trained, society stands to benefit by an efficient workforce, as well as a reduced social obligation to cater for the less fortunate. Society therefore owes it to its people to help in their education. We all know the financial stress in which our nation is in now, therefore it might not be good to expect government to continue to sponsor everyone, that is why I concur with Charles in his suggestion. In addition, however, I wish to submit that Charles' scheme would be successful only if we disabuse the minds of our students in their thinking that everyone must go through the university. We need to make the technical and vocational areas attractive and lucrative enough to make it worthwhile for parents to send their children. In this, one should recognise that it is the ability to make our local industries strong and competitive enough to absorb the output of our educational system, which would enhance the credibility of these educational facilities.
3. I disagree with those advocating for means to retain our graduates until they have paid their dues to society, in return for enjoying free education. In our present precarious economic situation, it would be suicidal to prevent people from leaving the country, when they can hardly get jobs to sustain their livelihoods. In fact, I believe they

should even be encouraged to go out. However, as I suggested on this net sometime back, the government should liaise with its embassies abroad to register all Ghanaian residents and open an account into which students who want to repay their loans can contribute about \$20 dollars a month until they finish total payment. The question is why educate people and let them give their expertise to other countries? I believe that Ghanaians love their country and when the economic situation improves most people would be willing to go back with the experience they have acquired. On the other hand, even before they go back, some could link up with companies or individuals back home to start project beneficial to the nation. Let's not forget that Italy, for example, faced one of the most devastating brain drain in Europe. However, remittances and job collaboration with those left in the country helped propel that country to its present status. Perhaps, that is not such a good example but I think it illustrates very well the fact that when you face poor economic conditions, brain drain could have more positive effects than negative.

Keep the debate going!

6.06 Educational Reform in Ghana, by *Kwabia Boateng*

The problems of education in Ghana is central to the adverse economic, social and political situation there. Our return to Ghana one day could well be hindered by the lack of attention to the education problem.

1. Why can't academic programs in the universities run all year round, but in every year three-five months are lost with faculty, and facility lying idle?
2. Why should the administrative wings of the universities continue to dictate the conduct of university exams; what system exists to ensure students are not victimised by faculty ?
3. Why should the exams council continue to exist and be funded by the public; should students be held accountable and suffer all the consequence in the event of exam leakage?
4. To reiterate a point raised by another netter, why can't curricula at the primary and secondary and even first degree levels be "domesticated"?
5. Since education in Ghana is not in fact free any more, what can be done to reduce administrative or direct involvement of the central government in tertiary education, while keeping public funds in? Could more people speak their minds on these things?

I intend to keep responses to guide me in formulating a plan to really re-structure Ghana's education.

6.07 Re: Educational Reforms, by *Alfred Opoku*

Amanfuor,

I believe Paul Opoku-Mensah in an earlier posting raises a lot of issues which we need to take into consideration when considering the idea of reforming our educational system. I just want to make a small comment on the need for contributions from our industries. While it is a laudable suggestion (and I think it was incorporated into the Valco agreement) we must not lose sight of the fact that "industries", those capable of really making effective contributions, are almost non-existent. Quite frankly, the small scale industries are just not capable while the medium scale ones are even looking for ways and means to grow out of their debts or even to remain operating. The one area which can make some form of contribution is the large scale (which invariably is foreign dominated) firms which are not numerous enough to provide the amount of money capable of sustaining the cost of tertiary education. This is not to say that we should abandon the idea, after all little drops of water...; however, this should tell us that we need to help grow our industries.

On a second point, giving tax breaks to firms who make educational contributions is a tricky issue. Sometimes, percentages of profits are earmarked for education while tax breaks are fixed. This can turn out to give negative returns to the country if these firms connive to present low profits while still benefiting from their fixed taxbreaks. Whoever designs such a policy should be ready to anticipate such tactics from the foreign firms.

Thirdly, providing money for education should not be the “be all and the end all”, we need to devise plans that would make these firms offer effective internships to graduates during their training periods and also make them establish some form of joint R&D with higher institutions to enable a real transfer of technology to our students. That is how we can benefit from their presence, not just by their donation of trucks and cash, as Valco has done in years.

6.08 Re: Jusec/sesec, by *Amponsah Fordjour, Dartmouth*

Robert Awuah-Baffour writes:

I am quite impressed of the attention this topic has received. I guess the bottom line of the answers to my initial request is that the system is generating weak students. Fine. While keeping this discussion open, may I take this noble opportunity to open a new topic? In Sam’s response to the Jss stuff, he emphasised on the government not giving a damn to the ideas of the university gurus. He gave an example of the new university in the North. Is opening a 4th university in the north a good or a bad idea?”

I don’t think the new topic Rob is inviting is very appropriate. There are more pertinent lines of discussions that need to be invited to the table for thorough analysis first.

By way of summary we have realised from the discussions that there is something wrong with the JSS/SSS system at the moment. SSS graduates will not be worth considering for higher studies in our institutions. Two measures have been proposed to deal with the situation. The first one is to sieve out the bad nuts with an entrance examination by the universities. This will be fine if checks and balances are put in place to make sure relatives and friends of lecturers and profs are not favoured. I’m saying this because a friend of mine told me there have been instances of nation-wide exams that were graded by the son of the examiner(prof) and all sorts of things happened. If the VCs decide to do this what should be done? Secondly, we suggested that the standard of the SSS should be improved which I think, though has a long term effect, will be a permanent and more appropriate solution. BUT how do we do that?

Now back to Mr. Awuah Baffour’s question “Is opening a 4th university in the north a good or a bad idea?” This is a good question, however, trying to answer it will only prolong our discussion. We realised from the discussions that there is some thing wrong at the top: what THEY say is final. The problem is ‘ MISUSE OF POWER’ and this is very typical when you are dealing with FUNCTIONAL illiterates. The best will be to tackle the roots of this problem. How do we make sure power does not go into the wrong hands in future? Or how do we tell them that Ghana is not for them, and ensure that they listen to the people? POWER BELONGS TO THE PEOPLE indeed.

6.09 RE: JSS, by *Sammy Bonti, Guelph, Canada*

Hi netters,

I just want to comment on John’s response to my posting on JSS. John is worried about what will happen if all the students are to fail the proposed university entrance exams. Should the universities be closed down? Well, there is a cost and benefit associated with every action. We have to remember that there is cost to university education which can reduce the welfare of the nation if it is not equalised or exceeded by benefits. If we decide to push everybody through to the university, then we should not loose sight of the fact that there is going to be an excessively high cost to university education considering the education level of these students. Secondly, some of these students may not be able to cope with the university system and may drop out. If this happens, the initial cost will be lost forever. On the other hand if we decide to let them go through and graduate because of some other reasons, the ultimate result will be sub-standard graduates who may not be able to compete in the already choked labour market . Where then will be the benefits that will be needed to compensate the high cost. There will be a great loss to society as a result. I still believe that the university entrance exams will make us better off. Even if all the students fail, it will be worth the tax payers’ money to close down the university for that one year. Closing down the university is not a new thing in Ghana. It has

been done for as long as one year before. Even if all the students fail, that does not mean the universities should be closed down. There will still be some students in their 2nd, 3rd and 4th years.

6.10 Jss/Sss (Equity vrs. Efficiency), by *Charles Awasu*

I still stand by my earlier point that the fallings standards in our educational system warrants more than just an entrance exam. It seems to me the VCs are taking an easier way out.

1. Before the educational reforms majority of Ghanaians were dissatisfied with middle and continuation schools. The controversy however was on the replacement which is the JSS/SSS.
2. One of the main rationales for the JSS/SSs was that its graduates will make their livelihood in agric., informal sector, self-employment etc. The target here was for the mass of the population whose kids need the best return on their investment in education.
3. The problem was with the elite groups. They abhor the idea of a level playing field. They forced the government to allow private JSS schools where there is a more “academic” treatment.
4. The elites also decry the JSS because their wards will lose the “A” level advantage that provided access to university in the UK and other C’wealth countries. The elites also feared the quality of a 4-yr degree based on 12 years of school education thus limiting international standards.
5. The shift in cost of education to students and families was also resisted and still being resisted.
6. The other concerns were from teachers and professionals who fear degrading their professions by teaching lower standard students.
7. Other factors to analyse:
 - a. the increase in enrolments in primary education.
 - b. the effect of mass teacher exodus in the 70s and 80s on the students
 - c. most of whom started school in early and mid-80s.
 - d. c. the overall socio-economic performance of the country.
8. In a nutshell the above points were in place before the reforms were initiated. Thus there was low support from elite groups and other groups who were opposed to the Rawlings regime.
9. With such a background it will be a miracle for the JSS/SSS to be that much successful.
10. The PNDC’s aim for the reform was mainly on equity grounds rather than political expediency. Analysts can forever argue the merits for equity or for efficiency for years to come, but there is no easy way out.
11. The PNDC should be given some credit for initiating the reforms. That was a lot of political will mustered to move ahead. This is not to say that I wholeheartedly support the way the reforms were implemented. There were a lot of things done differently.
12. However the reforms are still in progress. The JSS/SSS has been locked in; there is no backing away. It is up to Ghanaians to support the program.
13. The reality is that only a few Ghanaians can proceed to the University. Some of the kids will drop out. The system needs quality improvements at JSS level, greater efficiency and value for money at all levels.
14. The elitists interests and the educational bureaucracy should not be allowed that maintenance of the status quo. The Universities have always resisted the idea of SSS intakes since the beginning of the reforms. The first batch of SSS graduates enter the University in 1994. Hence the sudden roadblocks: an entrance exam.
15. The questions that arise: How can the entry exams be leaked proof? If external exams leak, University exams also leak. Are internal exams better conducted than external exams? Who pays for this entrance exam?
16. The University staff ratio in Ghana is 1:16 as against 1:20 by international norms. The University authorities therefore have to devise ways of increasing intake instead of limiting entry.
17. To answer Alfred’s point on the timing of the reforms: There is no perfect time. The JSS has been piloted since Kutu’s time. There is no need piloting the program forever under the guise of amassing logistics. As a developing country Ghana has no sufficiency in such provisions. If the program were to start today or tomorrow or the next, there is no guarantee that it will succeed. The program is a challenge for Ghanaians lets all support it.

6.11 Re: JSS, by *Vincent Kwapong*

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Sammy B. writes:

“I still believe that the university entrance exams will make us better off. Even if all the students fail, it will be worth the tax payers’ money to close down the university for that one year. Closing down the university is not a new thing in Ghana. It has been done for as long as one year before. Even if all the students fail, that does not mean the universities should be closed down. There will still be some students in their 2nd, 3rd and 4th years.”

I’m not sure if Sammy is just playing the devil’s advocate or indeed he really meant the statements above. Closing down the universities partially (as in 1st year classes only) or completely has very serious implications. I can’t even begin to discuss that without starting a new topic. The fact that it has been done before (even if it wasn’t for the best reason) does not mean it should be encouraged. The country at large and the universities in particular have a responsibility to ensure that pre-university students are getting the right education.

The point then of having an entrance exams will be to ensure that a fair representation of those who are most likely to do well in the universities is selected (out of the total applicant pool). The selection can only be relative (within the total applicant pool). I’m not an educator but I will speculate that any attempt to admit students into the university by virtue of an absolute assessment (such that 100% of the applicant pool can fail or pass) will be flawed.

If 100% can fail then it becomes highly likely that the students were not taught the right skills. (They PROBABLY were academically smart and learned everything they were taught).

In sum, I believe if there are concerns about the quality of pre-varsity education, the nature and content of the curricula (at that level) should be reviewed. I fail to see how instituting another university exams will resolve such concerns.

6.12 Re: JSS/SSS, by *Alex Aboagye, Trondheim, Norway*

Okyeame wo ho?

I think Enock Delaporte was right when he wrote that students will be admitted to the university on the bases of their SSS results. They will then be offered a one year course, (a preparatory course) after which they will write the entrance exam (a kind of justify your inclusion exam). This is somewhat fair in the sense that at least, all who will write this exam will have the same tuition, material, etc. But even this does not eliminate the issue of elitism since some JSS/SSS schools will always be better equipped/staffed than others.

But I am a bit concerned that the discussion has centred solely round the universities. Actually only a small fraction of all potential students who ever get admission to the university. It should not be made to look like graduating from university is the only way of getting an education or a career. There must be alternatives to university education – equally good and competitive. I personally think that as a nation we lack middle level personnel. We are overflooded with engineers but we have hardly any technicians. This area should be addressed too to ensure the smooth running of technological processes.

I wish to submit also that no matter how good engineers or technicians or craftwo/men we produced they are not fully educated if they don’t know their basic human rights and if they can’t be the watchdogs of their own society. Our educational system must teach us these things.

6.13 JSS/SSS: Qualification of Teachers & Language of Instruction, by *Yaw Oheneba-Sakyi*

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Amanfour,

I have been following the recent discussions on the JSS/SSS and educational reforms in Ghana generally. I agree with most of what has been said already. There is no doubt in my mind that the system needs to be overhauled, and our discussions on the network should play a big role in this process. Two issues (already mentioned by others, but not intensively discussed) that I want us to delve into are:

- 1) Qualifications of JSS/SSS Teachers
- 2) Language of Instruction

On the issue of qualification of teachers, it is my understanding that the Post-Sec teachers to a large extent are not adequately prepared to do justice to the curriculum materials designed for the JSS/SSS.

Possible Solution?

What about posting some of our “abundant” first-degree holders to teach in these first-cycle institutions? University graduates with some minimal preparation can handle the course materials better and possibly infuse fresh/innovative ideas. It may not be a fair comparison, however, if you look around the U. S., Japan, Europe and Asia, almost all elementary school teachers are university graduates. On my visit to Ghana in the summer of 1992, I was appalled by the under-employment of recent graduates from our universities; many in the ministries as unproductive “filing clerks” with basically very little productive work loads. I visited with some of my friends, chatted with them and observed for myself this phenomena I call “under-utilisation of minds”. I think we can do better than that.

Language of Instruction in a way is related to the issue of teacher qualification discussed above. We all know that the medium of instruction in our schools for the most part is ENGLISH (the Kwasi Oburoni’s language), although conversational language(s) at all educational levels including our universities are the indigenous Ghanaian languages. The questions then become:

“How much English does the JSS/SSS instructor feels comfortable using in her/his classroom? outside the classroom? How does this “inadequacy” affect the translation of a course syllabus (written in English) to practical knowledge acquisition and skills building for the student? And what are the effects of all these on test taking?”

Possible Solution??

We need to seriously re-consider the false pretences that the “official” language of Ghana is English, when in fact over half of our people do not speak/write/read it, and those who even have working knowledge of English do not always feel comfortable using it. Why make French or any other foreign language for that matter compulsory when our local languages are not compulsory?

Attention should be given to language immersion programs that take into account the learning of Ghanaian local languages, not just the conversational aspect of it but the reading/writing aspects as well. The country’s school of languages should be made an integral part of the process of educational reform.

I hope netters will comment and expand of these two issues that I’ve raised.

6.14 Elitism and Education!, by Alfred Opoku, Carleton, Canada

Amanfuor,

It seems to me that we are gradually shifting the emphasis of the current debate to one of a class analysis of the educational system. There is nothing wrong with being careful such that national resources do not fall entirely to the domain of one particular class or social group, but I also believe that casting the present discussion into a class analysis hinders our ability to assess views with plain objectivity. Charles seems to say that the VCs, and those who have criticised the JSS concept, and who have pointed out its failures, are simply out to fight for the maintenance of a system which favors their elite group. If my deduction is correct, and forgive me if it isn’t, then what Charles is saying is that these people should not even contribute their views unless it is to support the system as it is; that is a sad commentary

from people like us who have always advocated for openness and democracy. I hope Charles and others understand that it is possible to support a concept by offering constructive criticism of it, which is what I believe those critics have done.

I have been wondering how the absence of entrance exams, or the presence of the JSS concept provides a level playing field for all social classes in Ghana. The problem of elitism is not new in Ghana and one should not think that the absence of exams would eliminate the phenomenon. So long as we all cannot attend the same school in the same location, taught by the same tutors under similar conditions, there will be differences in attitudes and academic performances. Even in the so-called elite schools, there are failures. Under the JSS, there are some schools that are more sophisticated than others, so I just cannot understand all this talk of elitism. Elitism is not only defined by the location of schools, it is also defined by the social backgrounds of students. Therefore if a poor child attends “cyto” with a rich child, the latter is able to afford extra tuition at home to help him/her gain an advantage to go to the next level. The mere presence of JSS, or the absence of exams, cannot fill the void between the rich and poor of our society.

Charles says some people are concerned with their ability to use their “A” levels to go abroad for further studies. Sure, and why not? In this era of globalization it is an added advantage to have a degree that is widely recognised and accepted in foreign countries. As poor as we are, we are able to hold our heads high in these societies because we know our educational standards are at par with, and in some cases better than, the people here. Even with or “high” standards we have problems convincing external agencies to use us as experts in our own countries. While it is true that we need to open access to more of our young people, it should not be done at the expense of the quality of our education. It is no crime, politically, socially, or even morally, for someone to covert foreign education. If the JSS can be reformed to improve quality (and that is not to push all the blame for falling standards on the concept) such that certificates and degrees can still be accepted as credible, we are all for it. As it stands now, we all agree that our educational standards have taken a dive and we need to resuscitate it. Of course, all hands must be on deck but the question is how to do it. We do not necessarily have to agree with everything the government is saying or doing, and we do not have to throw overboard everything the “opposition” is offering.

I agree with Charles that exams alone do not constitute reforms, but the suggestion that students need to do a qualifying year at the university after which they will write exams to see who can continue, makes me believe that it is still a vital tool of the education process. Now that we seem to agree on the necessity of exams, perhaps we can shift attention to the need to reform the curricula, taking into consideration the need to divert our emphasis from university education to a middle level personnel training outfit. It is in this light that I suggest once again that whatever reforms we undertake must seek to focus attention on vocational, technical, and commercial aspects of education.

6.15 JSS: teachers and language, by *Robert Awuah-Baffour*

This piece is to serve as my personal comments to Yaw Oheneba-Sakyi’s posting recently on the ongoing debate on the JSS concept or issue. Great, your ideas are laudable and very nourishing. I thing just by default, Ghanaian graduates will end up in the JSS. After all most service personal end up in the secondary schools. And since the SSS is suppose to be a transformed version(suppose to be a positive transformation though) of the secondary school system, then there is no doubt that the graduates will end up there. And true, the young graduates are most of the time the best teachers in the system especially when they end up in the mixed schools for the reason that is probably beyond the absolute comprehension of most of us. On the issue of language however, I think it’s a problem of itself. It is a fact that most of the teachers not only can’t speak English but infact don’t understand the material they are teaching. You realise that most of the teachers are those who dropped out after ‘O’ levels. Unfortunately, some of them are forced to teach some subjects they have no idea of. I remember in the cause of selling my Jss science pamphlet in one of the schools in Kumasi, I met this guy who was teaching general science meanwhile he was a business major and was complaining to me the problem he had. The situation now is no different from a Ghanaian history teacher who was seriously teaching biology in Nigeria. Students here may think it shouldn’t be a big deal, but please it is at home. Yaw, did you put into consideration the text books, and the future programs the kids will be going when talking of language of instruction? Ideally, our own languages are the best but the side conditions are a big drawback. Probably teaching with both languages side by side EFFECTIVELY be help, but ha! I don’t know.

6.16 JSS/SSS, by *Robert Awuah-Baffour*

I think the question of the JSS system is not a matter of supporting it but rather it's organisation. After all nobody wants to be a student Matussela. For what? But once you put your kid, friend, brother or whatever to school, it is your responsibility to ensure that the kid gets the best. I strongly support the Jss only when the necessary conditions of good academic preparations and foundations are satisfied. The Jss is supposed to be a continuation of a revised primary school system in Ghana. And one of the basic parameters or variables of the Jss equation is laboratories. Are you aware that there are still some schools who never tasted the real JSS/SSS meanwhile they've graduated? no labs, no nothing. Build the labs., buy the equipment (the fundamental basis of the Jss), train the teachers, Start the system from the primary schools and the system will be great. Hey! the system is started, who the hell is going to change. I guess it doesn't make sense to reverse it but to ensure that the conditions to its dreams are fully met.

6.17 Elitism and Education!, by *Charles Awasu*

Alfred in his last posting seems to think that the background information I supplied for the implementation of the reforms were out of context. I personally do not see any merit in limiting the discussion to entrance exams. The whole discussion and the entrance exams arose because of the sad story about the Jss/Sss graduates. Actually the whole gist of my last posting was to refute Alfred's claim that the government should keep piloting the program.

1. From my point of view the idea of the entrance exams embody what has gone wrong with the system. To me the entrance exam is a non-starter when over 80% of JSS/SSS graduates will not enter the university. Alfred seems to think that opposition to the reform program did in no way affect the program negatively. I will argue that most of the opposition is made up of professionals and educators who were the very people to support the program. This same are now quick to pin point the system's failure.
2. From Alfred's insistence, it seems he and the Vcs only concern is for potential university students. In that wise whatever happens to the rest of the students takes a back stand.
3. For me there is no point in evaluating JSS students based solely on their ability to qualify for university education. What Alfred and others miss is that the JSS was introduced precisely to cater for the 80% of the students who might not make it to tertiary level. The old system of the Middle school was by late 1970s unable to produce students (non-university) that will fit into the working force. With education expenditure at 20% of govt. spending in 1980 it was unwise to keep funding such a wasteful educational experience. Hence the PNDC's haste to implement reforms proposed back in 1970 and 1974.
4. It is naive for anyone to assume that there is no elitism in Ghanaian education. My earlier posting was to infer that the government decided to take an equity position as against efficiency in the initial implementation of the JSS and that obviously led to lower standards. If anyone wants to judge the reform program I'll suggest the analysis to be based on equity. That is not to say that efficiency does not matter. But the government's goal was towards equal opportunity.
5. There is nothing wrong with socialising elementary education. Actually it is for the same reasons that countries like the U. S. have socialised primary education. To achieve equity goals. However in the U. S. higher education is mostly privatised. In Ghana almost all levels are public.
6. The reforms therefore were to arrest the decay in Ghanaian educational system. The stage is now set to rebuild its quality. Such rebuilding obviously is tied to overall economic performance.
7. All these is not to say that the system doesn't have flaws. Teachers salary is low per African standards. The inspectorate division lacks transport. There is little or no discipline on the teaching force. The Ghana Education Service until recently was an autonomous body.
8. The recent idea by the VCs to entry test JSS/SSS students even though an ad hoc solution is still in line with their opposition. The Ghanaian Universities are largely patterned along UK elitist university types and refuse to allow for mass-intake as in North America and for that matter non A levels.
9. To answer Alfred's point more squarely, there is nothing wrong with a parent aspiring for his/her child to enter UK varsities with A levels. But if that is the case let the parent not expect that by public funds, after all the priorities of the nation are not for the few who will make it to Europe. It is more for those whose only educational ladder will end either at the Junior secondary or senior secondary level.

10. As pointed out by other netters the system is already in place lets all work to rebuild it. If that is then case the our discussions need not stop at university entry exams for the few or for that matter on elitist agenda.

6.18 Teachers and the JSS, by *Anthony Kwesi Aubynn, Helsinki, Finland*

I wish to contribute “a little” to the on going discussions on the all important JSS saga. My contribution is rather in the form of an observation made while in Ghana some time back. I observed that the payment of grants (call it inducement grant) to students of the training colleges seems to be attracting “good” students including those who qualified to enter the universities (sixth formers) but who did not get the courses of their interest. I cannot support this with any concrete data, but according to many friends I talked to (some of whom were teachers in the training colleges and others sixth formers with three good passes in the Postsec) I was informed that most students who would hitherto not have considered postsec are flooding the gates of the training colleges to take advantage of the handsome monthly cash payment given them. If this is true, what will be the implications for the quality of the JSS in the future. I know a lot of “ifs” should be considered before answering this question. But would netters choose their own “ifs” and look at the teacher/JSS question on this basis.

My second issue is to raise the question of how to seriously involve our unemployed or under-employed graduates in the effective improvement of the system. I know that our graduates will consider themselves demeaned to be asked to teach in a primary or JS school. But think; in Finland, for example, most of even primary school teachers are graduates. So even if our graduates hold Masters degrees it may not be out of place to ask them to take up this challenge. How can we change the psychology of our graduates to accept such a change? How about incentives to make the teaching profession attractive?

6.19 Teachers and JSS, by *Charles Awasu*

The points raised by Kwesi are very relevant. I guess that is the direction the discussion on the school reforms has to take. Giving incentives to attract quality teachers is a good step.

The larger question of how to make teaching attractive to graduates etc. also borders on incentives. If teachers including graduate teachers are paid high wages, they might be interested. Moreover re-orienting graduates to take up teaching jobs is something which should begin on the University campuses. This is where the University curricula has to change. I think all Universities should have an education department to train highly qualified professionals both in teaching and administration.

This idea of segmentation by training teachers at Cape Coast and training public servants at Legon is no longer viable. The “Ivory Tower” myth should be dropped. From a personal observation there is an “unhealthy” situation existing whereby students from certain Universities pride themselves over the others. Cape Coast University is seen by some as a Teacher Training College and as such of a lower status.

My argument is that there probably are students who might want to become professional teachers but attend Legon whilst certain students attend Cape Coast but never teach. Since resources are low, it is obvious waste for such academic division of labor. I know several teachers who were trained in Legon and UST and ended up teaching. I also know several UCC graduates who ended up in the civil service. It will be worthwhile to start integrating all the campuses, to train teachers. Most of the world’s best Universities have teacher education departments.

Also the Universities will have to start considering extending their role by starting satellite campuses in the Regional Capitals to organise short-term training courses, seminars etc. for teachers and others. Distance education has to become a viable option. This idea of every student having to be resident on campus is too expensive and obsolete.

Universities can have strong departments here and there but it will serve the country better if all or more disciplines can be offered at any one site. New innovative programs have to be developed to reflect present day realities. Publicly funded university education has to deliver equal opportunities.

6.20 A Case for Ghanaian Languages, by *Adams Bodo, Trondheim, Norway*

The debate on educational reforms has now gathered momentum on the net. When the topic was first introduced it looked as if it was not of much interest but then here we are. This is typical of this very beautiful network of ideas.

Oheneba-Sakyi touched on two important issues in the following way:

“Two issues (already mentioned by others, but not intensively discussed) that I want us to delve into are:

1) Qualifications of JSS/ Teachers

2) Language of Instruction

(.....)

Language of Instruction in a way is related to the issue of teacher qualification discussed above. We all know that the medium of instruction in our schools for the most part is ENGLISH (the Kwasi Oburoni’s language), although conversational language(s) at all educational levels including our universities are the indigenous Ghanaian languages. The questions then become: “How much English does the JSS/ instructor feels comfortable using in her/his classroom? outside the classroom? How does this “inadequacy” affect the translation of a course syllabus (written in English) to practical knowledge acquisition and skills building for the student? And what are the effects of all these on test taking?”

Possible Solution?? We need to seriously re-consider the false pretences that the “official” language of Ghana is English, when in fact over half of our people do not speak/write/read it, and those who even have working knowledge of English do not always feel comfortable using it. Why make French or any other foreign language for that matter compulsory when our local languages are not compulsory?

Attention should be given to language immersion programs that take into account the learning of Ghanaian local languages, not just the conversational aspect of it but the reading/writing aspects as well. The country’s school of languages should be made an integral part of the process of educational reform. (.....) I hope netters will comment and expand of these two issues that I’ve raised.”

This is the point at which I wish to come into the debate again and ‘expand’ on the issue of language education. The ideas I present here constitute parts of an article I am preparing for a professional Journal. The topic is very dear to my heart and some of these ideas have already been featured at various fora in Ghana and Norway (Linguistic Circle of Accra, Daily Graphic, GBC and Univ. of Oslo NOA journal):

LINGUISTICS, EDUCATION AND POLITICS:

An Interplay on the Study of Ghanaian Languages.

Abstract

In this paper, linguistic, educational and political bricks in the Ghanaian society are put together to build a case for emphasising the study of Ghana’s indigenous languages in the educational system of the country. The problems and prospects of the case are examined. It is demonstrated that the superordinate problem hindering an emphasis on these languages in schools is the lack of adequate policies and the poor implementation of the sketchy ones available. Future gains for the study of Ghanaian languages include the fact that the educational system will produce Ghanaians who are well appreciative and empathic of their cultural set-up.

1. Introduction

The teaching of indigenous Ghanaian languages is a topic of considerable interest in our governmental, academic and other intellectual circles. The discussions held at various conferences, seminars and meetings, though sporadic, have enabled people concerned with the study of these languages in our educational institutions not only to take

stock of the problems that have hampered the teaching of these languages but also to propose some solutions to these problems.

In this paper one does not intend to present a comprehensive picture of the language teaching situation in Ghana, nor does one pretend to give a catalogue of all the problems of language teaching in Ghana. The main argument in this paper would be that most, if not all, the problems that have usually been identified by various people can be put in the framework of a more superordinate problem - the lack of serious, well-intentioned and consistent language policies and their implementation in the past. Finally, it will then be suggested that a better future for the study of Ghanaian languages in our educational institutions can be ensured only if we take the necessary steps to put in place more systematic and dynamic language policies.

2. Problems

But first of all, let us take a quick look at some of the problems commonly found in the literature on teaching African languages. Awoyini (1982; p.58) classifies the problems of teaching African languages in the following perspectives:

- i. The lack of secondary school teachers of African languages, especially well-trained graduates.
- ii. Little enthusiasm in the study of African languages by students and especially their parents because of the status and emphasis on English in most anglophone African countries.
- iii. inadequate supply of textbooks.
- iv. inadequate teaching resources.
- v. inadequate evaluation and testing techniques, and finally for him,
- vi. "The most significant reason why the teaching of African languages is so inadequate is because of the defects in the curriculum."

In Ghana various people have also identified the problems on similar lines. One of the most popular reasons used to discourage the teaching of Ghanaian languages in our schools is that there is no adequate supply of textbooks and other forms of literature in these languages, therefore making it difficult to train the child to use such languages as a medium of expression to meet new situations in our fast changing world. This, in particular, was the view of the Colonial Administration as is manifest in the 1956 Minority Report on the use of English:

"It is pointless to teach any of the vernacular languages as a subject in schools; for such insignificant and uncultivated local dialects can never become so flexible as to assimilate readily new words, and to expand their vocabularies to meet new situations.....their absence of literature discredits them and the use of any of them as a medium of expression."

This is undoubtedly an exaggerated view of the problem; for one realises that this point was frequently and intentionally overemphasised so as to favour the teaching of English in place of the Ghanaian languages.

Dr. Dowuona, (then commissioner for Education giving an opening address at a conference on the study of Ghanaian languages held at Legon in 1968) also outlined, among others, as some of the problems hindering the study of Ghanaian languages.

- i. the competition between our Ghanaian languages and English in our educational system and
- ii. the controversies over orthography and lack of agreement on what the standard form of each language should be.

One other problem that confronts the teaching of these languages is the discontinuous manner in which certain languages are taught and examined from the lower to the higher rungs of the educational ladder. With the exception of Akan and Ewe in which students can take the ordinary and advanced level examinations of the West African Examinations Council (WAEC), a diploma examination at the school of Ghana languages, Ajumako, a bachelors degree examination at Cape Coast University and a Post-graduate degree examination at Legon, no other language in Ghana has such a continuous system of examinations. Ga, for instance, is examined at the ordinary level of WAEC but not at the advanced level and yet there are diploma and post-graduate degree courses in it. As for languages like Dangbe, Dagaare, Dagbane, Gonja, Kasem and Nzema, there is a gap up to the diploma level and thereafter except for single papers, long essays and theses projects that can be written on them there are no other examinations. For other languages still, there is no examination of any sort on them. This situation does not augur well for a smooth teaching programme for these languages. It is a fact that in Ghana pupils and students do not read materials written in Ghanaian languages (and even in English) for the sake of pleasure but in order to pass examinations. This is one of the reasons why students do not show enthusiasm in learning these languages in the first and second cycle schools.

2.1 Lack of Systematic Language Policies.

All these and other problems not mentioned above can be traced to the absence of well-defined and systematic language planning policies and their implementation, both in the pre- and post- independence eras.

In the pre-independence era even though groups of missionaries did a lot to write down and teach some of our languages like Akan, Ewe and Ga, from the Minority Report quoted above, it is not surprising that the Colonial Government itself had no serious policy for the teaching of Ghanaian languages.

What is surprising is the attitude of our own politicians towards our own languages immediately after independence. They had no definite and clear-cut policy statement as regards the teaching of these languages. On the contrary, these politicians began to put more emphasis on the English language to the neglect of the Ghanaian languages. Dowuona echoes these facts in the following words:

“There was a new emphasis on English. Although the study of Ghanaian languages as a subject was retained, this new emphasis led to a gradual neglect of Ghanaian languages. The allocation of periods for these languages was progressively reduced in the upper rungs of the school ladder.”

The reasons for this kind of neglect are not far-fetched. In a sense the politicians saw these languages as barriers to national integration since every ‘tribal’ or ethnic group would strive to promote their language, thereby fuelling up tribalism. English, on the other hand, is a neutral language. This thinking is brought to light from a resolution taken in Parliament under the First Republic concerning the debate for a national language:

“The English language now serves to bind together all the tribes and cultures which constitute Ghana as a nation and to impose a Ghanaian language in place of it might provoke resentment of other languages as happened in India and Ceylon.”

The problem of policy implementation further complicates the situation. Even in later years when it looked as if Ghanaian languages were to be encouraged - as this is evidenced by the setting up of structures such as the Bureau of Ghana Languages, the School of Ghana Languages and various departments and units dealing with these languages at the Universities and in the Ministry of Education - the implementation of these laid down policies were half-hearted. Even directors and education officers who were supposed to implement these policies did this only by word of mouth, but sent their own children to international schools where no Ghanaian languages were taught. In fact, up to date, some people still speak only English to their children at home and many parents measure their children’s rate of progress at school, not by the amount of Akan, Dagaare, Ewe or Kasem they can speak and write, but by their level of proficiency in spoken and written English.

The lack of a well-defined policy and a half-hearted implementation of even the sketchy ones where they exist is undoubtedly then, the major problem confronting the teaching of Ghanaian languages in schools and all the other problems can always be traced to it. Ansre (1969) sees the problem in the right perspective with the following observation: “one of the root causes, if not the only one, is the lack of a clearly-stated policy on the study of Ghanaian languages in the educational system.....There is no policy statement on what should be the ultimate aim in their study, no suggestions on the content of the course and no provision for obtaining adequately trained staff and carefully prepared teaching material. As a result of this absence of policy there is lack of co-ordination between what is done at the various levels of the educational system.”

The point about lack of co-ordination is pertinent. That is why there are gaps in the examining of some of the languages throughout the educational system since there is hardly any liaison between the WAEC and the educational institutions. That is why there is the absence of suitable textbook since there is no provision for an annual workshop for textbook writers in the various languages. And that why the Bureau Ghana Languages claims that it does not receive suitable literature for publication from the Public (Otoo 1969) for it does not liaise with the higher institutions like the Universities and the School of Ghana Languages where, presumably, there exist a good number of long essays and dissertations that could be adapted and published.....

The forgoing analysis is an unfortunate picture if we begin to consider how important the teaching of Ghanaian languages is to our children and to the nation as a whole.

3. Importance

In sociolinguistic terms, language is hardly separable from culture. The former is even the vehicle through which the latter is transmitted and manifested. To deny a child literacy in his or her mother-tongue by not including it in the educational system will only be a means of helping the child to look down on his or her own culture. This point is sufficiently illustrated by Armstrong (1963):

“if we despise the language of a people then by that very token we despise that people. If we are ashamed of our own language then we must certainly lack that minimum of self-respect which is necessary for the healthy functioning of society.”

In order that a child may appreciate and love his or her own background and culture, s/he must be encouraged to learn his or her language more enthusiastically. This can only be done effectively with its inclusion in the educational programme.

When we come to look at the practical use of language issues such as level of proficiency and the typological functioning of particular languages in society have to be considered. The fact is that the Ghanaian child enters the classroom sufficiently equipped with native speakers competence in at least one Ghanaian language. With such a good degree of proficiency, the Ga, Ewe or Nzema child will quickly pick up language skills like reading and writing only if they were exposed to him in his L1.

Beside this point is the fact that a good L1 teaching programme could enhance the teaching and learning of any L2 that is exposed to the child. For example, if a Gonja speaking-child achieves competency and some intellectual skills like essay writing in his L1 this can lead to about the same level of competency in essay writing when he is later exposed to English, French or Russian. It is therefore not true to say that the addition of Ghanaian languages in the curriculum is one of the causes of the low level of English in our schools.

One of the reasons why we should take a new look at the teaching of Ghanaian languages in our schools is to be found in the way these languages are put to use by the school leavers. Most of our first and second-cycle school graduates use mainly their L1 and probably one other Ghanaian language in their day to day activities. English is hardly used partly because of their low level of proficiency in it. Boadi (1971) confirms that as far as the majority of school leavers is concerned if there is any agreement about the level of attainment which they reach in English, it is that this is low and inadequate for most ordinary purposes. If this then is the plight of the Ghanaian school leaver in the use of English, instead of directing almost all energies at the teaching of English, emphasis should equally be placed on the good, old Ghanaian languages which will be of immediate and practical use to them when they leave school.

Finally, if we realise that the fact that our educational policies and programmes should reflect our national goals and aspirations we will also realise the extent to which a serious approach to the teaching of Ghanaian languages is of prime importance. This is because in order that government policies such as increased productivity, decentralisation, rural development and industrialisation may succeed the broad masses of the population of Ghana need to be involved. This can only be possible with the Ghanaian languages rather than with English. As parliament in 1971 indicated:

“The continued use of English condemns the overwhelming majority of the people of Ghana to second-rate citizenship by disqualifying them from discussions of serious national issues.” Apart from the mass functional literacy campaigns under the non-formal unit of the Ministry of Education and under some non-governmental organisations, it will be a step in the right direction if the bulk of our school leavers are equipped with a good working knowledge of their written mother-tongues through an emphasis on Ghanaian language education in the formal educational system.

If these then are some of the many advantages to be derived from the conscientious study of Ghanaian languages, what is being done or what should be done to pave the way for a brighter future?

4. Suggestions For A Better Future

The answers to the many problems confronting the teaching of Ghanaian languages in schools lie in the formulation of more coherent languages policies. Two types of language planning policies may be distinguished: intra-language planning and inter-language planning policies.

Intra-language planning deals with the relationship between dialects of a single language and this mostly concerns how to achieve a standard written form of a language. For effective educational material to develop and in order to avoid

having to publish the same material in the various dialects of a single language, measures should be taken so that in the next five or ten years all Ghanaian languages, especially the government promoted ones, have standard written forms. Now that the Akan language for instance has a unified orthography it is possible to set up more effective, comprehensive and uniform teaching programmes in all the schools where Akan is taught. The other language groups should also have language committees set up to take charge of standardisation and / or revision of already existing standard forms from time to time.

Inter-language planning grapples with what functions to assign to particular languages within a multilingual set up and is definitely a crucial issue in a multilingual country like Ghana where we need to decide on issues like what languages to publish in, which of them to use in the mass media and which to teach at various stages in the educational ladder.... We need a definite policy statement on this. Again there are prospects for a better future now that there seems to be a clear insistence on the teaching of Ghanaian languages in the Junior Secondary School (J.S.S.) system. We, however, need such policy statements beyond the J.S.S. structure if we must advance any further.

But a policy statement on paper is not enough in itself. It is the implementation which matters very much. And with implementation the all-important aspect of co-ordination comes to mind. Efforts should be made by the authorities concerned to bring together the various bodies dealing with the development and teaching of Ghanaian languages, at least, once a year. Annual workshops for the production of primers, textbooks and other forms of literature should be instituted for bodies such as the Bureau of Ghana languages, the WAEC, the Universities, Schools and Colleges. The Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and (Bible) Translation (GILL(B)T) could collaborate in this area because of their experience in producing a lot of primers for adult literacy in Northern Ghanaian languages. A biennial conference involving all these bodies and other experts could be established to assess and review all the policies and the extent of their implementation each time they meet.

Another suggestion which, in our opinion, is worthwhile is that literacy in certain Ghanaian languages must immediately be included in the requirements for certain professions in Ghana. People advertising to employ certain professionals such as journalists, public relations officers, broadcasters, nurses, doctors, receptionists, revenue collectors etc. must be made aware of the functional importance of certain Ghanaian languages in certain localities. This is a fact we cannot continue to ignore.

For a start, since we cannot include all the Ghanaian languages in qualifying examinations for these professions, the nine government-sponsored languages - Akan, Dagaare, Dagbani, Dangbe, Ewe, Ga, Gonja, Kasem and Nzema - (which happen to be quite well-distributed in all the ten regions of Ghana) should be taught in the training programmes for such professions and the student required to pass in one of these languages. We do not see how, for instance, journalists, public relations officers and broadcasters can function well, without being literate in at least one Ghanaian language, in modern day Ghanaian society where local FM stations and newspapers are springing up in all regions and where very soon the Ghanaian languages will be used in political institutions like the District Level Assemblies.

The Ghanaian Universities on their part have an important role to play. As Neville (1963) suggests:

“they can ensure that facilities are made available for research into African languages and for the study of these languages at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.” That is why plans to establish a department of Ghanaian languages and literatures at Legon and the upgrading of the School of Ghana Languages to a degree awarding institution at the University College of Winneba is a step in the right direction.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion the Ghanaian languages constitute an important set of the human resources of Ghana and all available means must be used to tap them. Infact, English, though admittedly an international language of communication can hardly replace Ghanaian languages, for they constitute the bedrock of our cultural manifestations. In the words of Chinebuah (1976):

“If the Ghanaian and, for that matter, the African is to have roots in the way of life into which he is born and in which his earliest emotional and social experience have their setting, he must be taught an appreciation of the culture of his people and his native tongue in which that culture finds its fullest expressions. Otherwise our educational system will only succeed in producing men and women who are linguistically and therefore culturally displaced persons.”

This linguistic and cultural derailment can be prevented only if we take a serious look at the teaching of Ghanaian languages to our children by putting in place well-defined, coherent and continuous language policies in our educational system.

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[Fellows netters, if I had the opportunity to influence parts or the whole of the Education Ministry, these are some of the issues I would try to pursue. I therefore invite Dr. Kwabia or anybody who has the chance to lobby for educational reforms in the near future to consider these issues closely.]

6.21 Re. Educational reforms, by *Alex Aboagye, Trondheim, Norway*

On the issue of educational reforms, I think it is so important that people say what they really mean that if even in the process of formulating it we disagree and tempers rise it should not be seen as purely unhealthy. I will only caution that we firstly, refrain from foul language as others have pointed out earlier and secondly, not lose track of the important issues.

I have got the impression that the discussions have centred around these issues:

- entrance exams to the university,
- language of instruction for basic education,
- teachers/staff and other logistics problems,
- hasty implementation of the program.

People have come with their own opinions about some of these issues and how best they think they can be solved. Much as I can appreciate that language and logistics problems are important issues of the educational reforms, I am somehow, burdened to try to draw attention to the content of the new educational system. I think the discussion has hardly touched on this aspect. People are of the general view that the content of the new educational system is superb. I am not claiming otherwise. I just don't know the contents well enough and I therefore, request anybody who knows to brief us about it. But whatever it is, I think we need to scrutinise it. Is the content really as brilliant as we have been made to believe?

I am all for the idea that the new system tries to equip the youth with some kind of vocation in the course of their basic education. So far that is the only thing I know about the content to which I also agree perfectly. But equally, if not more important, is the issue of teaching our youth basic civic responsibility. In the old system we used to learn civics. This consisted basically of remembering the names of the heads of the various ministries. No wonder even university graduates still feel that political power actually lies with persons holding public office.

Up to now, most Ghanaians are of the general opinion that the 14, 15, 16 million people in Ghana must simply kowtow to the ideas and opinions of about 90 persons holding public office whether those ideas are for their good or bad.

This is so because the vast majority of the people are of the opinion that they can't change anything even if they want to. This mentality needs to be turned around. We need to teach our youth about our own political and social history in the context of the world system of things and make them understand that it is the masses who wield political power. We need to teach them the detrimental effects of leaving the destiny of a country in the hands of few people on the wrong mental concept that they wield power and that we dare not disagree with them.

I think this is the core of the educational reforms we need in Ghana and it must go side by side with giving us a vocation, career, profession etc. I believe there are wo/men out there who also see the importance of an "educated" populace and call on these people to come up with their ideas. It is only when we have an educated populace that we can be the watch dogs of our own society. If we have an educated populace they will not keep quiet when a convicted murderer is given public office. We must be taught that we all have civic rights as well as civic responsibilities to see to the proper functioning of our society, that we are accountable for our actions, that authority goes with responsibility, that everybody has some basic human rights and deserved to be treated fairly, that power lies in the collectiveness of the individual knowledge and wills of the general populace.

If our education system teaches us so that we come out as the best carpenters, masons, metal workers, cooks, hairdressers, tailors, etc. - if we are able to produce the best engineers, doctors, administrators, economists, etc. and yet we don't know our rights and civic responsibilities, we will only be trying to treat internal injuries by dressing the superficial bruises and we shall be talking about educational reforms again in no time. Why? Because a properly educated populace is the foundation upon which the progress and development of a society is built. And because a properly educated populace is one that knows that the initiation and momentum of progress depends on them. That's why.

6.22 The JSS etc., by *Charles Awasu*

This is a follow-up to Aboagye's posting. During all the discussions on the JSS, It has occurred to me that, there has not being any information on how the school kids themselves feel about the change. I think it will be interesting to find out from some of the students (especially those who cross-over from the former to the new) how they feel about the new changes.

Among other things we can also consider the ff.:

1. the status of pre-school education.
2. the number of kids who go to school hungry
3. students who might have a need for counselling
4. parent/community input into local schools etc.

The performance of the education bureaucracy needs some improvement. The Ghana Education Service, especially at the district level needs some fine tuning. Maybe there is need to introduce active school boardships. There is a lot that has to go into improvement our school system.

Since schools are not petrol stations whereby kids are driven up, filled with knowledge and driven off, it is time the parents/communities etc. have a larger say in what is being taught at schools. The idea of leaving all decisions to the public sector officials is not always the best.

6.23 Re: The JSS etc., by *Alfred Opoku*

Charles said something in his last posting which is interesting; that educational reforms need to have input from those who are the objects of such a policy, as well as their parents, and that the government need not be the only one to put forward ideas (obviously he did not say so in as many words!). This brings to mind a few things, among which is the

politicisation of the reforms which we have talked about already. When this government sets its sights on an objective, it listens to no one particularly those they see as being opposed to them. I know university students do not adequately represent all students in Ghana; nonetheless, they are the most articulate and intelligent portion of that group. When we objected to the reforms on the basis of inadequate preparation and lack of logistics, the PNDC labelled students as “selfish bigots”, “infantile leftists”, and “rabble rousers”, just to mention a few. If university students cannot have an opinion on such a sensitive national issue, who else can? Personally I do not think the primary school kids who were going to be experimented upon could have reasoned on the pros and cons of these reforms. As for parents, most of whom do not understand the workings of the educational system, they only knew one fact, as provided by the PNDC, that this system would cost less than the previous one and it would provide their children with better skills. Which parent would vote against such a promise? The point I am trying to make is that, while Charles’ point is noteworthy, it is clear that we have a government that is not susceptible to the ideas of its citizens, what the IMF says goes! And what the world bank says is the law! We all acknowledge the importance of involving people in the decision making process but how well does the P(NDC) understand such a point? Even when they have called for such views, they ignore what people say. For me, the biggest fraud perpetrated by Rawlings, and his cohorts, on the people of Ghana was when he formed the National Commission for Democracy (NCD) to go round the country and collate views on the form of government people wanted. Before the commission even started sittings the government announced district council elections! What was the point of that exercise and waste of public funds for these people to travel the country? I see the same pattern when it comes to other issues such as educational reforms. Let’s not deceive ourselves that this guy would appreciate other people’s views, even now that he is a president and not just a chairman. The only remedy is for Ghanaians to be better prepared in the next election to cast their vote because we would not only be electing a president and members of parliament but we would be electing a direction for our country; a direction which would have great bearings on our education, social life, and even our sports!

Charles’ point is great and well taken, but I am afraid to remind him of Krobo Edusei’s words to the opposition “yate nso yenfa!” (literally translated - we’ve heard you but we won’t follow your advice). That is what this government seems to be saying to the numerous ideas people have expressed in relation to our homeland Ghana.

6.24 Re: Educational reforms, by *Alex Aboagye*

I couldn’t agree with Alfred more on the issue of public participation in the on-going educational reforms. The suggestion by Charles Awasu that parents should participate in formulating the curriculum of the new educational system is, in my opinion, a laudable one. There are however, two problems associated with that suggestion that I can foresee.

Firstly, to reinforce Alfred’s point, the greater majority of parents know hardly anything about what the content of their children’s education should be. Saying this is no “better than thou attitude”. It is a fact. What do we expect illiterate cocoa farmer parents to contribute to the formulating of their children’s educational curriculum?

If it is done on community basis, then some communities, by virtue of the fact that they consist of well educated parents can actually formulate a very good curriculum whilst others may not because most of them don’t know what constitute a good educational curriculum.

If this suggestion is to be implemented on a national level then we could get some well-educated people speaking on behalf of all parents and helping formulate across-the-board policies for all schools.

Perhaps, it is not finding solutions to these simple organisational bottlenecks that is the problem. The second problem is probably, the willingness of the government to tolerate such opinions if they are to be carried out on national level. Some African governments see it in their interest to have a populace that is literate but uneducated. And in my opinion, that is what the old educational system made us, literate but uneducated. With such a populace they can perpetrate their regimes as long as they want. To such governments, having an educated populace is like a thorn in the flesh. We all probably remember Arap Moi’s pronouncements before the recent Kenyan multi-party elections - i.e. that the Kenyan people are not mature enough for multi-party politics. Even assuming that this is true, what did the Honourable President do to educate his people? He rather worsened the people’s chances of maturing by bridling all independent

press and any opposition. I personally feel that talking about awareness of the populace is often times not popular with many African leaders as they see that as a threat to their regime.

But this is a rather myopic way of looking at things as those selfish leaders will die and go but the countries they have subjugated and destroyed by their one-man policies will remain many years after to suffer. That is why leaders, if they really have the calibre of true leaders, if they have any vision, must see the education of their populace as an issue which is in the interest of the country. Many African leaders however, care less about the future of their country. They are more concerned about their short years in power.

In sum, what I am trying to put across is this; it takes more than just a literate populace - it takes an educated populace to ensure the development of any society. I maintain that to ensure this teaching the youth civic rights and responsibilities must be seen as equally important as the desire to give them a vocation. I propose that civic responsibility and rights must be an integral part of the national curriculum. This should be seen first and foremost as governmental responsibility. I agree with Charles Awasu that parents should participate in the formulating of their children's educational curriculum. But the issue of civic responsibilities and rights are so important that they should not be left in the hands of parents.

6.25 JSS and Educational Reforms, by *Ebenezer Annan, St Mary's Canada*

This is in reaction to Alfred's recent piece on the above. In his posting Alfred seemed to agree with Charles on the issue of 'participation' but then discounted Charles' suggestion by concluding "ya te nso yenfa". Without taking sides on the issue, I think it would only be fair to point out a couple important points.

First, I do not remember reading Charles' article but then it would be fair to say that the need for participation in the various institutions of the State can not be overemphasised and the educational system is no exception. Agreeably, the PNDC for its record has not given much credence to input by the intellectual community let alone the populace. This in itself is a major limitation for policy-making in Ghana which unfortunately the government does not seem to realise. However, to say that parents are generally illiterate and therefore would have little or nothing to contribute to educational reforms is not without prejudice. When it comes to building and supporting School programmes and even building structures for schools, parents are almost always consulted. Why can't they be allowed to say that they want their kids to be trained to be better farmers, fishermen, loggers, teachers and for that matter responsible community members? Participation in the real sense is not mobilisation. It is neither the power of the vote or even decentralisation. Participation offers a common ground for belongingness, a source of pride, self-dignity and provides a feeling of achievement on the part of the members of the community, whether they offer suggestions at the table, contribute labour, money or donate property for the purpose of educational reforms.

Secondly, I think it would be naive to assume that since, primary school kids are not in the position to offer academic or practical suggestions for educational reforms, they must necessarily be represented by University Students. University students may be represented on matters concerning their own reality but may not adequately represent lower institutions of learning. Why should university students represent primary schools when such schools have teachers or even pupils who are fairly informed about conditions prevalent in their own schools? - lack of writing material, inadequate teachers, long gardening hours, brutal lashing of pupils and absenteeism of teachers to mention a few. Participation takes place at various levels and if pupils can not be invited at national or regional levels they could be heard at the community level.

Participation, in realistic terms has to do with the involvement of all segments of the society whether identified by age, gender, class, colour or ethnicity. Playing down the role of a particular group is suggestive of the fact they have nothing to contribute and I consider that anything but participation. Certainly, I am not saying that everybody in the community should be invited to the table or even that absolute consensus should be reached before decisions are made. It is possible though to evolve ways and means to involve youth groups, traders, teachers, parents, pupils, students and academics in a concerted effort depending on the issues involved and the process at large.

Finally, in support of Alfred's piece, Alex Aboagye indicated that "it takes an educated populace to ensure the development of any society. I must say that Aboagye's axiom is leaking with fallacy. The knowledge and ability of

illiterate members of society can no longer be discounted. If development is to be workable and especially sustainable (and I use the term sustainable with ample caution), if development is to benefit the poor and vulnerable in society then the educated must learn to appreciate the wisdom of the illiterate. Development whether through educational reforms or other projects is about progress but it is also about mutual respect within the entire society.

6.26 Re: JSS, by *Steve Agyepong*

I admit that I let my disgust for the bribery and corruption that go on in our dear country take a better part of me when I wrote the first piece on entrance exams. Thinking about the stuff that goes on in our admission process back home makes me sick in the head and to suggest anything that has the potential to add to an already bad situation, to me, was unacceptable.

While admitting that the intention of the professors might not be to enrich themselves, the potential is there. So how do we administer such an entrance exam without allowing our tendency to enrich ourselves at the expense of the people take a better part of us? Maybe it is time to look at students previous academic records, extracurricular activities, etc. as part of the admission process. To make the use of previous academic records legitimate and useful, perhaps the university folks should have some input to promotion exams at the lower levels. I think Charles has done an excellent job in expressing my concerns and hope netters will take note. Alfred, I don't think I can agree with you on your assertion that 'standards of education have fallen since the introduction of the so-called "educational reforms" under the PNDC's ERP/SAP.' At least, the professors confessed the JSS/ concept look good on paper. And the problem is its implementation. So why don't we look at how best we can help improve things instead of adding to things to be done. For one thing, the standards of our education have been falling for a long time now. So don't blame it on Rawlings. Why blame Rawlings when you and I after benefiting from Ghanaian education opted to leave Ghana for greener pastures. Maybe we should be home helping to educate the young ones.

On the question of exams, we all know that in the real world we have all the resources to work with while at work. Right now I am at work, and I have my dictionary, user's manuals of all the software I am using, books written by others to help me, so why should exams be any different? Don't you think that the way we conduct exams in Ghana do not reflect how the real world works? Shouldn't we be looking at ways to make the JSS/, university, etc. exams reflect the real world?

7 AFRICA AND THE MILITARY

Compiled and Edited by *Sam Asomaning*

7.00 Editor's Preface, by *Sam Asomaning*

April 09, 1994. It is almost ironic that I am writing a short preface to the section AFRICA AND THE MILITARY at a time when the Burundi-Rwanda military crises is back in the spotlight. In October 1993, during a similar military crisis in Burundi, Charles Appeadu posted a short note on Okyeame calling on members to take advantage of the military crisis in Burundi to discuss the role of the military in Africa. This call went largely unheeded. Soon after, there was a military coup in Nigeria. It was not until late November 1993 that Isaac Thompson posted an article, "In 'Defense' of Military coups". The article was as provocative as it was controversial. "In defense of military Coups" was so provocative that it generated emotions and responses beyond Okyeame setting in motion a full fledged debate on coups and the role of the military in African affairs.

The central theme of Isaac's posting was that the role of the African military as we know it today is one "it was destined" to play. That is, it was a necessary role in our gradual evolution into stable democracies, given what we were, and what we inherited at the start of post-independence nationhood. He went on to state that this role is fast fading into insignificance. This assertion generated a lot of responses. The responses ranged from disagreement to finding the roots of military coups to suggestions of antidotes to military coups. "In defense...", as we came to call it, generated debate even beyond Okyeame, as shown by the last article in this section, "High Road," culled from the Nigerian network, Naijanet. The fact that Isaac's piece fit well with the 'military problem' in other parts of Africa gives credence to the fact that for coups and the military in Africa, 'you 've seen one, you 've seen them all'. This section is a microcosm of the debate on the military that took place on Okyeame.

Most of the articles were filled with varying degrees of emotion. These emotions are fully understandable. The question of the role of the military is a very emotional one to African intellectuals. This is due largely to the fact that most of our economic woes are attributed to the disruptive role of the military on the African continent.

Whilst we all agree that the military in Africa is playing a role beyond what it was empowered to do - protection of the citizens from external aggression we seem to be far away from finding an effective solution to what we consider as the military nightmare. To this end Baidoe-Ansah's call for a national debate on the 'whys, hows and whats of what can be done to stop military coups' is, to my mind, an idea whose time has come. Such an initiative can be easily organized by Ghanaians abroad, presumably as a goodwill gesture, but in reality to rectify a situation TO which their fate will forever be tied.

To me, if the intellectuals find the problem of the military too confounding, and if they think they can do a better job at governing than the military, then a good way to start is to accept that the role of the military in African politics is permanent. Having accepted that, strategies can then be adopted to curb or resolve the problem. One such strategy is for the intellectuals to "infiltrate" the ranks of the military, be a part of it, and ultimately "take control" of the military. This has the potential of giving intellectuals real say in military governments instead of being just coattails of it, as in current situations. If most of our important affairs and our lives are to be run by the military, and if our best brains can do it better, then they must be there to do it. Of course whether or not intellectuals can do better than the military is a debatable issue.

The articles in this section have been selected, hopefully, to present a balanced view of of the debate on the military. However bias towards personal taste is inevitable in such an endeavor. I am grateful to Isaac Thompson for proofreading the section and offering many invaluable suggestions, amongst them the title of the section. Enjoy reading the postings, give it some thought and voice out your views.

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Section Editor

7.01 In "Defense" of Military Coups, by *Isaac Thompson*

Date: Fri, 26 Nov 1993 14:20:11 -0500 (EST)
From: Isaac Thompson <ixtst+@pitt.edu>
Subject: In "Defense" of Military Coups

Not surprisingly, the military's recent flip act in Nigeria has called into question an argument I advanced, rather broadly, a few weeks ago about the declining significance of the military in African politics. I have received two private queries from some netters marveling over what appears to be a false prophesy! My prophesy (or "theory") isn't false yet. In the main, it stands valid, the Nigeria military's patent buffoonery notwithstanding.

I tell you why.

Before I do that, however, I have to say that I find it rather interesting how the role of CIVILIANS in fomenting political instability in Africa has been conveniently left out of the discussion on the net so far. Rather interesting! Could it be that most of these civilians were cut from the same cloth as you and I: Educated in the West and full of righteous indignation only to go home and be "overcome" by events? Think about it.

Now, to reiterate my earlier argument: I said that the military was dying (repeat, DYING--not dead yet) from African politics after over 35 years of spectacular failure in a role which it was destined to play. (Watch the word "destined" because my argument partly rests on that). The military sure remains a threat in Africa, but it's a threat that has been substantially diminished by time and circumstance and will continue to be so.

Sour losers don't go down easy. And for soldiers, who are socialized into believing that victory is the very essence of being, the tendency to kick and scream in the face of inevitable retreat is that much greater. But down they must go; no

one, not even soldiers, can resist the verdict of history indefinitely. As an institutional threat, they will eventually shrink down into becoming the exception, rather than the norm in African politics.

The evidence is there, except that some people, so obsessed with the seemingly immutable threat of the military, choose to look only at that side of the evidence that supports that obsession. They focus on the trees, rather than on the forest, when the forest, for our purposes, should be the focus.

Let us look at the evidence, broadly. Compare the number of coups in Africa in the past three years, say, to the number of democratic advances on the continent for the same period. You see easily that the military as a disruptive political force is staring into its grave. During this period, by my own rough count, there have been two successful military coups (Sa Lone and Nigeria) and two botched attempts thanks to the resistance of democratic forces (Togo and Burundi). During the same period, at least twenty-one autocracies/militocracies have been forced through the ballot box to either relinquish power or share it in a democratic setting. This must be cause for celebration, not panic!

A counter-argument here might be, Well, didn't we have democratic institutions at independence and look at what these same blasted soldiers did. They will soon be at their old tricks again. You are right, but you are also wrong if you ignore the crucially different histo-political forces that shaped these two phases of our brief and tumultuous national existences. The democracies we have now are real, the products of our own sweat and blood. The "democracies" of independence were a house of cards erected hastily by a retreating foe. They were doomed to collapse and they did. Which brings me to the "destiny thing" I alluded to above.

For the 75 or so years that colonialism officially existed in Africa, there were no democratic institutions and certainly no democratic ethos. The colonizers either destroyed traditional political institutions or rigged them to suit the exploitative political systems they introduced. It is often said that one-party dictatorships emerged in Africa after independence. Wrong, wrong, wrong! Colonialism was a one-party dictatorship. The culture of political intolerance which for the past 35+years has haunted African politics was long a part of the African polity before we terminated colonialism. The only exception was that the colonizers kept our soldiers busy with unnecessary external wars and so badly equipped them that they posed virtually no threat. Had there existed then the kinds of military we have now, coups would have entered the African political dictionary long before the 1960s.

Colonialism also took its toll on our economies, whose natural evolution toward innovation and self-supported growth was aborted through their re-orientation to serve the needs of others. The productive and consumptive sides were the most affected. Indigenous industry was actively discouraged and the entrepreneurial class suppressed. In the Gold Coast, for instance, "natives" who applied to either get into shipping or the export business, both critical sectors to development, were first discouraged with a complicated set of laws. When they persisted, the British brought in the Syrians. We are yet to get them off our backs.

Furthermore, new consumption patterns were introduced without the corresponding production skills or technology to cater for them. The idea was to get us addicted to imports like Ideal milk and "Tinapa" as a way of maintaining European markets in Africa. Rescue me if I'm wrong.

All of these rearrangements of structures left behind a vacuum. And it was into this vacuum that we were propelled at independence and were expected to do the impossible by building nations and making socio-economic advances with economies that were programmed to self destruct. We had to sort out this mess, and it took a process which necessarily gave rise to military dictators and civilian autocrats. It had to happen. How else would we have learned - if we didn't create these mistakes? Mistakes carry in them the clues to success. Our young, home-grown democracies are testimony to this success. (Compare Ghana's 1992 constitution with the nonsense we were handed in 1957 and you know we stand a better chance

now

than we ever did). These democracies will be more enduring than their predecessors because they are indigenous, they are our institutions, they were born of our own painful experiences. This does not mean, however, that we should encourage, even tolerate, civilian autocracies or military dictatorships. Contrariwise, we should oppose them. But such opposition is part of the process.

We are fond of comparing our seemingly chronic political instability with the relative stability of political institutions in the West. What we ignore is that such stability is the product of a long and arduous process, not much unlike what

we began in Africa 35+ years ago. The Americans had to fight a traumatic civil war to establish their nationhood and attain political rectitude. (Even then, assassinations remain a potentially destabilizing factor of their political culture). Only a few weeks ago, there were rumors of a military coup in Spain. The Japanese have only recently known political stability after centuries of political turmoil, including military coups. Ditto the French, the people who gave us “egalite” and “fraternite” and made revolution hip by chopping off leaders’ heads in public. They had to try five republics (the last one in 1958) before attaining the political stability which we so uncritically admire. (Note: Their 4th Republic lasted 12 years. By way of comparison, Ghana is in its 4th Republic attempt. If in 13 years we are still “standing”, we shall have beaten the French by a Republic and a year! Not bad for a nation that was once a colony.) If political stability is a destination, I tell you, we are within shouting distance of it.

My point is this: The instability that became post-independence Africa was bound to come. It was also bound to end. We are witnessing the beginning of that end. How quickly we achieve and sustain this end will depend on several factors:

1. The ability and willingness of civilians to pursue “good governance”,
2. The willingness of the military to “retreat” as well as governments’ ability to find new missions for their military.
3. The degree to which the international community is willing to countenance military leaders. There is no denying that attitudes today towards military governments are much different today than they were in the past.

Whether or not political stability, once attained, would lead to economic development is another (complex) matter.

Some netters, among other things, have submitted that after democracy, we should bring back those Swiss billions. Fine, but how many billions really are there? The World Bank (in 1989??) estimated it at \$40 billion, of which Nigeria alone accounts for about half, followed by the Sudan. If we give the two countries \$25 billion together, that would leave us with \$15 billion. What can that do for a continent chin deep in debt (over \$270 billion)?

7.02 Re: In “Defense” ..., by Alfred Oponku

Date: Fri, 26 Nov 93 17:29:36 EST

From: Alfred Oponku <aopoku@ccs.carleton.ca>

Subject: Re: In “Defense” ...

The discussion of Africa’s military by Isaac raises lots of issues for debate. I have some questions and comments on the discussion but before I go into that, I must say that I couldn’t agree more with Isaac’s contention that we cannot leave out of any discussion of political instability, the role played by civilians. It is a fact that many a military coup has only been the climax of civilian unrest, and some have been sponsored by civilian agents who then receive their largesse when the coup is successful. Thus, political instability is as much the creation of the civilian as it is of the military. Even disregarding the civilian elite who gain from coups, the “man-on-the-street” is too eager to throw support behind any soldier who by virtue of his access to arms, purchased at our expense, arrogates to himself the right to decide our collective destinies.

Having said that, I do not agree that the military is dying. The evidence that there have been fewer coups in the last years do not really support that assertion. Fact is, Africa still has a lot of military influence in our politics. In fact, if you count the “wolves in sheeps’ clothing” - meaning the soldiers who turned politicians - among the military leaders (though that may not sound quite fair) you would realize the extent to which Africa is still under the military. Most of these guys who are now running parties still hold immense control over the activities of their military. Army commanders have been hand-picked to maintain a strong rein over the ability of the military to be independent. Definitely, this fact might be important in the decline of military activities on the political front, they are already there!

Isaac gave three conditions which would help bring about the end of political instability. These conditions are, in themselves, dependent upon a lot of factors as I would attempt to show.

1. The willingness of civilians to pursue “good governance”. This is also dependent on the capacity of politicians to accept defeat and have patience to wait out their turn. There are a lot of politicians who would rather side with a coup than allow an opponent to rule. At the same time, it is also dependent on the willingness of the rulers to play by the rules. Patience is the key, as far as the general public is concerned.
2. Willingness of military to retreat... Under this condition, a problem arises. First of all, the military is not a monolithic institution and, therefore, whereas some may be willing to retreat others may not! But should there really be an option for the military to decide what they want to do? What new missions can we assign to the military? In this area too, should it be left to them to decide whether they want to accept the new mission or not? Given the history of our armed cousins, they would not willingly accept roles that would seek to diminish their importance in society. Kutu Acheampong paid dearly when he embarked on a mission to disarm the army and rather strengthen the police. After he was pushed out, the army had a confrontation with the police over the armored carriers given to the police a few months earlier.
3. The degree to which the international community would countenance military leaders. I wonder if there ever would be a time when the United Nations would outlaw military dictators. Fact is, they are unwilling to lay down any such rules. Guess who are against such a move? Mostly third world nations most of whom are ruled by some form of dictatorship! What is happening to Haiti should not make us think for a second that the UN would invoke similar sanctions against military leaders. It is up to individual nations to take their own steps and, unfortunately, there are not many nations willing and able to take such steps.

For political instability to end in Africa, these three conditions have to occur simultaneously. It is difficult, at least for now, to envisage all the variables working together to make these conditions occur.

7.03 Re: Military Coups, by A. L. Quayson

Date: Tue, 30 Nov 93 1' -:07:18 GMT
From: A. L. Quayson <LAQ10@phx.cam.ac.uk>
Subject: Re: Military Coups

Isaac, I must first of all start by saying that I enjoy reading your postings on the net. They are among the more provocative and well thought out materials that get put onto the network for discussion. I however want to disagree with you on your assessment of the future role of the military in political developments in Africa. It seems to me that in this matter you have been overly optimistic. I have been giving great thought to these things ever since I returned from Nigeria after a research trip there.

Incidentally, my visit coincided with the elections and its aftermath, and I had the opportunity to see the crisis in the country at very close quarters. My conclusions about the role of the military in African politics are directly opposed to yours. I suspect there is going to be an increasing civilianization of the military so that they can play an increasing role in African politics to defend their interests. This seems to be the case because the military is the only well organized class which is capable of articulating class interests and also seizing the means of force in the body-politic to achieve their interests. To speak of the military in terms of the category of “class” might seem to be the naturalization of an alien category because African groupings do not fall into neat classes. The social groupings in Africa exhibit such a high level of fluidity that it is impossible to speak of classes in the classical sense of the term. But that is precisely why the military is the most dangerous single grouping in African states. Because of their training and the fact that they are encouraged to hold a homogeneous view of their professional group, they develop a class consciousness which is commensurate to the structure of their group.

As you rightly pointed out, colonialism left us with serious structural problems and expected us to take our place on equal competitive terms with other older nations. One of the problems colonialism left was the structure and

composition of the African armies. Let me give you some statistics about the Nigerian army after Independence. Whereas less than twenty percent of military officers, as at Independence, had post-primary education, the comparative figure for the civil service was 62%. Furthermore, most military officers had been in the army for not more than four years by the time of Independence, whereas the figure for the civil service was nine years for administrative personnel. In addition, more than fifty per cent of military personnel were in the 20-24 years age group, whereas the figure for the civil service was less than 10%. All these figures lead us to one conclusion: the military was younger, less experienced and less educated than the technocratic civil service. To compound this problem was the fact that the high hopes that marked the attainment of independence were rapidly dissipated when the economic dreams did not materialize. Given the composition of the army, the ineptitude of politicians, and the increasingly manifest fact that the only way to ensure access to economic resources was through seizing and controlling political power, it did not take the military long to wish to control power in order to ensure access to resources.

The fact that the military often seize power in order to defend their class interests is clear from the Nigerian example. Babaginda refused to hand over power to the elected civilian because the military suspected that such a wealthy man as, Abiola would soon want to undermine their power base by shaking up the military. And this is a serious matter to them. Abiola's own business rival mounted a severe rear guard action to prevent the handing over for the simple reason that Abiola might want to stop him from supplying the military with guns and munitions, something which seems to have become quite lucrative after Ecomog. (Of course, this was never stated publicly, but it did not take people long to figure out what was going on between him and some of his rivals). Even in Ghana, despite JJ's populist rhetoric and his gradual but steady civilianization of military power, I would dare say that the interests of the military were a paramount concern of the administration. I do not see it as an accident that after the revolution, groups such as the Civil Defense Organization, the People's Militia and other quasi-military set-ups were established in the country. It seems to me that there was an attempt to clone civil society in the image of the military while reserving the means of force in the hands of soldiers so as to justify the military presence in politics in the minds of the people.

So what am I driving at? Simply, it is that the military involvement in African politics is definitely not going to go away. I have some ideas on how to relate the military to civil and democratic aspirations, but I would like at this point to rest my fingers for your response.

[The article below resulted from exchanges between Ato Quayson and Isaac Thompson. Isaac argued that his original piece "In defense..." was to "sketch the outlines of the PROCESSES that produced Africa's political woes and the consequences (bad or good) of those woes". Isaac claims he was just following the advice of one of his teachers who cautions that in attacking problems one has to "pay due attention to the PROCESSES that produced those problems". Thus Isaac argues that his was "a DIAGNOSTIC approach", that "deliberately refrains from speculating on strategies to prevent the newly emergent democratic institutions of Africa from relapsing into chaos or something worse". Thus Ato Quayson's opening "I still do not agree with your conclusions irrespective of the processes..." stems from this analysis. - Editor]

7.04 RE:Erskine and the Military, by *L. A. Quayson*

Date: Fri, 03 Dec 93 18:03:32 GMT
From: L. A. Quayson <LAQ10@phx.cam.ac.uk>
Subject: RE:Erskine and the Military

Isaac, I still do not agree with you on your conclusions about the military irrespective of the processes by which you arrived at them. But I share your and Alfred's sentiments that we need to discuss their role in politics in relation to wider issues of civilian political demeanor, the military's preparedness to return to barracks and the context of international attitudes to coups. I would however like to contribute to the debate from a slightly different angle.

Because of my contentious conclusion that the military represents the only viable social grouping that articulates a class interest and is capable of seizing political power for the pursuit of those interests, I think that no meaningful discussion of their future roles can be undertaken without attention to how to relate their vital class interests to that of the

democratic aspirations of the people. Surely, one way is to assure the military that their interests are best served under a democratic culture in which every interest is taken care of. This would of course require that civilian politicians behave responsibly not just in relation to the military, but also in relation to the body-politic in general.

I feel, though, that this would not be enough for two reasons. The first is that a phenomenon which I shall describe as “the civilianization of military power” has been taking place all over the continent. This involves a process whereby soldiers enter into increasing collaboration with civilian and later shed their more evident military postures and garb and take on the role of civilian administrators. This has been the case under despicable soldiers such as Mobutu and Eyadema. It was the same process that Kutu Acheampong tried to foist on Ghanaians through his ill-fated Unigov concept, and it is the same process that led JJ to metamorphose into a democratically elected president. From these examples, it is obvious that the civilianization process reveals different dynamics from instances where it is tyrannically imposed on the people to cases where it “grows” out of the radical political dislocations in the society as is the case with the JJ example.

It seems to me that Africans should position themselves so as to be able to forcefully influence the outcome of this process as I have described it, because it is likely to be an important feature of the military’s presence in politics. One suggestion I would like to make in line with placing the onus for the outcome of the process in the hands of both military and civilians, is that the classic role of the military be radically re-examined in the light of contemporary national and international needs. The military establishments in African nations need to be radically reduced and part of their authorities ceded to supra-regional authorities. Thus West African armies should cede their authority to a regional grouping which will be charged with seeing to the security of each country in the region in the context of a regional security policy. At the same time, the police forces of the countries should be strengthened to take care of internal security. Whatever remains of the local armies should be re-structured so as to make them highly educated and technologically advanced set-ups for the purposes of a regional network.

In the event of such a scenario, military personnel who enter politics would not be entering in pursuit of the interests of any single local military establishment. But, at the same time, soldiers should be encouraged to participate freely in local democratic processes so as to bring in their experience to bear. More importantly, whatever civilianization of military power will be seen to be at work will not be towards shoring up the interests of a particular class. Of course, in all this, the utmost co-operation of the military is required, something which I suspect they will not be willing to give without a struggle. Here is where both the international community and local peoples need to come to a clear analysis of what they want with military power in Africa in the next century. I hope these ill-integrated ideas will go some way towards generating such an analysis.

7.05 Re: Erskine and the Military, by *Daniel Appiah*

Date: Fri, 3 Dec 93 17:13:05 EST
From: Daniel Appiah <dappiah@ccs.carleton.ca>
Subject: Re: Erskine and the Military.

Ato’s earlier repinder to the above topic made two important observations. These are: 1) the military is the most organized and articulate group in Africa; 2) The military’s ability to organize coupled with their power and control over the guns and bullets make it a formidable force in African societies. From these observations Ato concluded that the military’s role in African Politics is more likely to expand rather than decline.

This conclusion is very revealing and has important implications for social and political action. But as most of us feel comfortable to equate military regime to “bad governance”, attempts have been made by some netters to put forward some suggestions that may be able to reduce the role of the military in Politics or at least make it to concentrate on its traditional roles of defense and deterrence.

In this piece, I will also attempt to put forward some suggestions which may help in reducing the role of the military in politics. My suggestions will be based on the premise that in a pluralistic society any social, economic, and political action/policy is the outcome of a compromise that is reached among competing organized interest groups. And in most

cases the policy outcome or the action that will be taken reflects the demands of the most powerful interest group. There are a lot of examples to support this premise. Among them are:

1) the French farmers constitute a very powerful interest group in French politics. They are using their power to block or prevent the GATT members from reaching agreements on Multi-lateral trade negotiations. Meanwhile, there are over 100 countries who are signatories to the GATT but the French farmers are making things difficult. This underscores the power of an organized interest group.

2) In the US and other industrialized democracies, the emergence of the so called post-material rights movement such as Gay Rights, Animal rights, and heaven knows what the next rights will be, are influencing and shaping social and political action. For example the Animal Rights Movement has managed to force some cosmetics firms to stop testing their products on animals! The list can be endless, and that shows the power of organized interest groups.

The question that needs to be asked in the case of Ghana and other African countries is: Why haven't we formed powerful interest groups to oppose the military? One can argue that the military has not allowed such formation of civil societies. Such an argument neglects the fact that we didn't have military regimes at independence. Given such neglect one should find other reasons for such a situation. I can think of the two following reasons.

- 1) The trauma of colonization made us to assume that the post-independence leaders, who are our own kin and kith, will pursue the "national interests" that meet our hopes and aspirations.
- 2) This assumption leads us to further assume that the national interests are easily definable and that our leaders will not pursue their own self interests. These self interests in most cases are in conflict with the often ill-defined national interests.

The consequence of these assumptions is that, many people didn't appreciate the fact that the actions and policies that are pursued by our leaders reflect the interests of the most powerfully organized groups in society. Such lack of appreciation may explain the paucity or dormance of well organized and articulate civil societies in Africa. The military has taken advantage of this situation, hence their continuing menace.

The implications of the above for social and political action are:

- 1) There should be an encouragement for the formation and activation of civil societies in Africa. Such groups as the Trades Union, Farmers organizations, Small-Scale firms and groups like Suame magazine, the churches, the students unions etc should be formed/reorganized and strengthened.

It might be interesting to note that another powerful group, albeit less powerful, apart from the military in African societies is the student unions. This might explain why during a military regime, the students movement, more than any other group, is able to present some opposition. Similarly, the power of the student movement has influenced and shaped educational financing policies(their interest) in most African countries. No wonder the student union in Ghana was split and rendered powerless before the PNDC government was able to implement its controversial educational reforms.

- 2) The reorganization and strengthening of these civil societies should be undertaken with the view to making them more politically oriented. This may be achieved by encouraging them to vote for people who will represent and articulate their interests in parliament.

Thus oriented, these civil societies will present a very strong opposition and challenge to the military. Such civil societies coupled with a free press and an independent Judiciary and Legislature may also provide the nutrients for our young democracies to mature into adulthood. Such mature democracies may be the best way to reduce the power of the military and probably prevent it from undertaking its unwelcome political experiments.

7.06 Coups, by *Benjamin Baidoe-Ansah U*

Date: Mon, 6 Dec 1993 13:50:51 -0400 (EDT)

From: Benjamin Baidoe-Ansah U <bbaidoe4@mach1.wlu.ca>
Subject: coups

This is to add to the current discussions on the military. A lot of ground has already been covered by other netters, so I will limit myself to additional issues.

1. I have always been disturbed by the ease with which most of the coups in Ghana have been carried out. It is always carried out by a very small group, who also usually happen to be lower in rank in the military establishment. They usually capture a few weapons, capture GBC, takeover one or two units in Accra, and presto, Ghana is theirs!! Given the small size and the relative lower ranks of coupmakers, why does the rest of the military give in? Why do the battalion and other unit commanders in Kumasi, Sunyani, Takoradi, Tamale, Ho, etc fail to mobilize their troops to quell the coup? I was in Takoradi on Rawlings' second coming, and all that the unit commanders did, with the exception of the 2nd Battalion, was to put their soldiers on standby and wait for further orders. Is there an obligation for unit commanders to quell a coup, or is it discretionary?

Part of the problem might be the rigid chain of command that is disrupted when a coup is set in motion. This supposition is supported by the tendency of coupmakers to arrest those who are in a position to give orders for troop movements. Once the chain of command is broken, it appears individual commanders are left to decide whether to defend the constitution, join the upstarts, or wait and see. Most of them appear to wait and see!! It appears most of the soldiers adopt a wait and see attitude because there is no clear-cut mandate on what should be done when the chain of command breaks down.

I have also observed that Ghana, as a nation, has not shown much concern for the welfare of the soldiers who stick out their necks to oppose coups and fail. Why would anyone like to risk their neck and the well being of their family to defend a country that will care less about them if they happen to fail in their endeavor. There are a lot of such unfortunate souls wallowing in limbo in the Ivory Coast, Togo, Nigeria, etc. I am yet to hear any opposition member make mention of them. The most sensible course for these soldiers has been to support the regime, or at best stay neutral.

2. I will like to point out that when it comes to suffering and brutalities, soldiers suffer their share, and more! All soldiers who will not sing the voice of the coupmakers are either locked up, implicated in trumped up "attempted coup" charges and executed, or "retired". A lot of soldiers have disappeared, the bodies of countless others discovered. During the early years of the PNDC, a lot of soldiers went to work wearing civilian clothes under their military uniform. They did this so they could quickly transform themselves into "civilians" at the first sign of trouble. Many soldiers in the Burma Camp area evacuated their families to the villages and other areas to minimize their exposure to potential battles in the area. By the above, I am not trying to belittle or minimize the brutalization that civilians undergo at the hands of the military during "their" regimes. What I am getting at is that there are a lot of soldiers who suffer too, sufferers who have every reason to hate coups, and therefore soldiers who can be our allies in finding solutions to coups.

3. Another exaggerated notion which I want to touch on is one that believes that all, or most soldiers benefit from coups. That is false in the case of Ghana. Part of the reason why there has developed a great dislike for coups among a lot of soldiers (believe it or not!!) is the perception that the military is taken for a ride by coupmakers. They charge that coupmakers use the armed forces as their power base, yet ignore them in terms of their control in the government or the "sharing of the booty".

In situations where the armed forces, as an establishment, is in control, we find the government made up of the top brass, like the Chief of Defense Staff, Army, Navy, and Air Force Commanders. In the NLC era, the government was not made up of the service commanders. It was also the case in the NRC era. The reason why we had SMC 1 and SMC 2 in Ghana was because the service commanders questioned the basis for some Majors and Colonels to give orders to Generals. Their argument was that if the military was in control, then it should be reflected by the overall leaders of the military forming the government - hence Acheampong's promotion to a General so he could continue to lead the new government made up of the service commanders.

The AFRC and PNDC were again examples of situations where the military, as an establishment, was not in control. (Unless one wants to interpret the later addition of the service commanders to the PNDC as a partial attempt to bring in the military as an establishment. There were more civilians in the PNDC, and in all other appointments than soldiers.

The position of the anti-coup group in the military is that the PNDC will be classified as a military regime, and any mistakes they made blamed on the military, yet it was a predominantly civilian operation. I also like to draw netters attention to the interesting phenomenon where “military” governments rely on specially formed groups (usually outside the military) to maintain their hold on power!! Acheampong tried to use special units in the police because he could not trust the armed forces. Rawlings used the commandos and other para-military groups, suggesting that he was no longer relying on the armed forces.

The point I am making here is that life has not significantly improved for soldiers in Ghana even under so-called military regimes, partly because the military has not really been in power in most cases. Those we usually see enjoying under military governments are the governing clique in the military(a small number of soldiers) and civilians (also a small number). The armed forces in Ghana is in tatters and ill-equipped!! The last I knew, there was hardly any aircrafts left to justify our having an air force - that is before Nigeria donated some used military aircraft to Ghana!! The purpose for going into the above at length is to try to present another perspective of the issues, with the hope that we can find allies in the broad mass of the military to oppose coups.

4. All Ghanaians are collectively responsible for the coups we have had. We are either guilty for participating/supporting the coup, or not doing anything to oppose it. A constitution is as good as the will of the people it serves to defend it. If no-one is prepared to raise a finger to defend the constitution, then it is only good for as long as nobody overthrows it. By shirking our responsibility to defend the constitution, we have lowered the risks that a coupmaker takes by staging a coup. One way to reduce coups is to make it difficult to succeed. The reason why we hardly hear of armed robberies at Fort Knox despite the open knowledge that it has most of the world’s gold bullion, is the fact that it is well guarded. This makes any attack on it too risky for even the craziest daredevils to attempt. We have to raise the risks for coupmakers in Ghana by demonstrating a will to defend the constitution!! This will entail a partnership between soldiers and civilians. It will take only a crazy soldier to attempt a coup in Ghana if they know that they will have to fight most of the soldiers and civilians in the country to succeed. If that is so, they may not even find enough soldiers, suicidal enough, to follow them!!

It is disturbing that at the national level, there has not been any significant discussion of coups and how to stop them. The few that has been held usually ignore the military because they are generally regarded as the culprits. I hope the above will help us to start seeing the potential in a civilian-soldier alliance to find ways to halt coups.

5. What should be done?

i) The armed forces is very important and it must be maintained and properly equipped. However, its current structure must be changed. We have to reduce the size of the standing army and introduce the concept of reserves. A lot of the soldiers shipped to the Gulf War were reserves in the U.S. armed forces.

Using reserves will :

- a) reduce the need for a large standing army and the costs that go with it.
- b) will make able-bodied men and women available to the economy in peace times.
- c) reduce the military’s monopoly on military know-how and hardware.
- d) blur the unhealthy distinction between civilians and soldiers.
- e) infuse high skills and professionalism in the military by having professionals serving on reserves.
- f) reduce the boredom that currently plagues most soldiers and partly incites coups.
- g) be in line with the traditional African concept of armies- for all able-bodied citizens, and not some artificially created group distinguished from everyone else.

ii) There should be a clearly spelt out requirement/modus operandi for all unit commanders on what they are required to do in case of a coup attempt with the chain of command broken.

It will:

- a) reduce the uncertainty about what to do, and make stopping the coup mandatory and not discretionary. The unit commanders, instead of putting their troops on standby, “waiting for further orders”, will know that they will have to follow some procedure to get their units to Accra to stop the coup or answer for it if the coup fails.
 - b) It will make coups difficult because it will increase the opposition from the military. This means a coupmaker will not even get started for fear of the opposition, or will have to get support from almost all units to be successful - something that will in itself increase the difficulty of coups and reduce them.
- iii) Reduce excuses for the military to seize power by ensuring good governance, respect human rights, reduce arbitrariness, etc.
- iv) Enter into international alliances which will see foreign troops being used to stop coups - though I must admit that using foreign soldiers introduces a whole lot of other complications.
- v) Remove government monopoly of the media, especially broadcasting. GBC studios could be moved to Northern Ghana or some other place far away from Accra! Or other fully fledged broadcasting stations could be built outside Accra, owned by private interests.
- a) this will increase the difficulty of successfully carrying out a coup because not only will coupmakers have to capture Accra, they will also have to capture the broadcasting facility in another part of the country, and in the process, contend with military units stationed there.
- vi) There are a lot of problems within the military that must be addressed. They constitute arguments used by coupmakers to gain initial support. This includes inadequate training, outdated equipment, etc. There is also the problem of integrating soldiers into civilian life after they retire. Most soldiers retire long before they are “spent”. They come out with a lot of working life ahead of them. Retirement is the biggest nightmare in a Ghanaian soldier’s life. A lot of the skills they acquire in the military is usually not directly applicable in civilian life. So they come out feeling useless, broken, and unable to fit into civilian life. Attempts have been made in the past to deal with this by sending soldiers on the verge of retirement to international peacekeeping missions so they can earn some money and retire on it. Others have been sent to the polytechnics etc. to learn new skills in preparation for retirement. The following could be done to reduce the problem:
- a) introduce the reserves concept mentioned above.
 - b) have regular soldiers alternate between soldiering and working in civilian organizations in related fields. This will reduce boredom, provide experience, make soldiers contribute directly to the economy, prepare them for retirement, and hopefully increase understanding between soldiers and civilians.
 - c) reserve some places for soldiers in our institutions of higher learning, or make it easier for a number of them to be admitted every year.

I know it can be counter-argued that a lot of other institutions in Ghana have similar problems and the military should not be slated for special treatment. I must point out however that the military has the potential to create problems, so it is wise that we do not subject them to too many problems, at least until other recommendations to neutralize their monopoly is implemented. They could be a security risk otherwise!

7.07 Military interventionism, by *Benjamin Amponsah*

Date: Thu, 9 Dec 1993 18:02:07 +0100

From: Benjamin Amponsah <benjamin.amponsah@avh.unit.no>

Subject: Military interventionism

I read with admiration the works of Baidoe-Ansah, Isaac Thompson and others I cannot recall now, on military interventionism. Other articles only scratched the surface of the problem by offering solutions without looking at some of the social processes that lead to interventionism. I will now try to summarize what has been said so far on the

processes of interventionism and in the end offer one interpretation (theory) that attempts to explain military interventionism in Africa and specifically Ghana.

Various interpretations for military intervention in Africa (Ghana) have been offered recently. Some of them analyzed the military performance and factors that account for the military engagement in active politics. Without going into the descriptive nature of these regimes, two patterns clearly emerge. We have the reformist and the revolutionaries. The latter is not fashionable these days due to the collapse of the eastern block. Reading from what netters have contributed so far on the subject, 4 reasons emerge as responsible for coups.

- The corporate interest of the army
- Economic reasons
- Social/political reasons
- Idiosyncratic reasons

The above reasons are not placed in watertight compartments since all of them could be cited to justify one intervention.

One particular theoretical postulate that account for military interventionism besides the above is what has been referred to as "praetorianism". According to this theory, military interventionism is only a manifestation of a larger social phenomenon - referred to as praetorian society. In this society there is a general politicization of social forces and institutions. Thus we have political clergy, political universities, political bureaucracies, trade unions etc. These institutions involve themselves in politics not only over issues that concern them but also over issues that affect society as a whole. The praetorian society has neither specialized political institutions like political parties, free press, pressure groups etc., to mediate conflicts nor accepted rules of the game for resolving conflicts (note this is an extreme version). It is argued for example that the most important causes of military interventionism in politics are not military but political and reflects not the social and organizational characteristics of the military establishment but the political and institutional structure of the society. Praetorianism emphasizes general social conditions as primary determinants of military intervention. Military interventionism is only part of the general syndrome in which other specialized groups, e.g., students, clergy, labour and business intervene directly in politics. The absence or weakness of effective political institutions especially political parties is made the fundamental source of praetorianism.

As all social forces intervene in politics, the military takes advantage of it because they have the potential to dominate the political system. Within this model it is assumed that there is general absence of well established national political institutions and traditions endowed with high legitimacy. The executive, the legislature, the judiciary and above all, political parties are fledgling entities of recent origin. They are generally weak and new ones established are usually closely dependent on the already weak national institutions for support and functioning. In a sense, a "creditor personality" is created in terms of the institution which offers the political largesse. Institutional independence is then lost in this process.

The low degree of institutionalization and the consequent low degree of respect for norms, roles and procedures account for various indicators of disorder in society. The disorders include the unmediated and violent participation of excessively politicized social forces in the political process e.g. ethnic conflicts, student riots, mob violence, military intervention and corruption, unstable political leadership, and violent suppression of civil liberties. Low integration of society is the result. As a consequence, each social group employs the means which reflect its peculiar nature and capabilities. The wealthy bribe, students riot, workers strike, mobs demonstrate and the military stages a coup d'état.

This interpretation is important as an explanatory model because in a society where active participation in politics is enviable, viewed as a gold mine, and corruption becomes one source of survival, there will be contentious social forces and it is only the fittest that will survive - in this case the military.

The military alone should not be seen as the problem. In fact, all social forces are in active competition for political resources. Here I agree [with Sitsofe] that some kind of soul searching must be done within and between individuals and across institutions to address some of the issues raised in the praetorian model. It must be inclusion and not exclusion. For example students would overthrow if they have that exclusive use of force just like businessmen and Trade Unions. Often some kind of unwholesome alliance is the result. It is not uncommon to find student leaders, Union leaders and businessmen in some kind of alliance with military coup plotters. If you disband the army as

somebody suggested, it will be a defeatist strategy because, the next to exclusive power use (arms) will be the Police and the last to stage coups will be farmers.

Interested readers should consult any of the books below:

- The political economy of military intervention in Ghana
Ebo Hutchful
- Politics in Praetorean polity: The case of Ghana
Yaw Sarfo
- The Praetorean state and the Praetorean army
Amos Spedmutter, Comparative Politics, April, 1979.

7.08 Re: Military interventionism, by *Alfred Opoku*

Date: Thu, 9 Dec 93 16:52:50 EST

From: Alfred Opoku <aopoku@ccs.carleton.ca>

Subject: Re: Military interventionism

I have always been of the view that there is never a simple explanation for any social, economic, or political phenomenon. I believe that it is important to explore every available avenues for explaining what happens in society, military intervention being no exception! On this basis, I have carefully followed all the theories and suppositions put forth on the net, and I must say I have enjoyed them. In reading theories, however, I always tend to look for flaws in them which I tend to question. One such flawed theory is that of "Praetorianism" as an explanation for military interventionism. Before I go on, let me say that I am not challenging Benjamin Amponsah, who used the theory (or is it just a postulate?); I am just trying to show where I think the theory falls short in its quest to explain military behavior.

In the praetorian society, it is said that there are no "specialized political institutions" which give way to the politicization of the whole society. In view of this, there are no "accepted rules" and no legitimate ways to "mediate conflicts". In short, there is a "general absence of well established national political institutions and traditions endowed with high legitimacy". According to the theory, even where such specialized institutions are available, they are either "fledgling entities" or of "recent origin". This lack of so-called specialized institutions creates a vacuum which the politicized military tends to fill. To be fair to Benjamin, he did say that this theory does not seek to portray itself as the only explanation available for the political behavior of the military.

Here's my beef! Does the theory acknowledge the fact that the specialized institutions are absent in these societies partly because of the political behavior of the military? If these institutions are "fledgling" it is mostly because the military has not allowed them the light of day to grow and become competent enough to establish accepted ways and means of mediating conflicts. The seeds of non-confidence in the judiciary, legislature, and the executive branches of government in such societies have been planted by the military who keep on interrupting the process by which these same institutions would become legitimized. So long as that interruptive process is not stopped, our institutions would continue to be of "recent origin" because we would have to come back to square one each time to re-start the process. In Ghana's 36 years of existence, we have had 4 republics, an average of 9 years each. Obviously, 36 years is a short time in the history of a nation but 9 years is shorter still in putting in place such institutions that are recognized by all citizens as legitimate. In these 36 years, we have had close to 22 years of military dictatorship and about 14 of civilian rule (and some authoritarianism). Certainly, this theory must have some explanations as to why such specialized institutions have not been well established in Ghana!

The theory makes a valid claim, however, that the most important reason for intervention is not a military but a political one. I couldn't have agreed more! The objective of ruling a nation cannot be defined in military terms, unless it is the result of a civil war. Having political aims for the intervention, however, does not indicate that the nation as a whole would be better served by such an action; not even the military! For while the soldiers command their comrades to take up arms against the establishment, it is just a select few who get to taste the largesse. The "sankwas" (also-runs) in order to fulfill themselves then take to harassing innocent civilians to get their booty.

If we are to take this theory seriously, we can only be pessimistic of our future since our specialized institutions are still fledgling and are of “recent origin”. By the interpretation of the theory, there is a legitimate reason for the military to intervene. It could happen, but let it be noted that if it does happen it is not so much the result of the absence of those institutions but rather, the unwillingness of the military (remember Isaac’s posting?) to let these institutions grow and become legitimate in the eyes of society.

7.09 The Ignorant Society, *Imrana Umar*

Date: Tue, 14 Dec 93 18:53:12 +0100

From: Stud Imrana Umar`?? <imra_u@grampus.ifi.uib.no>

Subject: The Ignorant Society

In the last couple of weeks there has been quite an interesting debate on the role of the military in the African political transformation. The contributions have been diverse and very educative, with particular reference to those made by Isaac, Baidoe-Ansah, Sitsofe, and Alfred, just to mention a few. To my mind, however, the most important question is yet to be addressed: Why the military are in politics in Ghana, Africa or for that matter almost all less developed countries. What is it that makes it possible for the military to involve itself in politics in Ghana but not in Britain, Japan, Norway or U.S.A.?

Most of the reasons given as to why the military are in politics in Africa are simply correlative and not causal. They tell the stories of what happens when the military are in politics and not what drags and sustains them in it. They are symptoms and not causes of the problems that lead the military to the helm of political affairs in Africa. The military are actively in politics not because of want of anything to do or because they have not been included in the act of governance or because they are today an intellectual and highly organized group relative to other organized professional or labour groups in Africa. The African military is not better organized than its counterparts in Britain, France or U.S.A., and not better educated either. As a matter of fact, the organizational structure and training of the African military is a counterfoil of these three standards. Why then is the military actively disrupting attempts at democratic evolution in Africa and not in these countries?

The reasons for military rule in Africa are not different from the reasons for the region’s failure to organize itself at the center along borrowed cultures. It is a reason common to all our woes. If we have to find a solution, to the problem then it has to be a common one. From Central and Latin America through Africa to South East Asia the reasons for military rule are the same. All the reasons can be summarized into one word, IGNORANCE resulting from high levels of illiteracy. It is ignorance that is responsible for our hunger, disease, religious or tribal conflicts, wars, high levels of corruption and all the ills associated with rudimentary societies. That is why the literates of all societies are hardly ever affected by these problems, even though they perpetrate them. Ignorance is the one common factor underlying the organizational structures of all the societies that are plagued by these problems, including military rule. It may be true that ‘where wealth and freedom reign, contentment fails; and honor sinks where commerce long prevails’ (Goldsmith), but I also believe that, where ignorance prevails, everything fails! Let us not deceive ourselves, there is a limit to which one can learn and understand without being literate.

None of the ills stated above is indigenous to any of these societies, they arose as a result of a conflict between the micro-structural reality of the societies and their expected macro behavior. That is why a person who will not steal an ear of corn from his neighbor’s farm will ‘take’ office property without feeling guilty about it. That is why someone will go around to look for a beggar to give alms to but will refuse to pay tax. That is why people will question wrongdoings in their local communities but will not do so when it involves public officers. That is why the lawyer or the doctor has respect for the literate but not for the illiterate farmer. The concept of a nation state in the foreign sense is still illusive to us because it contradicts our traditional societal organization. Every attempt we have made so far to copy it has failed because it is based on a different traditional societal organization. This is why societal organizational structures differ from France to Britain, U.S.A., Japan, and so on, each according to the traditional values peculiar to that society.

Understanding issues that fall outside one's frame of reference requires self-education which in turn requires literacy. Popular participation in government requires a minimum level of literacy that will enable one to understand the issues at stake (and not the personalities involved), the understanding of the spirit of civil liberties - not the words but the spirit. Once again, under our traditional organizational systems, we understand and cherish this spirit of civil liberty and yet we fail to achieve it at the center. Why? This is because it underlies the component parts that form our system. People at that level understand why they do what they are doing and have come to accept their traditional rules of behavior as the standard.

This kind of hopeless situation is more grave in Africa than elsewhere because Africa took a big false move in its educational system at independence, the continuous use of foreign languages as mediums of instruction in schools. As a result, illiteracy is still more widespread than in any other part of the world. We can only formally educate our children and not our adults. And where we are able to acquire education, we also succeed in alienating ourselves, from the rest of the society we are supposed to serve. Since language is the conduit of culture, we succeed in alienating ourselves from our cultures. We are neither able to express ourselves fully and meaningfully in our cultures nor in the borrowed ones. Herein lies our socioeconomic predicament in attempting to achieve modern nationhood. That is why as individuals we are good and clever people. (Clinton cannot perform better than Rawlings if he is given the chance to rule Ghana and Rawlings can perform as well as Clinton if given the chance to rule U.S.A.). That is why we have no problem in organizing ourselves at the traditional levels, as long as there is no external interference, because it is based on our standard norms and practices. Rather than defining standard rules and regulations to guide and guard these norms and practices, we seek to change our indigenous practices to suit the rules and regulations the borrowed languages (cultures) are expressing. Unfortunately the majority in our society have nothing in common with these new cultures.

Now, if we look at all the points raised previously one after the other we will realize that each and every one of the issues raised can be resolved through an improved level of literacy. Not through government sponsored campaigns but through self-education and real understanding of the environment around us.

Most of Baidoe-Ansah's recommendations are already expressed in one way or the other. For instance, the fact that majority of the soldiers neither participate nor benefit from the fruits of coups (as he said) shows that the size of the army or the alternative use of reserves, though both are necessary requirements, are not factors in coup making. Again, the modus operandi for all unit commanders during coup attempts is very clear, that is why when a coup fails the culprits are tried for felony. Decentralizing broadcasting facilities will not help much, since it could not in Nigeria, where there are many equally strong ones regionally located.

In my opinion, coup-making is only one of the symptoms of the threat to our emergence as a modern nation-state. The real threat is ignorance. It creates a conducive environment for all the wrongs of societal organization. That is why a military coup will not be tolerated in Britain but will be aided and abetted in Ghana, Chile or Burma. If we look around us, anywhere ignorance prevails there is utmost failure. Look at the ignorant family next door to you, the nearest community to you with high level of illiteracy eg. the ghettos in the cities and the immigrant communities, the country with a high level of illiteracy etc. Then look further around you and you will observe that wherever there is a conflict between culture and language there is a high level of illiteracy and persistent failure.

When we educate our society, we educate our military, police, farmers, traders, artisans, drivers and all those who matter. And whenever we make any random sampling from our population we are likely to pick an enlightened person. It is high time our policy makers recognized that, we need a complete restructuring of our educational system if we are to make any progress at all. Let us reduce illiteracy in a way meaningful to our cultures and we will soon be on the path to success!!

7.10 Re: Military, by Amoah Apraku

Date: Sat, 04 Dec 1993 16:53:17 EDT
From: Amoah Apraku <amoah@maple.circa.ufl.edu>
Subject: Re: Military

Like any public sector funded with tax-cedis, the role of the military is clearly defined. I don't think any Ghanaian hates the military as an institution because as Sitsofe said, they're our brothers etc. I think what Ghanaians hate and will continue to hate is some members of the military using guns and bullets bought with our taxes to seize political power without our consent and using the same to kill, burn, maim, crack our skulls, whip, expose our private parts to the public and many ceteras instead of defending us from external aggression. Can we imagine the confusion that will ensue if other public sector institutions decide to use what is entrusted into their care to usurp political power?

What really moves the military to perpetrate these actions is the overwhelming power that is entrusted into their care. What they have come to realize is that with this arsenal, they can gain and maintain political and hence economic power. I think this has come about as a result of the scarcity of resources and poverty in our societies. The military realizing that they can get the lion's share by usurping and maintaining political power, are quick to rise to the occasion. So after coups, you hear the usual ramblings about owing the 'Yoo ke gari' seller blah blah blah. This soon gives way to posh cars, potbellies and an easy life. This has created situations where a military recruit earns more than a graduate in the civil service. Whatever we do, or propose to do, we must not lose sight of the fact that the military will fight tooth and nail to maintain this economic advantage. After all, they have come to realize that "'booklong'" doesn't give one the economic edge in Ghana, brute force does.

As for the formation of political pressure groups, I think Ghana is way ahead of even the so-called Western countries. If the student group in the US is half as organized and potent as NUGS, we would have seen a student president in this country. So, it is the use of the arms entrusted to them for our protection to maintain an economic advantage even over the dead bodies of civilians that has made people hostile to the military. If this trend continues, it will lead to the ultimate demise of the military in Africa and elsewhere because eventually the people will find a way to counter and foil coups, even if it takes a thousand years!

7.11 Re: Military, by *Baidoe Ansah*

Date: Fri, 17 Dec 1993 09:00:29 -0400 (EDT)
From: benjamin baidoe-ansah U <baidoe4@mach1.wlu.ca>
Subject: Re: Military

Kofi, I agree with you that some military personnel gain from coups and are therefore inclined to support it. This is however usually the case AFTER the coup has succeeded. In the fluid early hours of a coup, when most soldiers do not know whether the coup will succeed or not, they do not support it. Most play it safe by "standing by". Attempted coups have been foiled during civilian governments.

After a coup has succeeded, it is a lot more difficult to reverse things so both civilians and soldiers find it easier to join the regime. In fact, the whole country, not just soldiers, succumb to the new regime!! The critical time of interest to me, in terms of resistance is therefore the period before a coup succeeds, the execution phase.

Short of reading people's minds, it will be impossible to monitor the planning of coups. There is however a lot that can be done to stop its execution. If the commander of the 3rd Battalion is required or requested to move troops to Accra to stop a coup, he will find it difficult to say no unless he knows the coup has succeeded. If not, and it is foiled by others, (as has been done under some civilian regimes) he will be in very hot soup. The other ranks will not disobey their commander for the same reasons. If they do and the coup fails, they will be court martialed!! It is this uncertainty about whether a coup will succeed or not that should be exploited by giving the commanders clear orders on what should be done. In other words, we should not give them room to wait and see, we should force them to show their hand before the coup succeeds. If we do this most of them will come to the defense of the government in power and the constitution because they will not be sure of the success of the coup, nor will they know with certainty what their fate will be under a new government.

We have to start a national debate to find out the whys, hows, and what can be done to stop coups. All those involved in executing past coups should be debriefed so we can get a clear picture of the anatomy of a coup. These same coup

makers could show the country the loop-holes that made them succeed. As a country, we have been very irresponsible in tackling this problem. No institution worth its salt will be hit consistently by robbers as we have been hit by coups without hiring consultants to plug the loop-holes. Yet we want to point fingers at others!!

I should take this opportunity to dispel another misconceived generalization. There is the general perception among civilians that soldiers are ill-trained as managers and incompetent. This is not to hold brief for the soldiers. I agree some square pegs have been put in round holes, especially when appointments have been based on political loyalty. The same however goes for civilian managers.

Having said this, I must say that the armed forces is the only institution in the country that consistently trains personnel abroad and have them RETURN to their post!! So it has personnel trained in modern techniques of management, etc. The staff college in Teshie has been consistently staffed by officers from Britain, Canada, etc. Our officers are trained to manage, they are not just professional killers! Some of them have attended military colleges that train soldiers for the US, British, Canadian, and Israeli armed forces. Beyond a certain rank, officer training emphasizes managerial training. A number of the commanders sent to ECOMOG headquarters in Liberia were sent as managers. Some were sent there for their logistics expertise. Some of us will marvel at how much some of our officers know about modern techniques of motivation (not with a gun!!), delegation, leadership (also not with a gun!!), communication, and other management issues. Logistics areas like transportation, procurement, and distribution; accounting, human resource management, strategic planning, etc are just some of the areas in which soldiers acquire expertise.

[The article below was prompted by a series of postings by Samuel Asomaning titled “Coups and National Development”. The main theme of those postings was that coups in Africa tend to be motivated by economics. That is the result of the military’s desire to control the ‘national cake’ and hence its distribution. The military manages to beat the competition only because they are armed. This view of economics as the underlying cause of coups in Africa is held by others too. See for instance article 7.10 by Amoah Apraku or 7.2 by Yaw Agyaba. Given the fact that some nations have been able to make economic and technological advances under unstable and authoritarian regimes, the author argues that the antidote to coups perhaps lies in eliminating our economic problems. That once the economic problems have been solved, the incentive for the military to stage coups would have been eliminated. - Editor]

7.12 Re: Coups and National Development, by *Elizabeth Asiedu*

Date: Sun, 7 Nov 1993 15:07:49 -0600

From: asiedu elizabeth <easiedu@uxa.cso.uiuc.edu>

Subject: Re: Coups and National Development

I disagree with Sam on the relevance of coups to economic development. Sam wrote “This brings me to the posting by Appeadu about military coups and the necessity to find antidotes to them. To my mind, our energies should be directed elsewhere, towards economic issues.”

How can an economy develop in the midst of instability? I am not referring to authoritarian regimes (there is no evidence as to whether dictatorship/democracy fosters or hinders economic growth see Przeworski and Limongi, Journal of Economic Perspectives, Summer 93), but to situations where there is a coup every couple of years the government will lose credibility. This implies, policies implemented will not produce desired effect. Instability undermines investment and therefore growth. Not to mention foreign investors, the consumers in the economy tend to save (those who can afford of course) in other economies i.e other countries. A typical example is Ghana. Most rich Ghanaians have savings abroad, and I believe that is the most rational thing to do.

When there is instability, governments don’t behave in “developmentalist” fashion. The question is what kind of policies should be implemented? Long term or short term Policies? To answer that question, one needs to know how long the regime will be in power, and that is a million dollar question. There is a tendency for governments to develop and to adopt the “drink today for tomorrow we die” attitude; that means having “fat” accounts in the swiss bank etc.

So, I believe in order to foster economic growth, we need to find antidotes to military coups.

7.13 Capital Accumulation, by Yaw Agyaba

Date: Wed, 08 Dec 93 12:43:25 CST
From: Yaw Agyaba <EPID048%UABDPO.BITNET>
Subject: Capital Accumulation, Politics and Coups

The many contributions on the role of the military in politics have looked at many sides of the question. I think the economic incentives for coups need further exploration. It is no gainsaying that the process of primitive capital accumulation in Ghana (and many African states) began in earnest after independence.

The slogan "Seek ye first the political kingdom and all other things shall be added" translated, in practice, to "seek some political appointment or influence and your financial miracle begins at all cost". Overnight, we witnessed the transformation of our politicians from poor or middle class (by Ghana standards) teachers, petty intellectuals, etc. to financial barons, industrialists and real estate owners. How they got there was not lost on fellow Ghanaians - civilians and the military. The forces of the state were used to silence the few who protested. The looting continued. Of course when politics degenerates to the blind pursuit of wealth, when the opposition disappears into thin air with the slightest use of force then who is better equipped to supervise the looting of our national coffers?

The problem is not the trigger-happiness of junior rank soldiers or lack of military discipline. The first generation of African coup makers were battalion commanders and senior officers. The popularity of the June 4 uprising stemmed in part from the exclusion of the lower ranks from this national plunder and in part from the pious hope of many that the purges of that era (remember 3 former military heads of state were executed supposedly for their corruption) will put an end to the politics of greed forever. "Let the blood flow" - became the rallying cry of our university students of that era. What followed next is evident for all. The executioners and our student leaders now sit at the feast table.

The bottom line for curbing coups in Ghana lies in removing the economic incentive. How do we do this? THIS IS THE NUT WE MUST CRACK!! Surely a highly politicized society ready to use its resources not just to expose corruption but demand and exact redress is part of the solution. So long as there are Ghanaians ready to forget the past, constitutions encoded to legitimize previous banditry, politicians ready to place themselves above the law..., so long as the politics of greed continues and many are ready to recoil into their shell and the nation is willing to descend into a climate or culture of silence, so long will we continue to dance in cycles of doom. What use are an armed people if no one is ready to fight? "COUPS" is just one price for our inaction and political cowardice, individually and collectively as a nation. Mere rhetorics (including the finest counter-coup plans on paper) will achieve nothing, absolutely nothing. Are we ready to ACT UP?

7.14 High Road, by Bolaji Aluko

Date: Wed, 01 Dec 1993 09:55:52 -0400
From: "CHRISTIAN K. N. AKUAMOA" <CKNA@ac.dal.ca>
Subject: Military in Politics (fwd)

I find it heartening to note that some of our discussions are taken seriously elsewhere. I found the piece below on the Nigerian network which is a further reaction to our discussions on the military. Read on...

C.K.

----- beginning of forwarded message-----

30-NOV-1993 18:26

From: Mobolaji E. Aluko <IN%maluko@scs.howard.edu>

Subject High_Road

LET'S TRAVEL THE HIGH ROAD IN OUR DISCUSSIONS ON THE FUTURE OF NIGERIA !

I have chosen to introduce this write-up using the above banner headline because quite frankly I worry when I read messages of some members of our network arguing about Shonekan, Abacha, Onuh and so on. I call it "the monarchist attitude" in which you posit that the history of a nation is that of its kings (substitute: leaders) and not of the people themselves. What does it matter if the majority of the people are indifferent to who rules them ? I can assure you that the majority of Nigerians do not know or care who is at the top at any given time - they are all tarred with the same corrupt brush anyway - and it is incumbent upon those of us who know to seek the high road in our discussions, and not hold brief for, or make ad hominem attacks on personalities.

This is why I was glad to read the postings of Alfred Opono and Isaac Thompson on the military and the civilians, really the only two parties in Nigeria. I do not see Mr Thompson's piece as in defense of the military at all; rather it is a scholarly presentation (as I see it) of the facts at hand. Of course, if you say that the cases of wife-beatings in Nigeria have reduced but I am still being beaten by my own husband, to me the declining statistics is meaningless, and that is why someone may accuse Mr Thompson of supporting wife-beating (or coups in this case)!

Let me discuss some of their points:

- (1) The willingness of civilians to pursue "good governance". I would amend this to read "democratic governance", by which I mean respect for a free press, the rule of law, the creation of an enabling environment to achieve the greatest good for the greatest number of people and to bring out the best instincts in their citizens (including enlightened self-interest), minority rights and majority rule without majority tyranny, transparency and accountability. While I admit that lack of patience in defeat is a problem, it is difficult to see how one can be patient when the other side does every single thing to thwart your contributions, and any compromise with the other party is seen as "incipient carpet-crossing?" I think the major problem is that basically many of the civilian leaders do not see the ideal of democratic governance being worth pursuing essentially because they have not grown up around it, and that they believe that the national cake has been baked once and for all and only grabbers benefit.
- (2) The willingness of the military to retreat. This is problematic, but certainly you do not retreat when you appear to be winning ! This is where the collaboration of civilians in Nigeria is particularly galling, because they hold up the military regimes without doubt. This is the only area that I believe that we should fully emulate the Western world when it comes to the role of the military - a proud, educated , influential force, with the best brains and a significant percentage of the ordinary population being ex-soldiers or reservists. The historical role of the military is to fight external aggression, period, and their size at any time should reflect the current threat, while the total size of those ready to be called up should be based on historical threats and the number of able-bodied persons willing to serve for short periods. Bottom line: the military has no reason to retreat if the civilians don't insist !
- (3) The degree to which the international community would countenance military leaders. This is unreliable, because beyond one's borders, in international diplomacy, economic interests are paramount, and stable markets are key. Nigeria for example is seen first and foremost as an oil market, not the most populous country in Sub-Saharan Africa which should be serving as a model for others. I will come back again to this civilian involvement. If well educated civilian Nigerians are willing to represent a military government in international forums, why should the international community care that his master at home is a soldier ?

To the three points which Alfred Opono and Isaac Thompson brought up, I would add a fourth:

- (4) The willingness of all parties involved to openly discuss the fundamental issues that divide them. In Nigeria, at the risk of being accused of playing the ethnic card, these are:
 - (a) the compromise pre-condition under which the Northern Region joined the union called Nigeria, namely an implied guarantee to rule or at least have veto power. All the strife in Nigeria can be traced to attempts by the rest of Nigeria to renege on that compromise, and the willingness of the potential losers to use the military to maintain it, and the ability to get other "reasonable Nigerians" to side with them.

- (b) the Biafran war, and the “no vanquished, no victor” sham. We have a people, the Ibos, who still feel vanquished, and who constantly fear “marginalization” in a Nigeria to which they have been forced back into, and us others behaving as victors. So many issues have not be addressed about this war that the wounds are still deep.
- (c) the Awo complex of “leadership denied”, that makes the Yorubas say first Awo, now Abiola. In Awo, the Yoruba say here was a patently competent man who history (and the Hausas and the Ibos) conspired against. The link between (b) above and this “leadership denied” complex is of course Awo (substitute: the Yorubas), who the Ibos seem not to be able to forgive for treachery in their war effort.
- (d) the minority complex of being inconsequential in the Nigerian scheme of things. By minorities, I don’t only mean ethnic minorities, but economic minorities (the large uneducated masses).
- (e) the role of Islam (with its strong political implications) and non-Islamic religions in a diverse society. How do we allow people to obey their faith without syncretism ?

I hope that I have been balanced in my depositions, but I believe that some of these issues are worth bringing up.

8

HEALTH RELATED ISSUES

compiled and edited by *Yaw Agyaba*

8.00 Introduction by *Yaw Agyaba, Section Editor*

In general, health related issues were discussed infrequently on Okyeame in 1993. This was primarily because many of the subscribers to Okyeame are neither health professionals nor students of allied health. Nonetheless, four main issues -acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), food hygiene, Kwashiokor, herbal medicine and patent rights, captured the attention of all and were vigorously discussed.

The discussion on AIDS focused primarily on the extent of the disease in Ghana, myths about the extent of AIDS in Africa and general perspectives on AIDS prevention. Also, some of the frequently asked questions on AIDS were explained for the non-technical readers. The discussion on food hygiene was a rich exchange of ideas on the best ways of improving on food delivery by food vendors in Ghana. There was an interesting exchange on the exact meaning of the term “Kwashiokor”, a Ga term that has found its way into world medical literature. Kwashiokor, in its current medical usage, is synonymous with a form of protein-calorie malnutrition in children characterized by generalized swelling (oedema), hair and skin changes and bloated stomach. There is no argument about who, where and when it was introduced into world medical literature. The controversy is about how and why it came to be used among the Gas. The last series of articles deal with the acquisition of medicinal herbs from Africa by transnational drug companies and what deserves to be done by Africans. It is a lively discussion of patent rights and, also, of the neglect of our rich resource.

The articles included in this section are just part of the many postings on the above subjects. These articles were presented for the general readership of the Okyeame network. Taken together, they reflect the depth and breadth of the discussions that ensued and capture the informal way in which the discussions were held. As much as possible, the articles are presented in their original format. Only one article has been wholly rewritten for technical reasons and has been clearly marked as such. That article retained its original theme and central message.

The editorial committee is grateful to all the authors of these articles. They and they only are responsible for the ideas and contents in their articles. If these articles provoke the thinking and practice of at least one reader or if they change the knowledge, attitude or practice of one single Ghanaian, then the greatest part of our mission will have been accomplished.

AIDS IN GHANA AND THE REST OF AFRICA

8.01 AIDS in Ghana (Statistics)' by *ENOCK*

<NOCKY@ac.dal.ca>
(08 Jul 1993)

Hello Amanfour,

From the WHO Weekly Epidemiological Record, Vol. 68 #3 (9-10 Jan. 1993), Ghana is reported to have documented 3,612 cases of AIDS as at Dec. 31, 1992. The AIDS data was documented in Ghana on July 1, 1992.

Editorial note: This information was provided in response to a request for statistics on AIDS in Ghana.

8.02 Aids in Ghana by *Kofi Nyame*

<udkj170@elm.cc.kcl.ac.uk>
(19 Jul 1993)

Amanfour,

The information supplied by Enock on the situation of AIDS in Ghana is cause for concern. There is the need to make a conscious effort to stop the spread of this killer in Ghana. My experience of the situation on the ground points to the fact that not enough is being done to arrest the spread of the disease. AIDS adverts are being run in the media, but most of the adverts are not well designed to convey the import of the situation.

People in Ghana tend to view AIDS as "someone" else's disease, this attitude has not helped the campaign to halt the spread. The problem on the ground is quite huge. What do we do to people who test HIV positive? What do we do to people who have active/full-blown AIDS? How does one go about asking people to go for a test? Which kind of people should be routinely tested? How do you go about letting them be aware of the fact that they are being screened and how do you communicate the results to them? I think the Ministry of Health (MOH) should take another look at the situation and put in place adequate measures for the identification of high risk groups. This process demands the participation of not only the MOH or the National AIDS control Programme but those of all recognisable bodies, churches, schools, political parties, night clubs etc. etc..

Our collective efforts in suggesting ways and means of exercising control might also go a long way to help. Thus the ball is in the court of Netters, lets see what we can make of it.

AIDS is not someone's problem, it is our problem!!

8.03 AIDS by *Osei Kofi Darkwa*

<C95979OD@WUVMD.Wustl.Edu>
(19 Jul 93)

AIDS is no doubt the new pandemic of our age. The situation in Africa is particularly alarming. With the exception of the Seychelles Island, virtually every African country has reported the existence of the infection. Although Sub-

Saharan Africa contains about 10% of the world's population, 66% of all adults infected with the disease are from there (WHO data).

The AIDS situation in Ghana is equally alarming. Enock's data points to this fact. Personally, I don't think we can talk about solutions without first dealing with the barriers to AIDS prevention in Ghana. I don't have much time to go into the details of all the barriers to AIDS education and prevention but the following feature very prominently:

- * Cultural impediments to the use of condoms in Ghana
- * Taboos surrounding the discussion of human sexuality
- * Males' attitudes toward females
- * Less emphasis is placed on the social context of the disease

Elizabeth referred to a Harvard professor's research in Africa about the possible association between AIDS and Malaria. Some research (particularly in Zaire) found that those with Malaria were more likely to have the HIV virus. For additional information on this, you may refer to Bigger et al. (1985). I think the article was published in *Lancet*, 2, 520-23. Other researchers found no association between Malaria and AIDS. Additional information on this can be found in an article by Leaver et al., (1990), published in the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene*, 84, 201. There are a whole bunch of references on this topic.

While finding an effective way or effective ways of dealing with the crisis back home, let's also find effective ways of dealing with the barriers to AIDS education and prevention in Ghana, or Africa as a whole.

8.04 The Myth of AIDS in Africa? forwarded by *Isaac Thompson*

<ixtst+@pitt.edu> (13 Oct 1993)

Netters:

I will like to shift the discussion on the net to a pernicious scourge in Africa: AIDS. Not enough can be said about this disease and it deserves every bit of our attention.

I am forwarding the following summary, along with extensive excerpts, of a recent newspaper article with little comment, simply urging netters to read everything. I issue one caveat, however: While the article does a good job of debunking a lot of the myths associated with the disease in Africa, it could paradoxically create a false sense of security in some of us. Don't be fooled! Whether there are 50 cases in all of Africa instead of the millions we are told about, there IS still AIDS. The prudent thing to do then is to recognize it and tackle it as a potential scourge, bearing in mind that while its magnitude is not yet what we are told it is, left unchecked it certainly could attain those dimensions.

NOTE: The article appeared in the October 3, 1993, edition of the *Sunday Times of London*, under the by-line, Neville Hodgkinson.

It turns out that all the hoopla about AIDS in Africa and how the disease is cutting a swathe of destruction across the continent originated with the adventures of a well-meaning but culturally misguided French couple in 1989. In that year, the childless couple--Philippe and Evelyne Krynén--flew into Africa, like most altruistic but culturally diffident Europeans to go help those seemingly perennially helpless Africans. The object of their altruism became a village in Tanzania, where supposedly a case of AIDS had been diagnosed 6 years earlier. Thanks to their tireless efforts, the village would soon gain international notoriety as the "epicenter" of the world's AIDS epidemic.

The couple's primary "evidence" of this "epidemic" were children "alone in houses emptied of adults, or abandoned into the care of grandparents; a football team destroyed by the disease; old people sitting alone with their dead; black crosses painted at the entrances of homes alleged to be hit by AIDS". They wrote in their journal: "Here, Aids does not choose its victims among marginal groups. It touches the entire sexually active population, men and women alike. Extreme sexual liberty, a weak sense of hygiene and a lack of medical and social support have made the populations of these parts a particularly homogeneous risk group."

Their accounts, picked up by the Euro media, were supplemented with such cheap antics as getting young villagers to write letters to European school children describing the ravages of AIDS. With a European population racially predisposed to believing any outlandish tales about Africa, it was not long before these efforts of the couple's succeeded in turning Africa into the potential "origin" of the virus that causes AIDS. AIDS "researchers," eager to wrap their prejudices in "science", headed to the continent in droves.

With research came extensive testing programs, which went beyond Tanzania and led to wild estimates about the proportion of the ENTIRE African population that might be infected by the virus. (As much as 50% of children were said to be infected by their mothers). Elaborate treatment facilities were set up in Tanzania and elsewhere to help those affected by the diseases either through infection or by losing loved ones to it.

But this image of Africa as teeming with sexually-permissive, AIDS virus-infected was last year called into question--by none other than the couple, when they tried to organize special programs for children affected by the virus. The incident leading to this dramatic reversal in what would for a long time remain an irreversible damage requires direct reproduction of some of Hodgkinson's accounts:

"Our aim was to help the people help their children," says Evelyne. "But in some of the villages we found nobody was interested in the future, or in the kids, any more.

"One reason, we thought, was that they had been told 40-50% were infected and were going to die, and this in a context where people were indeed dying a lot, because of poverty and an upsurge in malaria. The young people were convinced they were going to die anyway, so why should they think of the children or the future.

"We said that even if 50% are infected, 50% are not, so let us find out which are which. Then those who are free of the virus can think about the future again."

A pilot study offering HIV tests to their own staff provided the next shock: only 5% were positive, although almost all were young and sexually active. Perhaps they were unrepresentative, the Krynens thought, because their level of education was above average.

So last year, they proposed a mass testing programme to the villagers of Bukwali. Encouraged by the promise that a clinic would be established to give free treatment to anyone testing positive, about 850 people agreed to take part, almost the entire population aged between 18 and 60. This time, 13.7% were found to be HIV-positive still much lower than the villagers had been led to believe.

The Krynens have found that one positive test cannot be relied upon for HIV diagnosis, even though in many African countries a single test is all that can be afforded. A wide variety of parasitical and other infections can trigger a false positive result and repeated testing frequently shows the same patient to be negative.

The villagers may have shown a higher rate of HIV-positives simply because they were older, with an average age of about 42, compared with 24 in the staff study. They had been exposed far longer to "whatever it is in Africa that can so readily cause the blood to test positive", says Evelyne.

"We have noticed that with the women, the more children they have, the more likely they are to be positive. We have five HIV-positive women on our staff, and all have children but a stable life. It could be because being more in contact with doctors and hospitals, and taking more drugs, or even just giving birth, causes you to accumulate reactivity to the test. It may not have anything to do with a virus."

Even more dramatically, the Krynens' studies have shown no connection between HIV-positivity and risk of illness. Fifty-four villagers were ill with complaints such as pneumonia and fungal infections that might have contributed to an AIDS diagnosis, but just as many of these were HIV-negative (29) as positive (25). When they were given appropriate treatment, most recovered.

"All of a sudden you put all you have been told about the disease in the garbage can, and try to reconsider," Evelyne says.

“Once you know HIV means nothing any more, once you know it is not true there is an epidemic, you doubt everything you believed before”.

“The 15 villages we have looked at are in the most affected area of a region that is supposed to be at the epicentre of Aids in Africa.

“When you listen to the people, you find they had been shocked by some deaths where the effects on the body were very visual, with fungus infections and skin rashes. But these can be secondary effects of antibiotics, and the people who died with these conditions had all been treated before for conditions such as bronchitis. Nothing is sure; everything is just wind.”

Evelyne adds: “There is not a trace of evidence for it being sexually transmitted. I will spend a night with an HIV-positive person, if he’s handsome enough I’ll do it to prove it.”

The Krynens have found that one positive test cannot be relied upon for a HIV diagnosis, even though in many African countries a single test is all that can be afforded. A wide variety of parasitical and other infections can trigger a false positive result and repeated testing frequently shows the same patient to be negative.

IF KAGERA is not, after all, in the grip of an epidemic of “HIV disease”, and if there is no Aids, where have the thousands of orphans come from?

The answer, say the Krynens, is that most of the children are not orphans at all. Their final disillusionment was to discover that although many children are raised by their grandparents, that is a long-standing cultural feature of the region.

“We have been shown false orphans since the beginning children who have parents who never died, but who will not show up any more. And when the parent has died, nobody has been asking why. It has nothing to do with an epidemic.

“Families just bring them as orphans, and if you ask how the parents died they will say AIDS. It is fashionable nowadays to say that, because it brings money and support. “If you say your father has died in a car accident it is bad luck, but if he has died from Aids there is an agency to help you. The local people have seen so many agencies coming, called AIDS support programmes, that they want to join this group of victims. Everybody claims to be a victim of AIDS nowadays. And local people working for AIDS agencies have become rich. They have built homes in Dares Salaam, they have their motorbikes; they have benefited a lot.”

NOTE: Netters interested in the rest of the article may consult their libraries.

Editorial note: The above narration was rewritten by Isaac Thompson at the request of the editorial committee. It retains the essential elements of his original posting.

8.05 Myth of AIDS in Africa? by *Kofi Korsah*

<korsah@icacp6.IC.ORNL.GOV> (14 Oct 1993)

Amanfo,

Isaac Thompson’s posting on the above subject makes very interesting reading indeed. I have always maintained that this idea of AIDS being rampant in Africa is not true. I have maintained this in the face of the so called “overwhelming” evidence to the contrary. The other day they had a questionnaire circulating in the Lab here purporting to have come from the FDA. The questionnaire was ostensibly trying to reduce the risk of AIDS contamination of U.S. blood supply; and you know what, they were putting the entire Black Africa with homosexuals,

drug addicts, etc.! I was so annoyed that I wrote to the FDA through the Lab. Admittedly, the letter was rather strong, but I felt that I had to do what I had to do. I am glad that recent findings are supporting the arguments I raised in the letter.

Quite possibly, the “scare” has been fanned by a comedy of errors. However, I believe that the West was eager to jump on the idea of “a deadly disease coming from Africa,” not to mention the fact that Homosexuals were eager to “know” that the disease did not originate from them! I believe that it has been well documented that, in fact, it did! However, as Isaac rightly pointed out, this does not mean that the disease is not in Africa. We should leave no stone unturned to try to find solutions to the problem.

8.06 Africa: AIDS, Lies and Racism in science, by Yaw Agyaba

<EPID048%UABDPO.BITNET@mitvma.mit.edu>, (14 Oct 93)

Fellow Ghanaians,

The article on AIDS in Africa forwarded to Okyeame by Isaac makes for interesting reading. The whole story of AIDS in Africa is a crass example of racism in science, of how oft repeated lies gain a strength of their own and assume the weight of truth. There are far too many preposterous myths about AIDS in Africa, myths propagated as scientific facts. One such myth is the notion that the AIDS virus jumped species barrier when Africans ate monkeys and/or injected monkey blood as sexual stimulants. This nonsense gained credibility when Harvard researchers Kanki and Essex falsely reported they had isolated the AIDS-like virus in the African Green monkey. Exposed, in March, 1988, they recanted their story: the virus they isolated was found in captive macaque Asian monkeys in primate research labs in the USA.

Tons of publications on AIDS in Africa are nothing more than a collection of speculations and “garbage”. That they are accepted for publication in reputable scientific journals tell a story of its own. These painful realizations led Konortey-Ahulu to cry aloud in LANCET (a major science journal) in 1987 “why has the world’s media ...conspired with some scientists to be so gratuitously extravagant with the untruth” (Lancet July 25, 206-8, 1987).

Today the notion that AIDS is a viral disease is being questioned in scientific circles (see: Duesberg PH. AIDS epidemiology: Inconsistencies with HIV and with infectious disease. Proc Natl Acad Sci 88:1575-1579, 1991; Erlander SR: The cause of AIDS. Medical Hypotheses 40:97-101, 1993). These notwithstanding, Africans are being used as human subjects in many controversial “vaccine trials”.

How did AIDS come to Africa and what do we make of the pattern of distribution on the continent? The epidemiology of AIDS in Africa tells a classic story of a trans-oceanic (intercontinental) spread of the disease with the centers in closest contact with Euro-America bearing the greatest brunt. There is an astonishing lack of contiguity in the pattern of distribution within and across countries. The earliest cases, even among prostitutes, were among those serving in areas with high expatriate populations like Abidjan and Kinshasa. Several studies of polygamists show a disarming low rate among men in rural areas and less educated men in urban areas compared to their highly educated, very mobile counterparts in direct contact with Euro-America. The remarkable stability of HIV prevalence in rural areas of Africa cry in the face of the various outrageous lies peddled as science and “evidence”.

It is commendable that some people are now making efforts to tell the truth. My only wish is that these truthful stories will be given the same weight and currency as were accorded the tales of doom. History has indeed repeated itself. Early writings on syphilis and tuberculosis in Africa bear a striking similarity to the unfolding drama of AIDS in Africa as portrayed in the western media. Yes, Africans are fighting back. I strongly recommend the book “AIDS, Africa and Racism” by Chirimuuta R, Chirimuuta R (Free Association Books, 1989) for anyone who wants to arm himself with some truths to fight back.

These observations notwithstanding, Africa faces a grim crisis in health care delivery. This must be seen as a challenge to everyone. It is our responsibility and ours alone to improve on the lot of our people, to understand the causes of diseases among our people, to fashion the best strategies for disease control and to implement them for the benefit of “our Africans”. Our PhDs and other degrees are worthless if we cannot rise up to these challenges; if we will accept

indignities in Euro-America in our pursuit of gold and silver and watch generations of our people doomed to premature death and unfulfilled lives. There can be no nobler mission than to bear our difficulties among our people and collectively free ourselves from the yoke of disaster.

8.07 Re: Africa: AIDS..., by *D.Lamptey@sheffield.ac.uk*

(with Yaw Agyaba's comments)
(14 Oct 93)

According to other medical people, a harmless virus found in East Africa produced the same antibodies as the syphilis virus, hence western medicine ended up diagnosing a large number of Africans as infected with syphilis, but could not understand the lack of expected symptoms of advancing syphilis. In the Sunday times (U.K) a while back, there was another survey done (and it was savagely debated on user net) which showed that some harmless infections (cold??) induced antibodies which were indistinguishable from HIV by some common HIV tests. (I am sure we have some docs on the net who can correct any wrong facts.) Also there was a program on British TV a few months back which actually went out there to document the lives of people who were "tested" positive for HIV. Oh, yes there is (has been) a fair amount of evidence that the African origin theory is a duff one. It could just as well have been some sad bastard in a germ-warfare lab who produced this virus and injected it into someone as a test (ala Vietnam) or to rid the world of a group of people.

Derryck (no med qualification)

Comments by Yaw Agyaba:

Many of the so-called AIDS cases in Africa, especially in the early 1980s, were common cases of tropical diseases. There were significant cross-reactions of the ELISA test for HIV-1 antibodies with many tropical diseases, including malaria. Thus, many of the positives were false positives. If their predictions were true, much of Africa, particularly the eight nation region in East and Central Africa, would have been completely wiped of all humans. The falsity of these predictions, however, does not exonerate us from the crisis of AIDS nor should it weaken our resolve to contain this sad crisis.

There is a popular joke in certain circles about "FAT AIDS" - it refers to the many bureaucrats and scientists who are feeding fat on the AIDS scare. It is saddening that there are African scientists "infected" with FAT AIDS. Let us look beyond AIDS and critically question ourselves: How best can we be relevant to Africa's resurrection? We cannot bury the dreams of Garvey, Du-Bois, Nkrumah, Lumumba and the countless ordinary men and women who sacrificed so much to throw away the yoke of colonial rule. Their dream of an Africa vibrant with hope and prosperity, a proud Africa shining like the stars of heaven must be revived. Let us play our part!

8.08 Some Answers On AIDS, by *Ernest Asante-Appiah*

<asante@fhs.csu.McMaster.CA> (20 Dec 1993)

I'll do my best to answer some of the questions regarding AIDS and HIV. I'm taking the questions as presented in a previous posting - paraphrased though.

1. Is there more than one kind of AIDS test? Yes, there is. The most common and less expensive test relies on the recognition of antigens as you rightly pointed out. There is another test based on PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction). Briefly, the genetic material of the virus is amplified using a polymerase, an enzyme, in an attempt to detect very low amounts of it. This test is more sensitive. To the best of my knowledge, I don't think there are any chemical tests out there. They are all immunological or biochemical. Chemical test would be very specific.
2. Can one carry the virus without the disease or complex? Yes. In certain cases, people have tested positive for as long as ten (10) years before showing symptoms of the AIDS related complex. It was thought that the virus was

dormant during the period, however, recent data casts doubt on that theory. It turns out that the virus continues to replicate in the lymph nodes thus remaining undetectable.

3. Does the virus change frequently? Yes, it does. The virus has an enzyme called reverse transcriptase. This enzyme is responsible for converting the genetic material of the virus which is RNA into DNA. It makes an error of about 1 in every 10000 bases which is extremely high compared to other polymerases. The net result is that the genetic material codes for slightly different proteins or mutants which do not have the same chemical or physical properties as the wild type i.e.. the original protein. So, for example, if an antibody was designed to recognise the original protein it may fail to recognise the mutant form.
4. Can other agents cause AIDS? The presently accepted notion is that HIV is the causative agent of AIDS. There is another school of thought led by one Dr. Duesberg who believe that HIV is an accessory factor and not the principal cause of AIDS. I must say that most researchers do not accept that view. I, however, keep an open mind on the subject. Finally, I would like to state that there have been cases of people with AIDS-like symptoms but these patients however test negative for the HIV virus. So how much do we know about the virus ? Very little.

Editorial note: The questions were posted by Mr. N.D.K. Asante.

PRIMARY HEALTH CARE AND FOOD HYGIENE

8.09 Development: The Basics (OR Primary Health Care), by *Alfred Opoku*

<aopoku@ccs.carleton.ca> (25 Nov 93)

Amanfuor,

We have on numerous occasions discussed the issue of development on this net. Like a canker, that issue never dies and does resurrect from time to time. Most of the time, however, we dwell a great deal on macro issues and talk hours on end about abstract things. How about getting down to brass tacks and narrowing our focus on specific issues on the ground, and try our hands at some of the real problems that many of our countrymen and women face daily?

Its been several years since we heard of Primary Health Care, but so far I am yet to see or hear of any progress in terms of preventive health among Ghanaians, adults and children alike. One area where we surely need to upgrade our preventive policies is in our food delivery system. It is a fact that each day, in Ghana, millions eat outside the home, and I don't mean fancy restaurants! Come to think of it, the waakye, kenkey, banku, rice, fufu, etc. are all prepared by thousands of individuals who are under no health regulations. There are no guidelines on their operations, in terms of simple and basic hygiene!

How do we know for sure that the red pepper I got from a kenkey seller is not a combination of ginger and cola-nut? How do I know that the woman who used her bare-hands to scoop waakye for my kid-sister had clean hands? Is the meat you ate at that famous chop-bar really what it is supposed to be? The questions can be numerous. Picture this: You go to buy some waakye, the woman picks the green leaf and looks at it for a second. She senses that it might not be clean, she swipes it with what obviously looks like a rag. If you challenge her, she tells you it is a napkin! If you are "lucky" she uses her own cloth to wipe the leaf! We have all been witnesses to scenes like that; yet, for the most part we were overwhelmed by the aroma of the food we are about to receive than the potential health hazard posed by the flouting of the hygienic code.

If we are really thinking about development at the grassroots, we need not strain our minds into thinking that the grass has its roots only in the village! The roots dwell with the single individuals, families, etc., strewn all over the country. If we are really serious about preventive health then, of course, we need to consider our daily habits and see how we can improve them. Note: I am not advocating that we give up the "cold sweats" and "barima nkwan" and replace them with God-knows-what. It is quite clear that our people have certain ways of living which is unique to them. It is important to ensure that we

innovate in order to clean up the germs and bad practices associated with these daily routines. If innovation means microwaving our fufu to avoid health hazards, so be it. Thank God that AIDS is not transmitted through ordinary germs, otherwise Africans would be decimated! Take an "ice-water" seller; she/he only rinses a cup with ordinary water and that single cup could be used by at least 50 people a day! If saliva contains dangerous germs, it could be

passed on to all these unfortunate souls. I liked the “water in plastics” idea until it became an environmental mess. We don’t have an efficient waste disposal system, how can we even begin to think we are making progress with preventive health?

The examples are numerous and, believe it or not, these are the simple things which we need to tackle to gain a foothold on the development ladder. The question is how do we improve these services without limiting the ability of ordinary folk from making a living? Here, I think the technicians, technologists, and nutritionists can be of immense help. Should the government, or local authorities ban the use of newspapers in the wrapping of food such as “shito”, waakye etc.? How do we ensure that we do not reduce the possibility of street “take aways”? If we can find answers to these questions, we would have gone half-way in our effort to curtail preventable diseases.

Please let your views be heard on this issue and let us attempt to think of ways to go around the problem. Remember, Ghanaians love their food so it certainly would not be an option to abandon certain types of food. However, we need to made the system safer to ensure healthy food delivery.

8. 10 Development: the Basics - A note of caution by *Samuel Asomaning*

<asosam@unixg.ubc.ca> (25 Nov 1993)

The issue at hand seems a timely one and deserves a lot of attention. At first glance, it appears setting up rules and regulations will be the right way to go. This brings me to my note of caution. My submission is that we must beware not to make rules and regulations the central piece of our attempt to solve the problem. I will also give what I think is an alternative to rules and regulations.

Anybody who has ever lived in ANY African country knows that rules and regulations are made ‘to be broken wisely’. That is they look pretty on paper but they do not work in practice. More often than not, these rules do not work because those charged with the enforcement of the rules tend to derive financial and other material benefits from these rules and ignore the very problem they were charged to oversee. The ultimate result is that people who can afford to give these material benefits to the ‘custodians’ of these rules and regulations tend to flout the rules with utter disrespect. Remember the old Cecil Rhodes saying: ‘Every man has his price’. This saying, although it is applicable to any nation or people, is very much identifiable with Africa. Reasons abound for this behaviour - poverty, I don’t care attitude, etc., etc. The result of this lack of selflessness tend to cost society at large much more than the gains that accrue to the individual regulators. As an example, everybody knows about reckless building in our towns and cities. Everybody knows, hopefully, that we have a lot of city planners, building inspectors, etc., who are paid to make sure that this doesn’t occur.

Thus, while some rules and regulation are essential, they should be minimal in our bid to address such problems. To tackle the food issue, for example, we can resort to ways and means that will let demand and supply (call it market forces) do the work for us. We all know that these food vendors are in the market to make a buck. We know too that they will do everything to make that buck. The question is won’t they change their attitudes towards hygiene if they could not sell the food they prepared. Food vendors (as our example) will not mind greasing the pockets of regulators. To them it is a cost which they will gladly pass on to consumers. Your question might be how do we get people not to buy the food (we are not talking about boycott here)? My answer will be education.

It might sound ‘bookish’ to you, but I believe if a percentage of the public (probably not a very big one) refuses to patronize the vendors to the extent that the vendors do not break even, they will go out of business. To stay in business, they will adopt healthy methods of not only preparing but also dispensing the food. Thus market forces can be a more powerful tool than dishonest regulators and enforcers - which we have kilotons of.

Educating the public must not be the duty of the government alone. It will have to start from the home, school workplace, etc. If people are really sensitized to the pitfalls of eating unhygienic food, I believe a fraction of them will act to do something about it. If that fraction becomes big enough to dictate the profits of the food vendors, the food vendors will act without a whip from the government regulators. If on the other hand we resort to rules and regulations, we will only be engaging in redistribution of wealth from consumers (higher prices) to regulators (bribes).

8.11 Re: primary health care by *benjamin baidoe-ansah U*

<baidoe4@mach1.wlu.ca> (29 Nov 199)

Amanfoo,

I agree with Paul and others that regulation and education need to be jointly implemented to improve the food delivery system in Ghana. Both were effectively used in the Busia era when Ghana was struck with a cholera epidemic. Of course, there were also the dead bodies to “gently” persuade people to follow regulations. My observation was in Accra, so I don’t know how effectively matters were handled in other towns and villages.

What has been lacking in our legislative/regulatory system is our failure to broadly consult on issues before coming out with legislations on them. On the food issue for example, food sellers and consumers should be directly and actively involved in formulating legislation. This minimises resistance. It will also alert legislators and enforcers to potential problems before they arise.

Another issue that we usually ignore is to come up with alternatives for those who will be affected. An example that comes to mind is the anti-drug campaign in Asia and South America. Initially, people thought they could tell the coca farmers to just destroy their farms, and everything will come to an end! Of course, it did not work!! Now, they provide the farmers with alternatives. A couple of weeks ago, I watched a program about Asia where women who work on coca farms have been trained and provided with sewing machines. An alternative industry is being developed to replace the dependence on coca for a living. This is what I call responsible legislation.

Coming back to the issue of food sellers in Ghana then, we have to involve the food sellers, scientists, manufacturers, importers, consumers, etc. to come up with alternatives to the leaves, newspapers, etc that we use to sell food. Merely legislating out the leaves, newspapers, etc. without working out alternatives will be irresponsible and will meet resistance. Such resistance will result in enforcers enriching themselves.

8.12 Primary Health Care – Clarification, by *Samuel Asomaning*

<asosam@unixg.ubc.ca> (29 Nov 1993)

It is interesting to note that the debate about primary health care (or probably regulations and their implementation) is picking up. I wish to clarify the position I took. I did not mean to belittle or downplay the importance of rules and regulations. Rules and statutes as we know exist in one form or another in every economy. The point of the matter is how do you approach the solution of a problem more effectively. To this end I still believe that ‘market forces’, reinforced by good doses of education (in this particular case) probably will be the way to go. I stated in my piece that rules and regulations should not be the MAINSTAY of a policy to solve such a problem. By that I meant if the efforts to resolve such a problem is quantified as 100, it will probably be wise to allot 30 to rules and regulations and the remaining to ‘market forces’. This I should have stated explicitly.

I believe market forces work even in so called ‘crude economies’ like the ones we have in Africa. If allowed to work they could minimize some of the dilemmas we face in ‘implementation’. Market forces are capable of minimizing the bureaucratic content of enforcing rules and regulations and they also solve some of the riddles associated with performance evaluation - in this case finding out if the policy and the rules associated with it do work.

While producers should also be educated (no doubt about that), I feel the emphasis should be on the consumers. The rationalization is that the principle of profit maximization and by extension cost minimization always hold when production is left in private hands as is the case of food vending in most of Africa. Again, this is true even in so called ‘crude economies’ like those in Africa. Thus, if food vendors can get away by using cheap and unhygienic substitutes and thus maximize their gains, they will do it even in the face of the knowledge and education they might have received. I might be too pessimistic here but remember that human beings are more often than not rational. They can

also find their way around rules and statutes. BUT they can never neglect the consumer (unless of course they work for a government company).

Rules and regulations are necessary, but to my mind they should serve as a standard for judging the effectiveness of the attempts to solve the problems at hand and to settle legal matters and not as the weapons and tools for solving problems. I believe we already have enough rules on the books to prevent the type of problems we are discussing. I have heard about swoops by sanitary inspectors on food vendors selling their wares in the open skies before. It dissuaded them from doing so only temporarily. To illustrate my lack of faith in depending 100% on rules. I will illustrate with a story I heard in Ghana. I do not know whether it is true or not but, at least, it highlights or sensitizes us to the potential pitfalls associated with overdependence on rules and regulations.

A young graduate from Legon joined the customs and excise department. He/she was charged with overseeing the compliance with a government policy to protect the 'infant textile' industry in Ghana. The policy levied 100% duty on imported printed wax (English Wax, Dutch Wax etc., the type called Dumas), and a minimal duty on the importation of "grey balch" (spelling mistake mine) and others known as rags. The Lebanese traders took advantage of the policy by importing Wax and declaring them as rags and 'greasing' the custom officers palms - duty evasion in short. This our young grad, filled with all the 'bookish' ideals of nation building, refused to cooperate. The Lebanese responded by offering him ten thousand cedis (sorry, guys, this was when the cedi was also money). The guy refused at which point the Lebanese sought the advice of his countrymen and was told to go and see the guy's boss at Head office. He did so accordingly; offered the boss seven hundred cedis and got the boss to order his subordinate to do what he (the Lebanese) desired. When he came to take delivery of the goods, he told the guy 'I gave you 10,000 you refused your boss took only 700'. So every man has his price and in Africa some are really cheap. We should beware not to let these cheap prices usurp well thought out and well intentioned policies.

JUST WHAT IS KWASHIORKOR?

8.13 RE: kwashiorkor, by Sowah Simmonds

(4 Oct 93)

Somebody, [Kwaku], wanted to know the Ga word for Kwashiorkor----- I hope the person is not a Ga, but whoever the person might be, this unfortunate disease or malady is malnutrition and the Ga name for it is ---ready ---or not here --it comes----- K W A S H I O R K O R ----. The name means bloated stomach. Kwashiorkor is a Ga word . Now that you know, I am not sure whether you want to feel proud of the origin, or angry because the name is linked to the Ga people and for that matter Africa.

8.14 Re: Help--What is Ga Meaning of Kwashiorkor?, by Alhassan Manu

<aamanu@ucdavis.edu> (4 Oct 1993)

Oman Adehyee,

I am 'surfacing' on to the net in response to Kwaku's request for the meaning of Kwashiorkor. Kwaku might have read Simonds Sowah's piece which gives the meaning of Kwashiorkor to be 'Bloated stomach'. Well, some of us have our doubts because of what we know from the literature. I have been asking my Ga friends about the meaning of the word, and I get answers which are normally the symptoms of the disease [as Simonds Sowah's meaning appear to sound]. One friend said the word is compound - Kwashi (a Ga name) and Okor (red). This tends to agree with some literature definition of the word that it means "Red boy". Before continuing I must say that I am not a Ga (I am a Bono from Techiman). My knowledge in the subject matter stems from my academic background (Nutrition) and my interest in the etymology of the word- people keep asking me the same question the professor asked Kwaku. So, please forgive me, if there is really a meaning to Kwashiorkor that I am not aware of.

Perhaps a little background will do. Kwashiorkor was first introduced into the medical literature in the early 1930 by Dr. Cecely D. Williams when she worked in the Children's Hospital in Accra. Her first article about the disease appeared in Archives of Diseases in Childhood, 1933; 8:423-33, titled "A Nutritional Disease of Childhood Associated with a Maize diet". Maize diet is obviously Kenkey. In that article the name Kwashiorkor was not used. Because of widespread interest in the article, writing two years later in the Lancet [Nov 6, 1935: 1151-1152]. Dr Williams included the word Kwashiorkor in the title: "KWASHIORKOR, A nutritional disease of children associated with a maize diet". Kwashiorkor became an international word and many people wrote about the etymology of the word. In 1963, DR. Williams challenged the etymologists. In her article "The story of Kwashiorkor" [Courier 13:361, 1963 ; culled in Nutrition Review 13(11):334-340, 1973), she insists that Kwashiorkor means "The disease of the deposed baby when the next one is born" (this was the definition she used in 1935 when she first introduced the word to the medical literature). I hope these references will help people who are interested in the etymology of Kwashiorkor.

8.15 KWASHIORKOR, by *ALEXO*

<udkj001@bay.cc.kcl.ac.uk> (04 Oct 1993)

I find Nii Sowah's response to Kwaku's request for the meaning of the word kwashiorkor quite strange. He appeared to be annoyed (or am I wrong in assuming that?). Anyway I just want to clear the air "small".

First Kwashiorkor DOES NOT mean malnutrition. It describes the symptoms brought about by malnutrition in especially children. I am not proud that the word originated from Accra, Ghana. But I am proud that at least we could use our wit wisely. How did the name come about? According to a story I heard from the grapevine (Toli) it came about as follows: A Ga woman had a child and called him Kwashie. Shortly thereafter, she gave birth to another child and called her Korkor. Due to the short interval between the two kids (and obviously lack of enough food for the two) the elder one Kwashie developed a big stomach, sparse lightened hair, dry skin, swollen feet etc. Not long afterwards the younger one also suffered the same fate. The local people thus referred to those symptoms as Kwashie ke Korkor (meaning Kwashie and Korkor). So anyone who suffers from such illness is said to be having Kwashie ke Korkor which later became Kwashiorkor. Though the above story is by oral tradition, it holds a lot of substance. In and around Ga-mashie where I grew up, the fear of Kwashiorkor is mentioned any time a woman conceives again within a rather short period after having given birth. In fact some people there will never accept that it is malnutrition. They think the gods are punishing them for giving birth in rapid succession. I am not proud of the origin of the word but I am proud that long before "the book long people" could come out with a "theory" that spacing children is an excellent idea, our mothers did have ways of encouraging their sons and daughters to space their children nicely. What an excellent way? Even if we've got a yellow-card for it by our warning word, Kwashiorkor is going to all the medical schools of the world.

HERBS AND PATENT RIGHTS

8. 16 Patent Rights? by *Charles Awasu*

<CAWASU%SUVM.BITNET@MITVMA.MIT.EDU>
(14 Dec 93)

For some time now we've looked on while botanists and others from the West have raided our forests for medicinal plants for which we get paid little or nothing. From close sources the most promising drug for the cure of AIDS soon to be "outdoored" in the US is from plants in the West African rain forest. (I wonder why the reference: "West African Rain Forest". Is it a no-wo/man's land or the statement was couched that way to dilute country specific stakes? My question is who should own the patent rights to such a drug? Is it the local herbalists who have been using such plants for cures all these time or the drug companies in the West? We need to intensify the debate so we can share in such big-time profits. Are there any "herbalists"/medical community/botanists or others on the net who can help us locate

the issues involved? Is it possible to trace the composition and origin of drugs? Is there any African organization tracking such miracle drugs?

8.17 RE: HERBAL MEDICINE, by ALEXO

udkj001@bay.cc.kcl.ac.uk (15 Dec 1993)

Fellow Ghananains (as my Nigerian friend likes to say),

Charles wrote about the “new potential AIDS drug”. It is from the West Africa rain forest and a US company is working on it. His question is: who gains from the patent rights of this medicine? The answer is no one except the firm in the US. But, there is a but! Under new agreements which has been “generally accepted” by all pharmaceutical companies going into herbal remedies, some amount of the #/\$ [pounds and dollars] obtained from discoveries like these are supposed to be given to the country where the herb was discovered. So the country will gain something. Unfortunately, they will get what the company decides to give it i.e. crumbs and nothing else but crumbs. The “law” is very loose and so gives lots of chance to exploitation e.g.. who gets the money? the local people or the govt or a corrupt govt official who does the signing? A lot of debate is currently going on ever since the US govt started screening plants from the Third world for their medicinal properties. The AIDS drug in question was found in Cameroon. This whole issue brings up another very important question: What are we doing with the resources that God has so freely given us. As a pharmacist working in drug delivery, I have come across several cases where the efficacy of herbs, including Ghanaian ones, in certain illnesses have been proven beyond doubt. And yet what do we see? We in Ghana cannot still afford to provide simple health care for our people. One netter was asking whether we can do the type of research done in this part of the world. The answer is simple: WE CAN DO ANY TYPE OF RESEARCH (be it in medicine, pharmacy, engineering etc.). But we are not. Why???? The WHO estimates that only 30% of our people have access to orthodox medical care. What happens to the 70%? We do have the resources to provide Health For All by “when we choose” but we are simply lacking in the philosophy, drive, organisation and confidence required to undertake such ventures. When the Chinese went into acupuncture, the West ridiculed it; now they are all into acupuncture.

We have the herbs, they are good and we need to use them. But it seems our universities are filled with people who continually let the nation down. I am very surprised that in our discussions on the various reasons for failure in our political and economic life, the role of the universities have not been questioned. I believe we, the “educated”, have failed our nations a great deal. Yes, the political situation has been bad. But I know the resources which have been made available to us and how we’ve sc.....ed” up things. Why for example should we buy Sheena Hair Product (contains shea butter (“nkutoo”) from Ghana and possibly other parts of W. Africa) for #8 (8 British pounds) when all the ingredients it contains are at home (Ghana). Why can’t we formulate it and sell it to our people. Why should we import Cocoa butter cream from the US and Cote d’Ivoire? Why should we not use neem tree to cure malaria or avocado pear leaves for hypertension? Believe me, all these work. And yet we sit down and use our scarce resources to import medicines. Such foolishness!!

Fellow netters, I’ll like to end here. But presently, I’m thinking of going into business. What sort of business? Commercial exploitation of our natural products (particularly of plant origin) - from cosmetics to pharmaceuticals. I am yet to obtain the funding I need but once I do get it you will hear from me. Who knows I may call the company OKYEAME PHARMACEUTICALS.

8.18 Re: Patent Rights?, by S. Asomaning

[<asosam@chml.ubc.ca>](mailto:asosam@chml.ubc.ca) (14 Dec 1993)

Charles Awasu wrote:

“..... “outdoored” in the US is from plants in the West African rain forest. (I wonder why the reference: “West African Rain Forest”. Is it a no-wo/man’s land or the statement was couched that way to dilute country specific stakes?”

I think that is fairly plausible. From a strategic point of view why should they advertise the details for their competitors to make use of the information and possibly gain an edge over them. I hope you agree that they did not get involved with the mission of looking for promising medicinal plants on humanitarian grounds but for profits. Profit maximization, the driving force of capitalism, no? (copyright acknowledged)

“.....My question is who should own the patent rights to such a drug? Is it the local herbalists who have been using such plants for cures all these time or the drug companies in the West?”

You were a bit ambiguous here. If the source of the drugs or herbs is from local herbalists, then they deserve to share in the booty. But the necessary negotiation should be put in place before handing over the scoop not afterwards. After they ‘ve had the information and have been able to detect the active ingredient. It will be a big joke to expect a fair deal from such negotiations. They can even succeed in synthesizing it in the lab after they ‘ve identified the active ingredient. What then do you do with the bushes? On the other hand, if they just collected plants and went by the classical try and error route, why the hell should they share the booty with us..... We cannot always expect other people to come and develop our resources for us to enjoy. We have to do something ourselves. The argument that we too often hear back in Ghana and elsewhere in Africa that we cannot do Research and Development because we don’t have the equipment and resources to back us up is not always true - believe me. We have to go to the root of the problem and have foresight among other things.

8.19 HERBAL REMEDIES, by ALEXO

<udkj001@bay.cc.kcl.ac.uk> (16 Dec 1993)

Anyemime (this is Ga for brothers and sisters),

Whilst talking about research and money I did mention that we NEED to use what we have to get what we want. When God called Moses (sorry, all of you guys who don’t want to hear religion), HE asked him what he had in his hands. It was a rod. The good Lord told him to use it. He did and marvellous things followed. The biggest problems we have as Ghanaians and perhaps as Africans is we often try to use the unavailable to get the available. Why can’t we do the reverse? Since I’m in the field of health, I will restrict myself to it. We have herbs - lots of it. Most have been proven to be very good in curing diseases once thought incurable. We have evidence from folklore and from scientific research that these work. Go to Mampong and see the wonders. Yet what do we see? Most of our people are sick and dying because of the lack of “paracetamol”. How sad? 70% of our people have no access to orthodox medical care. The cost of buying synthetic poisons (all drugs are poisons) from abroad is astronomical and yet the herbs lie idle or do they? SCRIP Magazine carries in its December issue the following facts:

1. In the UK examining plants for medicines started in earnest in 1673 with the formation of the Chelsea Physic Garden.
2. Morphine was isolated from poppies in the early 19th century.
3. A steroid from yam was used as the starting point for the development of oral contraceptives in the 1960s.
4. Vincristine and Vinblastine, 2 very potent anti-cancer agents are plant-derived.
5. Twenty five percent (25%) of all prescription drugs are based on plants.
6. Of the approximately 250,000 plant species, only 5% have been examined for their medicinal properties.
7. Prof. Farnsworth of Iowa Univ. has examined 119 medicinal compounds from plants and has shown a 75% correlation between their current use and their original traditional use (so when you are going to Kumasi and you hear the man selling “concoctions” don’t wink)
8. There is a great increase in the number of companies (in UK and USA) going into commercial application of herbal products.
9. There is a GREAT INCREASE in the demand for herbal products especially because today’s generation has suspicions about the cancer-causing properties of synthetic chemicals.

Isn’t that great stuff. But hold your breath. The Centre for Research into Plant Medicine in Mampong has done quite a lot. It basically runs as an orthodox hospital with a Traditional dispensary. Through such creative work, the efficacy of several Ghanaian herbal remedies have been proven beyond doubt. And after using our people as guinea-pigs, I’m very

saddened by the fact that the Americans are in to steal the results. Sometime in 1991(?) a firm in the US invited a scientist from the Centre for an “all-expenses paid” trip to the US. What for? Your guess is as good as mine. And in 1992, a friend of mine was at Howard and was shocked to meet someone who has info on all Ghanaian plants which have been examined scientifically. The strange thing is that the chap had the results of unpublished research findings going on in Tech. Why am I aying then? Our failure to use what we have is going to cost us dearly. So fellow countrymen/women, let us rise and build. As I’ve said, I am (God-willing) going to start Okyeame Pharmaceuticals (sooner, rather than later). I therefore encourage all you out there to think of how best you can put your skills to the benefit of our country. However, a word of caution is, necessary: the beginning will be rough and tough and the very people you go out to “save” will do you in. But we must try. If we do not, who will?

9 RACISM

compiled and edited by *Stephen Agyepong*

9.00 Editorial Comments by *Stephen Agyepong*

On Friday, September 7, 1993, Ebow Halm of Cambridge Massachusetts, United States (US) posted the article, "Africans As Monkeys" on the Okyeame Network. Below, I reproduce the article in its entirety.

"A white lady at work just showed me an article she cut out from the paper. I'm so outraged that I am reproducing the first two paragraphs here even though you have probably read it. Maybe after I finish writing it I won't feel like donning a black hood and leading my version of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK).

AT&T APOLOGIZES FOR MONKEY DRAWING

Raleigh, North. Carolina. -- American Telephone & Telegraph (AT&T) Corp. apologized yesterday after workers and a civil rights group complained about a drawing in this month's employee magazine that uses a monkey to depict Africans.

The drawing, which appeared on a game's page, shows characters on several continents conversing by telephone. All the characters are human except the one in Africa, which is a monkey.

I guess some people's perception of us will never change."

This posting was followed by a call by Charles Appeadu asking Okyeame netters to share their experiences with racism. The response, to the call, was overwhelming. The discussion that followed even generated other topics for discussion. There was a general consensus that racism was a bad thing that should be stopped. However, as should be expected looking at the varied backgrounds of netters, suggestions to deal with the problem were varied. Below are postings that were deemed to reflect the tone and character of the discussion that followed beginning with Charles Appeadu's initial posting.

9.01 Racial Discrimination, by *Charles Appeadu, Seattle Washington, USA*

(Tuesday, September 21, 1993)

In the wake of the (AT&T) "thing," I am wondering whether it wouldn't be interesting to hear from as many netters as possible any incidence of discrimination they have experienced here in the U. S, in Europe, and elsewhere

I believe many of you were as surprised as I was when I first traveled outside Ghana and also when I came to North America, how all the other races view us as inferior! I mean I was shocked! When I was growing up in my village in Ghana, it never occurred to me that some where on this planet, some people consider people like me (that is of African ancestry) inferior in intelligence and that people like me are considered criminals etc. I never (and still don't, of course!) consider somebody more intelligent than me because he is Japanese or whatever. But all these stereotyping here!

I will tell you an interesting story. A student (a senior, of Chinese origin) in my Finance class came to my office one day for counseling. After helping her deal with some difficult situations, she said "can I tell you something?" "Of course, you can," I replied. This is what she said:

"When I came to New York city from China in 1975, I was told that Black people were inferior - that they cannot think well and that they were dumb. I believed this totally because they were virtually no blacks in my classes that is, until I had you as my Professor! I have been amazed at the way you taught. You made everything very clear. You understand it so much I got confused. Is this thing about Black people not true after all? I went home and told my husband, who is a Jew, that an African Professor has changed my mind about Black people entirely!" Of course I helped her disabuse her mind totally of this misconception -- we had an interesting discussion! It is needless to say that, my session is the most popular in the department, especially among the oriental students.

This is just one example. I am sure many of you have had similar experiences and probably more interesting ones. Can you share them with us? It is unfortunate what the system has done to our brothers here. Their confidences have been systematically reduced to zero! Once one African American woman exclaimed to me "we (African Americans) don't have the brains to do courses like Finance!". Can you believe that? I explained to her that "it is not that you do not have the brains. The reason there aren't many African American students in such programs, at least here at the University of Washington, might be because you do not have the preparation to do such courses -- it has nothing to do with intelligence." She said "we have been told that, we cannot do them and we have believed them!" What a sad story!

9.02 Racial Discrimination, by *Daniel Appiah. Ottawa, Canada*

(Wednesday, September 22, 1993)

Appadu's story about racial discrimination is not entirely new and shocking to me, but it raises a number of questions that have been bothering me for some time now.

The first question is: What are the origins of negative prejudices against people of black African ancestry? It has been argued recently that the stereotyping of black Africans has its roots in the slave trade. Books such as "Through the Dark Continent" and "In Darkest Africa" by the explorer Henry Morton Stanley, shaped opinion in Europe and North America and created images that have persisted to this day. See also New African Magazine, September 1993 edition.

Whether we agree with this argument or other arguments that have been used to explain this malicious prejudice, the fact remains that it is a reality and unless we are able to do something significant to reverse the perception, it will continue, perhaps, forever. Clearly, we cannot redo the past by denying that the slave trade did not take place. What we can do now is to create better and positive images about Africa. An Africa without wars, famine, disease, and misery.

This brings me to my second question: If we believe and know we are intelligent and can think why can't we apply our intelligence to solve our numerous problems?

This question does not imply that "intelligent" races do not have problems. Of course they do. But to the extent that virtually all African countries cannot solve the most fundamental problems of food, shelter, and clothing such prejudices will persist. What we are failing to realize is that intelligence and knowledge, if they are not used in creative ways to solve problems, remain myths.

So, for you and all of us, the burden is to try to apply the knowledge that we have painstakingly acquired over the years to solve our problems. This raises the issue of how and where we can effectively apply our knowledge and intelligence to solve our problems? The answer will be best left to the good judgment of netters. I expect some lively discussions.

9.03 Racial discrimination, by *Elijah Kombat, Bergen, Norway*

(Thursday, September 23, 1993)

When Cynthia wrote a piece about racial discrimination and stated that the sad thing about some Africans in Diaspora thinking they are superior to their brothers and sisters in Africa, some people wrote to agree with her assertion. But I think, the sadder fact is that the greater majority of Ghanaians, who have not had direct contact with the outside world like some of us the fortunate few, hold the same view, that all Americans and people from the Caribbean's are superior. A recall of this view brings to memory one of Osofo Dadzie's plays where OD portrays his "native Jamaica" with a smack of superiority to his Ghanaian girl with whom he is expecting a baby. Considering the popularity of the Osofo Dadzie series among Ghanaians against the backdrop of the Ghanaian's erroneous picture of "overseas" and the internalization of such negative portrayals, can they be blamed? Charity they say ought to begin at home. Until we as a people disabuse our minds through education (formal and informal, deliberate or otherwise) we will, sadly, for a very long time to come, always accept our status as second rate. Sad. Isn't it?

9.04 Racial Discrimination, by *Adams Bodomo, Trondheim, Norway*

(Thursday, September 1993)

Editorial Note: In response to a question raised about a Bangladeshi asking "where Ghanaians sleep back home?" Adams wrote the following.

If you or any other Africans get a second chance tell this young man or woman that you normally battle with floods all night long on tall trees and that it is his ambassador, who is experienced in such things back home in Bangladesh, who has helped you.

And if he doesn't understand this beautiful African literary device of indirection you can, if possible, sit him down and 'lecture' him.

As warriors of our image, as 'cultural warriors', we need to use almost all methods at our disposal.

9.05 Racial Discrimination, by *Alfred Opoiku, Ottawa, Canada*

(Friday, September 24, 1993.)

The issue of racial discrimination boils down to the perceptions that have been formed about us. Unfortunately, we Africans have not been able to create a counter argument, either intellectually or even in our ability to resolve our own crises. That is not to say that the ability to solve crisis alone gives a positive image of a people. However, let us remember that the few times Europeans and North Americans, and perhaps the rest of the non-African world, hear about us is when there are economic and political disasters on the continent. Don't blame the Bangladesh guy for asking that stupid question. In his country, he does not learn about Africa the way we do about Europe and America. His only source of information about us is the books he reads and the news he listens to.

The fundamental problem with us, as Daniel Appiah pointed out in his piece, is that we are yet to create the conditions to provide the most basic of necessities to our people. Anyone who cannot feed himself or herself and relies on others, definitely, cannot have much to say. This idea permeates all aspects of our relationships with the outside world. Therefore, when the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) decides to give us loans they even have to make sure that they also provide the plans and the experts to supervise. Why? The premise is that we are not capable! But are we? I do believe we are capable but we seem to lack the initiative to take charge. We are waiting for "the chance" to do something but let's be aware that no one would give us that chance; we have to fight for it!

I agree with Adams that we need to be ambassadors of our country and race and try to disabuse the minds of those narrow-minded people. I heard a story once about a guy who was in the United States (US) to study and he faced a similar situation. A white guy just walked up to him and asked if it is true we Africans lived on trees! His answer? "Yes, we live on trees but guess who lives on the biggest tree? The US ambassador to Ghana!" I think we need to be self confident about ourselves and not adopt a defeatist attitude when we meet these people. It is the same when we are with them in the same class; we need to prove to them that we are equal if not better than them. My own experience was when I attended an American school in Italy. On the first day we had to introduce ourselves and you could hear the name of every "big" school in the book - Harvard, Cambridge, Oxford, Duke, Stanford, etc. - but when it got to my turn I stood up and boldly recited "the University of Science and Technology." After the program, at least 6 people came up to me to ask if that school is in England; the reason being I said it like it belonged in the same class as all those others, and why not, after all we were taking the same courses!

Sometimes, instead of being offended at some of the remarks, we need to let them realize their stupidity and narrow mindedness. To be able to do that, we have to be informed about ourselves, and them!

9.06 Something Positive by *Isaac Thompson, Pittsburgh Pennsylvania, USA*

(Friday, September 24, 1993)

In a rare portrayal of Africans in a positive light, today's (9/23) issue of the San Francisco Chronicle has an article saying that Africans comprise the best educated immigrants to the US. today. According to a study done by the census bureau, nearly half of all African-born US. residents have bachelor's degrees. That compares to 20 percent of native-born Americans.

Juxtaposed against the AT&T monkey fiasco the article shatters myths and prejudices heaped upon us over the years. Looked at from another perspective though, this could unfortunately be indicative of a scary trend where the best educated are leaving the continent in droves. The last person turn off the lights.

9.07 Racial discrimination by *Alex Aboagye, Trondheim Norway*

(Friday September 24, 1993)

In my humble opinion, whether Daniel Appiah's question "If we believe and know we are intelligent and can think why can't we apply our intelligence to solve our numerous problems?" is right or wrong, there is no denying that the world now equates intelligence to social prosperity and progress. The world respects people who are prosperous because we tend to think such people are intelligent. The western world didn't have much respect for Japan after the second world war. But now because of its prosperity, it admire even Japanese practices which it labeled "primitive" in Africa.

Prosperity is, for now, judged by the country's income, availability of certain basic infrastructure such as health services, educational facilities, communication systems, and other such economic indicators.

We can probably argue as to whether the world's yardstick for measuring prosperity is correct/fair in all circumstances. For the western world's form of prosperity does not necessarily mean they are happier than Africans but that is perhaps beside the point.

Be that as it may, and with no intention of trivializing the complexities of our problems as a race, the fact that we havenot been able to solve the fundamental issue of food sufficiency, the basic preoccupation of all societies since humans appeared on the surface of this earth, doesn't, to say the least, augur well for our image. And if a person (be he black or white) watches the news and sees many children dying from starvation and all the leaders can think about is securing political power through the barrel of a gun, then whether justifiably or not, he or she begins to wonder about the intelligence of the people in question.

We need not adopt western culture nor definition of prosperity to consider ourselves prosperous or progressive. But if we are to be credited with any intelligence then we must stop going round begging for food from the western world

when most of our lands are fertile and we have agricultural universities. We must back our verbal assertions of equal intelligence with actions, achievements, problem solving, bettering our lot as a race. You may not like this piece but I think that at the same time as we try to correct the prejudices we must also look inside and correct some of the faults in our system.

So until our leaders start putting their acts together, until we start throwing our energies, resources, intelligence and knowledge into solving our basic problems, until we stop going from the door of one country to another begging for food and start long term plans to solve the problems of food shortages in Africa, until we find amicable ways of solving our conflicts as a race, until we start rearranging our priority list, until that day our intelligence as a race will continue to remain, as Daniel Appiah puts it, a myth.

9.08 It's racism!!! Or is it?, by Isaac Thompson, Pittsburgh Pennsylvania USA

(Friday, September 1993)

The following men of old have in various forms addressed the issue of prejudice against Africans as well as the "burden" of being black. In the face of the AT&T fiasco and the reactions of some netters, I have seen fit the following with netters.

Sometimes you say a lot by saying little. I think these men do so and do it well, so well that, I have chosen not to add my voice to the debate yet.

MARCUS GARVEY:

Prejudice by the white race against the black race is not so much because of color as of condition; because as a race, to them, we have accomplished nothing. . . we are dependent for our economic and political existence.

The powers opposed to Negro progress will not be influenced in the slightest by mere verbal protests on our part. They realize only too well that protests of this kind contain nothing but the breath expended in making them.

You can never curb the prejudice of one race or nation against the other by law. Prejudice is actuated by different reasons. Sometimes the reason is economic, and sometimes political. You can only obstruct it by progress and force.

Malcolm X:

Having complete control over Africa, the colonial powers of Europe projected the image of Africa negatively, jungle, savages, cannibals, nothing civilized. [N]aturally it was so negative that it was negative to you and me, and you and I began to hate it. We didn't want anybody telling us anything about Africas much less calling us Africans. In hating Africa and hating the Africans, we ended up hating ourselves, without even realizing it. Because you can't hate the roots of a tree and not hate the tree. You can't hate your origin and not end up hating yourself. You can't hate Africa and not hate yourself. . . . You can't have a positive attitude toward yourself and a negative attitude toward Africa at the same time. To the same degree that your understanding of and attitude toward Africa become positive, you'll find that your understanding of and your attitude toward yourself will also become positive. . . . You know yourself that we have been a people who hated our African characteristics. We hated our heads, we hated the shape of our nose, we wanted one of those long dog-like noses, you know; we hated the color of our skin, hated the blood of Africa that was in our veins. And in hating our features and our skin and our blood, why, we had to end up hating ourselves. . . . Our color became to us a chain--we felt that it was holding us back; our color became to us like a prison which we felt was keeping us confined, not letting us go this way or that way. We felt that all of these restrictions were based solely upon our color, and the psychological reaction to that would have to be that as long as we felt imprisoned or chained or trapped by black skin, black features and black blood, that skin and those features and that blood holding us back automatically had to become hateful to us. And it became hateful to us.

Marcus Garvey:

So many of us find excuses to get out of the Race because we are led to believe that the race is unworthy--that it has not accomplished anything. Cowards that we are! It is we who are unworthy, because we are not contributing to the uplift and up building of this noble race.

Kweggir Aggrey, Ghanaian nationalist:

I am proud of my color; whoever is not proud of his color is not fit to live. . . . If I went to heaven and God said, "Aggrey, I am going to send you back, would you like to go as a white man?" I should reply, "No, send me back as a black man, yes completely black. Because I have work to do as a black man that no white man can do. Please send me back as black as you can make me."

NOTES: Garvey's quotes appear in the "Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey," the book which Nkrumah, in his autobiography, said "did more to fire [his] imagination than any other book."

Aggrey's quote appears in the book, Pan-Africanism, by the Nigerian author, Esedebe.

Malcom's was from his last major speech (shortly after he was bombed out of his home). Could be found in the audio section of any good library.

9.09 Racism, by *Kofi Gyampo Lee, New Hampshire USA*

Friday, September 24, 1993.

In dealing with racism, one issue we have to be cognizant of is our combative attitude towards racism. It is paradoxical and ironical but a harsh reaction towards a bigoted statement or action is just as bad as the causative statement or action.

I state this for 3 reasons. First of all, a harsh reaction makes you just as insensitive as the person who initiated that reaction. Secondly, by so reacting, you will be confirming that persons worst suspicions about you or where you come from. It is important to remember that two wrongs just don't make a right.

Last but not the least, we as human beings simply do not have the power to change anybody except ourselves. It is therefore unproductive to point fingers at other people and rub their faces in their indiscretions. Over time, they just get sick of you without getting your message.

A most eloquent means of making our case is by making our character and conduct speak for themselves. We will achieve more (in terms of stamping out racism) by the way we conduct ourselves - with dignity, intelligence and sensitivity. We have to be good ambassadors of our country and people. Through interaction, other people will learn not only to respect you as an individual but where you picked up your manners from as well!

A wry observation on this whole issue though is that stripped down to its elements; intolerance, racism, tribalism, favoritism and all the other isms you can think of reflects a generic and base instinct in us as human beings. The problem might therefore not be how bad the white man is but how bad human beings are. Has anybody given thought to the fact that if the history of Negro and Caucasian races had unfolded differently, the black man will most probably have committed just as many atrocities against the white man?. Please share your conclusions.

Even within the fraternity of black people we find so many reasons and excuses to differentiate ourselves from other black people and discriminate against them in all kinds of ways. Permit me to drop yet another cliché; but wouldn't it be best if we remove the log in our own eyes before going after the speck's in other peoples eyes..

9.10 Light on Africa by *Charles Appeadu, Seattle Washington, USA*

(Friday, September 24, 1993)

Our discussions on racial discrimination have been very interesting so far. I believe that there are many ways to reduce racism and its effects to insignificant levels but the most obvious way, to me, is for the victim to perform to the amazement of the racist! Performance here has nothing to do with what you do or claim to do in the classroom; it has nothing to do with your titles; it has everything to do with what you produce and the standard of living of your people. It has everything to do with the improvement-in-conditions you communicate to the world. It has to do ultimately with who you are as a people. Now, sincerely, suppose you put yourself in someone else's place and you ask the question "who is the African?" What conclusions will you come to? Take this someone else to be a person from Europe, Bangladesh, Canada etc. This person might not know you as an individual -- he gets to form his image of the African from what he hears on the news etc. about Africa.

Now, sincerely, when you think about Mobutu Sese Seku of Zaire as an African leader, what comes to your mind? When you think of the fact that he has plundered his rich diamond country and helped outsiders to do likewise and when you think of the fact that your leaders have by and large been dictators who have forced their leadership on you; who probably had no idea how the world economies are run before forcing their leadership on you; who would not tolerate any diverse opinions; whohow do you feel about this. Friends, it is not enough to tell your friends that you, as an individual, is intelligent. People don't form their opinions about your people from what they see in you as a person even though occasionally you might be able to tilt the tables a bit. They see your leaders and the well-being of the general population. Until we do something about Africa, we will continue to cry in vain for the rest of the world to respect us. In vain because the world does not develop respect for you from your cries but from your products!!!

I do not want to sound as though I do not see anything wrong with racism. I raised the topic for the current discussions. I am deeply hurt by racism, but there are also many times that I am not proud to have many of our leaders as MY LEADERS. I think that we should have something to show the rest of the world. Sometimes, I have the feeling that either our leaders do not really desire to improve our situation or they do not know how.

Africa needs a light from us! Wake up Ghanaians!!

9.11 Racial Discrimination, Part I, by *Benjamin Baidoe-Ansah, Waterloo Canada*

(Saturday, September 25, 1993)

I have been following discussions on the above subject with great interest. The point which has been made by some, and which I want to reiterate is the fact that most of the solution to ending the low esteem in which Africans are held lies within ourselves. No one, absolutely no one, can force another person to respect them. If we are going to be respected by others, it will stem from WE conducting ourselves in a manner worthy of respect!

I do not want to hold brief for any racist, however my close interaction with whites in Canada and other places indicate that there is very little positive information about Africa in the Western world. The way WE act and conduct ourselves therefore goes a long way to confirm or refute these negative images from Africa.

For others to accept and respect us for who we are, we must, OURSELVES, accept and respect who we are. The sad fact is that MOST of us do not accept ourselves for who we are, we are ashamed of our customs and culture, we fail to portray our cultural identity, but will rather attempt (with grotesque results) to adopt someone else's culture. I believe this lack of a real self identity underlies the low esteem in which Africans are held. The fact is that adopting someone's culture (identity) makes you an underdog. We deny who we are, and attempt to become what we are not. In the process, we undermine our psyche, our self-confidence, our sense of self-worth, and lose confidence in our abilities and capabilities.

How many of us still carry the burden, at least for me, of a foreign name? How many of us teach our children English but fail to teach them our local language? I have been in Canada for 6 years, and I have not found one Ghanaian family that speaks a Ghanaian language at home!! What a shame!! How do we expect to earn respect with such spineless behavior? I have come across children born here of Ghanaian parents who believe there is no water in Africa! They

also believe that without food aid all Africans will die of hunger! If children living with Ghanaian parents can hold such beliefs, why should we blame a white child whose parent's education on Africa is probably from the media!

A friend who got married traditionally in Ghana had a church wedding in Canada. A Canadian friend who was invited to the wedding was quite perplexed when she ask me that she thought the two people were already married. I said yes, they were. I anticipated her next question and hoped she wouldn't ask it, but she did. She said, "if they are married, then why are they marrying again?" Since then, I have had discussions with friends who have told me that our traditional marriage ceremony is now called "engagement" in Ghana. The wedding is therefore the actual marriage by Ghanaian standard, or should I say "educated" Ghanaian standard!! Such nonsense! It is these absurdities that perpetuate the low esteem in which we are held!

We gave my three daughters Ghanaian names, and we have not had a peace of mind since. A lot of Ghanaians have warned us of being misguided, and creating problems for the children in future by not giving them European names! We also speak Fante with them. Again we have come under heavy flak. What is wrong with Africans? Why do we capitulate so easily? Is it because we do not believe in ourselves to start with?

The way we conduct ourselves gives signals to others about the way we feel about ourselves. It becomes an input which they use to form an opinion about us. Our church tried to help us when the children were born, but we quietly but firmly told them that we were okay. They were not satisfied with our answer, and probably taken aback with the answer since in their minds Africans always need help! They therefore sent emissaries on two separate occasions to our home to find out what help we needed. We repeated our earlier answer. We could have done with some help then, but we were not desperate so we chose the path of dignity.

How are we helping each other? We spend a lot of time trying to pull each other down. I understand Africans are considered a "strange" species by Immigration officials in Canada because we have the unusual behavior of turning over other Africans (I will send you home syndrome!!). One often comes across other races organizing relief aid for Africa, how many of us or other Africans have taken part in these projects. How many of us have decided to forgo a meal, or a beer so that a child somewhere in Africa will have a new school uniform or be vaccinated? I am not even talking about the hurriedly buried issue of linking Ghana to internet which was discussed briefly on this network! How many of us will go back home to help in nation-building? How many of us will drop our demeaning jobs abroad and go home to take up jobs that befit our qualifications?

It is time we stop the finger pointing and put our act together. I think respect is something one earns. Unlike human rights, it is not inalienable, we must work for it. Though other races may not like us, we can still earn their respect, just as individuals can sometimes respect and even admire their enemies!

Let's make our words and deeds, individually, and collectively, dignify Africa.

9.12 Racial Discrimination by *Benjamin Baidoe-Ansah, Waterloo, Canada*

(Saturday, September 25, 1993)

I watched Nelson Mandela address the UN today calling for the lifting of sanctions, etc. As I watched him speak, I remembered a confrontation I had at a public forum with a white professor who supported apartheid. He argued that South Africa will go the way of the rest of Africa if power is transferred to blacks. He went further to argue that though Mandela has been in jail for over two decades, his physical and mental health is better than most political prisoners in other African countries who have been incarcerated for a fraction of the time!! As I watched him today, I could not help but agree, sadly, with the latter argument.

I have also been comparing the way apartheid is being dismantled with the way governments. change in Africa. The government in power has been consulting the blacks since Mandela's release, even in the absence of formal structures. The constitution is not being imposed. Neither are the rules for the transition being rammed down anyone's throat.

Why can't we be civil in the way we do things? Why did Samuel Does's ears have to be cut, with the tape rolling too!. When East Germany's leader, Honecker, was put on trial for ordering the shooting of anti-government marchers, he

was set free because they said he was sick and did not have long to live!! How many such examples can we cite in Africa?

We are capable of such respect-worthy behavior, but until we start behaving in a respectable way, we will continue to be called savages, and whatever bad names there are!!

9.13 Racism?, by *Alexander Nii Oto Dodoo, London, United Kingdom*

(Monday, September 27, 1993)

Appeadu's article, (see section 9.10) makes very interesting reading. He hit the nail right on the head. The views of the outside world on Africans will not be changed JUST by the achievements of individual Africans. I will give you an example. Here at King's College London we have students from all over the world. We have an M.Sc course in Pharmaceutical Sciences lasting one or two years depending on how the college regards the first degree of the student. Students from the Pharmacy Faculty UST Kumasi are allowed to do the course over one year though those from other countries in Africa may have to do it for 2 years. Why? Their experience with UST students have shown them that we can perform. Infact this year 3 out of the 4 Ghanaian students who took the course had distinctions. Two years ago all the Ghanaians taking the course had distinctions. And now we have a Ghanaian on the staff. So yes they respect us from that point of view but in private discussions etc. etc. one can clearly see that their view of Africa as a whole, including Ghana, is still one of poverty, misery etc.

We as Africans need to change that view and as Appeadu rightly said, this view will change when they see us solving our problems in more responsible ways - when they see us feeding our people, providing jobs for some of our people, providing shelter etc. Not till they see that in us they will always regard us in very poor light. And would you blame them? After all why do our old folks "praise the white person" Isn't it because they PERCEIVE him as one who is able to provide for his people and for others, one who is associated with wealth etc. etc.

The other time the leader of a group to which I am associated said they were in need of an item and that I should inform the people at my church and that they might help. The item cost 100 pounds. What did I do? I told him I would provide it from my allowance. He was shocked. I did provide it. The lesson I was trying to get across was that we can solve our own problems if we are willing to die a little for the causes in which we believe.

So now the rhetoric must be ending and the action beginning. Look at modern day Ghana - the opportunities for growth are everywhere but just because of a government which fails to listen to anybody those opportunities are being wasted. Meanwhile unemployment is just unacceptably too high. When shall we learn to put national interests ahead of personal desires? When shall we be able to feed our people? Not till these are done the white man will still consider us as inferior and I for one will NEVER blame him.

9.14 "Better" than Africans? by *Derryck Lamptey, Sheffield, United Kingdom*

(Monday, September 27, 1993)

I spent 4 years (post Ordinary level) in Trinidad (where my mum comes from) and I experienced two attitudes.

Some were taken with the "...man from the motherland stuff.." etc., and expected me to have a very developed consciousness on African issues (Which I have to admit I did not at the time). These guys would usually tease you about "...grass skirts and hunting for wild pigs, and stuff...", but it was definitely in passing humor (which you NEED to have to live happily in Trinidad)

Unfortunately, some other poor bastards had obviously watched too much television and actually believed the stuff! So some would come up to me and show me a walkman, and say "do you know what this is...", and stuff like "...where did you learn to speak English?" And I can tell you now (as I did then): I was not particularly clever in the Ghanaian scale of things (maybe I am, but I was in the "ghetto", at "Motown", Achimota at one point), but I was *definitely* layers of intelligence above the average classmate out there. The quality of English (as that is the common communication

language) that an African will display (colloquially, and comprehension-wise) is higher than it is out there.. But I think such perceptions are changing rapidly. There are quite a lot of African professionals living in the West Indies now, for various reasons

I did not even mention that there are cities in Africa bigger than the whole islands of Trinidad & Tobago!

Actually, I heard from a West Indian guy, that Africans perceive West Indian blacks as “slaves”. I was taken aback, since I had never heard this before.. I think that (for most of us) it is really a toss of the medieval dice as to whether our forefathers got shipped out or not!

9.15 Racism: A Summary of Solutions by *Adams Bodo*, Trondheim, Norway

(Tuesday, September 28, 1993)

In this short posting, I shall volunteer and attempt to summarize the plethora of solutions that have been suggested by various contributors. As the net grows more and more webby we have many more contributions on each particular topic than before. And this is one topic that has received great attention. I can count not less than 15 people including Charles Appeadu, the originator, Ebow Halm, Sitsofe Anku, Elijah, Sampson Dankyi, Wadada, Richard Appartaim, Isaac Thompson, Alex Aboagye, Michael Aveh, Ben Ansah, Daniel Appiah, Alfred Opoku, and many more including me. As a summary, it would be impossible to say exactly what was said in the presentation of each solution. At the risk of slighting therefore, I would summarize the various solutions as follows:

1. That even while in Europe, we should try and excel in whatever we are doing, for instance, as students, professors etc. This would disabuse people of such negative ideas about Africa and Africans.
2. That we should sit down and ‘lecture’ i.e. educate them, as it may be a fact that some of these people do not really have contact with Africans and their only source of information would be TV and other forms of sensational journalism.
3. That we should ‘blast’ them, clash headlong with them. This is probably the confrontationalist approach. It would seem to me that this is usually the result of the failure of other means for resolving the racism problem. Or it could be a consequence of the search for a most effective method.
4. That we should put our house in order first. That, in a way, it is our fault that people are racist towards us. If only we could grow our economy - with the help of our agricultural universities produce enough food from our fertile lands, increase our industrial base -, stop having coups and unstable governments, etc. we could solve the problem of racism, of people looking down on us.
5. That there is already something positive and we could try to consolidate on that, in other words, we are on the right path: more and more Africans are getting university education, etc. We could therefore try to build on this positive development.
6. That we should be proud of our own values, heritage and uphold them. We should show them that we have got a ‘deep humanity’ that can be comparable to that of any race, if not more. This is, in short, the ‘cultural warrior’ approach.
7. That racism being a product of the mind, the most natural place to begin is the mind. That however wealthy you are in Europe here people will still not consider you as any more worthier than a white drunk, a deviant, if we do nothing about this perceptual problem. We could therefore exorcise ourselves. The feeling that we are inferior must be fought, for this is what they have tried to do to us. We should refuse to bend but change the wrong attitudes implanted in our minds - and in their minds - We have to deconstruct this mind and find a new way of thinking, to reconstruct this very mind. After all it is mostly a mental war, this racism, this Hurricane Europa.

There are certainly many more and I would only be too glad if someone adds to these. One thing, though, is that most of these are related or even overlap. Another important thing is that we, probably all agree that no one of these is sufficient by itself. We need to INTEGRATE these approaches. And we certainly need a strong conjugation of efforts. Even if it sometimes happen that, because we come from different professional trainings onto this net, we think some methods are more relevant, I am quite sure we are all aware that these have to integrate for us to succeed. Integrational approaches are central to most fields.

Another thing I will like to suggest and probably emphasize is that we should try and make alliances with, and seek help from, the good and God-fearing people on this part of the continent, as we battle in this wind whirl, in this

hurricane. Surely, there are good people who have helped and who are helping to fight racism. I think we should not forget of them in our search for solutions.

With this multiplicity of ideas, methods and solutions, I am quite sure we will succeed. We can pull our acts and axes in unison. And also maybe, just maybe, we are sensitizing somebody somewhere without knowing it.

Please, let us throw away petty squabbles and move ahead. This is a topic that certainly should - and does - unite all of us.

9.16 On Racial Discrimination by *Kwame Owusu Danquah, Copenhagen, Denmark*

(Thursday, September 30, 1993.)

I just completed reading the note on the (mis)use of the word 'black'. I got confused somehow because I couldn't find out why you would like us to be called 'blacks' when we do not have that color. My children are aware that there are neither white nor black human beings on our planet. Their father is dark brown, their mother is pink (or whatever color it is) and they themselves are light brown. I think we should rather stop using that negative word to describe our color.

In Denmark (I am sure it is the same in Norway), Turkish, Pakistanis, Lebanese, Arabs, Africans etc. are all referred to as blacks. It has nothing to do with their colors. No matter how much we try to 'polish' the word, black will always be used to symbolize evil while white is for purity. Let us stop calling ourselves blacks for we are brown! We are Africans or people of African descent and NOT blacks.

Lots of love from this small country where people seldom smile!

9.17 On Racial Discrimination by *Alfred Opopu, Ottawa, Canada*

(Thursday, September 30, 1993)

I want to say that until today I did not know that "black" is a "negative word" as suggested by Kwame Danquah. In fact, I am more confused by Kwame's reaction to Adams' piece. It is one thing to say that our color cannot be labeled as black, it is another to describe the word as negative. It is true that the word has several negative connotations in the racist language and environment but that does not make the word itself negative. The division of the human race into the black and white color bars is based on the absolute difference in our appearance. In the English language such extreme differences are symbolized by the use of the figurative colors "black and white". I cannot say why exactly the word obtained such negative connotations but I can say that our social and economic circumstances, certainly, have not helped our cause. It is clear that most Africans have assimilated the idea that we are black, and there is nothing wrong with it. It is up to us now to give the black color more positive images to counteract such negativity. It is a challenge to us as a people. If, in fact, the word has obtained its negative connotations because of the low esteem in which we are held, then it follows that any color we choose to call ourselves, brown, chocolate, ebony, etc., would also be maligned with negativity. Do we change our name from "Africans" to something else just because the mere mention of the word elicits negative images? I guess not! To paraphrase Malcolm X,

Before there was anything like America, we were black,
Before there was anything like racism etc., we were black!

You can continue with your own ideas. We are black, and we should be proud!

9.18 Black and Proud?, by *Charles Awasu, Syracuse New York, USA*

(Thursday, September 30, 1993)

Alfred Opopu in one of his postings argued that the word black has no negative connotation and that the negative connotation actually emerges from the low self esteem Africans have exhibited over the period. (that's a tautology).

I disagree with such a line of reasoning. It seems Alfred is trying to live by the parameters drawn by the Europeans. I disagree that Africans have to accept being called black. By accepting to be called black, the Africans lose the position of calling themselves by their own name. Nobody has the right, including Europeans, in labeling anybody. If our forefathers accepted the derisive reference, that does not mean we should accept it.

It seems Alfred and those who think they are black do not understand the whole basis of racism. There are no humans on earth who are either black nor white. It is a lie sold by the Europeans and accepting it is like swallowing a boiled egg.

Labeling, which is an offshoot from racist thinking, which originated from eurocentric "superior" thinking should be counteracted. If Alfred thinks he is black, he could go ahead and accept that label. I for one do not think of myself as black. While at it can Alfred tell us why it is necessary for him to add "proud" to the derisive word. (That seems to me like negative capability".

9.19 Color and Racial Discrimination by Adams Bodo, Trondheim, Norway

(Thursday, September 30, 1993)

I share a lot of Kwame Danquah's (see section 9.18) exasperations about the NEGATIVE USES of the word 'black' on Africans and people of African descent. It is unthinkable how this categorization came into being. If you remember, I asked the question in the posting you referred to if we can really, really categorize humans into black and white? It must certainly be an attempt to stigmatize us as something negatively different.

I suggest, however, that the color 'black' is, intrinsically, not as negative as you think it is: ('I think we should rather stop using that negative word to describe our color'). It seems to me that it just depends on its usage contextuality.

You see, one sad thing about racism, tribalism etc. is that their practitioners simply look out for any differences, whether realistic or imaginary, between they themselves and their target group. They then attach a value to these differences. Never mind if you are their superior, boss or even richer than them. They will think that you are intrinsically inferior to them. For most racists, wealth and worth, for instance, don't go together.

It is such tendencies to attach negative interpretations to perceived (physical) differences that should let us simply tell them that we are not ashamed of our color, culture, etc., hence the declaration: 'I am black and proud'. One can, among other means, simply disarm them when you counteract their negative interpretations, their devaluations of the word, by giving the very features they so negatively perceive very positive interpretations. I am sure that we will tell them that 'we are brown and proud' as soon as they begin to attach negative values to that color, which, as you said, may be our right color.

As you rightly pointed out, its true that we are Africans and not just 'blacks' I sometimes find it funny when people categorize some Americans as: Hispanic Americans, Jewish Americans, Russian Americans, Black Americans.... Maybe our friends in America could tell us more but I would have thought that a more logical categorization would be:

1. Americans according to place of origin/race: Hispanic Americans, Jewish Americans, Russian Americans, African Americans...
2. Americans according to 'color': White Americans, Yellow Americans, Black Americans.....

Where from the illogical categorization: Jewish Americans, Black Americans...? Why should people who claim to be so rational, so civilized, so sophisticated, make such a simple, illogical 'mistake' ? The name of the 'mistake' is racism! And you know racism is not always logical.

That is what we have to fight with all the conventional means at our disposal.

9.20 The Economics of Racism, by *Mahamudu Bawumia, Vancouver, Canada*

(Thursday, September 30, 1993)

Judging from the very useful contributions on the topic of racism it is obvious that any attempt to assign a one factor cause to a phenomenon as complex as racism is an exercise in futility. Nevertheless, I will contend, as others have, that the links between economic development and racism are stronger than some would have us believe. Adams has as usual provided a good summary of the various positions on this issue (Thank you). Whilst I agree that mental deconstruction is part of the solution, I am intrigued about how the minds were constructed in the first place. In the initial encounter between people of different races, what are the mental gymnastics responsible for one race having a feeling of superiority? We probably don't have to go outside Ghana in search for an answer to this question.

In my humble opinion, most of the analysis of this issue has been flawed in one respect: The issue has largely been cast in terms of Black versus White. This dichotomy has given us a sense of "unity" i.e. us versus them. This "unity" is however more apparent than real. Racism (I am using this term rather loosely) can be as vicious between people of the same "color" as it can be between people of different "color".

Why were we so indignant at the "stupid" Bangladeshi's statement to the effect that we lived on trees? I dare say (and I am no mind reader) that at the back of our minds was the thought that given the state of their economic development s/he had no "right" to make such an insinuation about us.

Adams was right in pointing out that no matter how rich a person of African descent becomes in this hemisphere, s/he would not be respected in society. Why?

Just as Kwame Nkrumah noted that the independence of Ghana is meaningless unless linked to the total emancipation of the African continent, so are the riches of people of African descent in the western hemisphere meaningless (where racism against people of African descent is concerned) unless linked to the economic emancipation of the African continent.

In the context of racism, I will contend that people are perceived against the backdrop of the economic development of their "nations" of origin. I do not intend to downplay the role of ignorance but such ignorance tends to feed on the issue of economic underdevelopment.

9.21 Black & Proud? by *Charles Awasu, Syracuse New York, USA*

(Friday, October 1, 1993)

I am still on the posting by Alfred Opoku (section 9.17) which sought to play word games with netters on the word "black". I'm not inclined to believe that Alfred based his reasoning on dictionary meaning(s) of the word. Maybe as Africans from the continent, such a simplistic understanding of the word has value, but for those who are more acquainted with racial discrimination based on the skin color, that's a different matter.

Maybe we need to find out why a portion of the human race; that is people of African descent and Europeans are defined by binary opposites: white versus black. Why is the skin color description applicable to only those two when most of the world (including the billion Chinese, Indians etc.) do not fall under that application. Why is the racial definition based on pigmentation only applied to those two races? What was the hidden agenda? Why was it necessary to prove that Caucasians are more intelligent than Negroid? Why is the racial tension so high between those two?

Not forgetting that we in Ghana have been colonized and that the colonial state is still alive: language, institutions, and foreign capital domination) And that despite all our so-called independence we still do not have sovereignty?

If some don't know, this is why it is. The Europeans ever since they developed the MAP, developed a "superior" attitude and have ever since tried to dominate the world. That domination has surfaced through THEIR ABILITY TO

CONTROL KNOWLEDGE AND MEANING, NOT ONLY THROUGH WRITING, BUT ALSO THROUGH DISCIPLINARY AND PROFESSIONAL INSTITUTIONS, AND IN SOCIAL RELATIONS. Anyone who understands that will have gained the key to understanding power relations in world society.

What we as Africans, Ghanaians etc. have to do is to search to understand the construction of social meanings through critical and strategic thinking. The uncritical acceptance of subjugated knowledge through the use of dominant meanings created by dominant reality is dangerous. I therefore find it unacceptable that after the long discourse on racism some people still want us to be in bondage under racist labels, epithets, slurs etc.

9.22 Black and Proud, by *Samuel Aggrey, Vancouver, Canada*

(Friday, October 1, 1993)

I have read some few articles about this subject on this net and I want to throw in some few comments. Being “black”, “white” or “yellow” are names put in literature by the elite (British) of the then world. Caucasians referred to as whites, Orientals (Asians) referred to as yellow and Africans, blacks. Definitions given to these 3 categories reflect the nature of the “dominant elite”. I wonder what definitions would have been given to these 3 categories if Africans were the dominant elite. Most Akans refer to people from Northern Ghana as “Ntafuo” and people from Volta Region as “Number 9”. These 2 terms are equally perceived as negative. “The world is changing rapidly and I hope that when we become part of the elite we would be sensitive to definitions given to certain words”. General Colin Powell is “black” by whiteman’s definition. He once held the topmost position in the US army, held the key to the destruction of the entire world. Most people saw and still see him as a noble man. One question we may all want to ponder about is: why the classical definition of “black” tends to fade away on the minds of “whites” when it comes to certain distinguished “black” people ? Arise and Shine !!!

9.23 Black and Proud? by *Charles Awasu, Syracuse New York, USA*

Friday, October 1, 1993

Alfred Opopku seeks answers to the following three questions:

1. What were we called before the advent of this so-called forced acceptance of the label black?
2. Where did the name Africa originate?
3. For those who understand akan, what is the meaning of the word “abibiman”? Does it not have any links with our color? Did it start with the labeling of Africans as black?

My answers to Alfred and others who are interested are as follows.

1. Africans were made up of different states before the partitioning. We in Africa therefore belonged to different states i.e. Ghana Empire, Egypt etc.
2. The name Africa according to some sources was given by those who divided the continent up. Portions of present day north of the Sahara were referred to as Africa. (There is very scanty info. on this).
3. The two word abibini or abibiman was coined out from the European word black. This was an eurocentric intrusion on our languages. we all know, they wrote portions of our alphabets. (Since Ghanaians do not refer to their fellow Ghanaians as obibini or abbibiwoman, it shows that the intrusive word was added at the same time as the continentalization of the land mass--now known as Africa.

The word Africa is therefore an African word, it was only expanded by the Europeans. I therefore see nothing wrong with it. Though I question their motive in continentalizing the land mass. Since Ghanaians do not refer to their fellow citizens as “black” abibini or abibiwoman--one need not be an academic to tell it is foreign intrusion.

I’m a human being, a Ghanaian (that’s what’s in my passport) an African, and I answer to the name Kojo Charles Awasu. These I believe are enough descriptors for any sane person to identify me with. Anything beyond that eases into “hidden agenda” and I’ll oppose it. I don’t need skin color differentiation to be proud.

9.24 Semantics of 'black' and 'white', by *Adams Bodomo, Trondheim, Norway*

(Saturday, October 2, 1993)

Here is a list involving lexical collocations between both black and white. Maybe this will help us in our debate.

A. BLACK

1. Negative uses:

black mail - to incriminate someone

black mark - a mark of discredit

Black death - A epidemic that devastated the populations of Europe in the mid 14th century. It originated from Central Asia!

Kwame Danquah and Isaac Thompson have also given some others

2. Positive (or, at least, non-negative) uses

Blacksmith - a kind of artisan (highly respected in some societies)

blackboard - a useful pedagogical tool (remember that there have been cases in which we have green blackboards!!! - interesting?)

Blackbox - flight recorder of an aircraft that can contain very useful info.

black bread - a coarse bread that some people like very much.

black coffee - coffee without milk (a very useful stimulate esp. in cold climates like in Scandinavia)

B. WHITE

1. Negative uses

White elephant - a useless possession

White feather - a symbol of cowardice

White slave - a woman tricked or forced into prostitution

'Le mariage blanc' French for 'white marriage' - a fruitless marriage

2. Positive (or, at least, non-negative) uses

White-headed boy - a highly favored person

White hope - a person expected to achieve much

White lie - a harmless or trivial untruth

White wash - to exonerate

White coffee - coffee with milk

What does this list tell us? That both words can be associated with negative and positive mental images in English (and even across the worlds languages). The words are themselves not necessarily negative!

I will like to draw attention to a point I tried to make sometime ago (I think in connection with the definition of literacy on this net) that we must always try to distinguish between denotational and connotational meanings (I think somebody even mentioned this recently) in matters of lexical semantics. Dictionary meanings - mostly denotational - do not always give us the full picture but in this case there is not much to suggest that the semantics of the word 'black' is inherently negative while that of 'white' is inherently positive. In this case, the connotations, the usage contextualities,

as exemplified by the above collocations show us that both words are open for both negative and positive interpretations.

I hope the list will help us to further our debate at the end of which we all hope to be more knowledgeable.

9.25 Modin Sane, by Alexander Nii Oto Dodoo, Sheffield, United Kingdom

(Monday, October 4, 1993.)

I have been following the discussions on racism with keen interest. I however have a problem. Some netters are saying that we should refrain from calling ourselves black. Good. But among the Gas a person of African descent is called “modin” where “mo” = person and “din” = black. Why is it so? Were the Gas corrupted by the “blofotsemei”? If so can someone tell me how Gas used to refer to other Africans before the pink man arrived. Or were we color blind at the time preferring to call people by their geographical origins. Maybe so maybe not. But please help because I don’t want to use the word modin again and I can’t say “mobrown”

9.26 Black Star Rising, by Isaac Thompson, Pittsburgh Pennsylvania, USA

(Monday, October 4, 1993)

“I am black, but beautiful...Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me...”

Songs of Solomon, 1: 5-6

I have watched in silent anguish as people ashamed of their Blackness attack Alfred Opopo for daring to defend his Blackness. I say “ashamed” because if Africa today were involved in such “great” things as putting satellites in orbit, putting men on the moon, doing pioneering work in science and technology, and of course having an enviable standard of living, Blackness would NEVER be an issue. In fact, then the whitest person might even claim to be Black, because to be Black would be to be “great.”

Alas, we are not “great”--YET--but rather than stand and fight, rather than help improve our lot while remaining what we are, some among us have resorted to “logoligi” logic to deny their Blackness without stating how that denial would improve our common, wretched conditions. It’s a crying shame!

The Biblical quotation with which I opened this posting shows that the debate over Blackness--the contempt heaped upon it and the need for one to defend his Blackness--has been an unfortunate feature of the human condition for eons. As we thrash it out here in our own little world, it might be appropriate to explore the origins of this “mess”, if only briefly. As usual, my view carries a Garveyist spin.

Long before Europeans made sustained contact with Africans, Black (or anything dark), especially in matters of romance/beauty, was considered less desirable. To be beautiful meant to be “fair of complexion,” and poems were written to women extolling such “virtues.” In his Iliad, for example, Homer constantly refers to the beautiful Helen of Troy as “the fair skinned one.” Similar references to beautiful women can be found in later European works such as Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales. Such color bias, however, was practiced among the Europeans themselves and had no overt racial overtones. In fact the ancient Greeks, in their initial contact with Africa--a word from the old Arabic, Aprica, meaning “sunshine”--named the dark inhabitants they encountered “Ethiop” (burnt face), hence Ethiopians. It was merely a descriptive term of convenience--not derogatory--coined against a background of the initial shock over encountering people elsewhere who looked nothing like them.

The connotational bigotry associated with being Black came later, with the arrival of those “bastardy,” hypocritical missionaries who preached that God was everywhere, including inside their crosses and rosaries, but made exceptions when it came to African religious objects. In fact, there is some evidence to show that before Europeans successfully turned Blackness into scorn, our ancestors looked upon their Blackness with nothing but pride. In his book, The White

Man's Burden, Winthrop Jordan quotes a 17th century European visitor to Africa as having seen "jetty colored" Negroes, "who in their native beauty most delight/And in contempt do paint the Devil white." Jordan then adds, somewhat condescendingly: "...this assertion became almost a commonplace." Many accounts of Africa reported explicitly that the Negro's preference in colors was inverse to the European's. Even the Negro's features were conceded to be appealing to Negroes." (Jordan: 7) The advent of missionary terrorism and European colonialism changed all that.

To be dark came to mean not merely inferior or ugly (as was the case in Europe), but thenceforth being a heathen, a savage, a personification of evil, BLACK, and damned! The "missionaries" reinforced this through the pervasive propaganda of white angels, white prophets, and of course a white God, contrasted, not coincidentally, with a Black devil. (It is important to note that nothing of substance here had changed: Only the VALUES assigned to certain things had changed CONTEXTUALLY in consequence of a shift in power relations. The same devil that Blacks perceived as white was now cast in Black and fostered on Blacks.) With the advent of slavery and later colonialism, these new values thoroughly replaced the old ones our ancestors cherished. Africans--Black Africans, that is--came to believe that there might be something inherently wrong with them after all. This fallacious belief has endured till this day, much to our detriment and despite attempts to crush it.

The person most noted for making a determined effort to destroy this belief and reclaim the innocence and nobility of Blackness lost to European bigotry was the Jamaican Marcus Garvey. Dark of complexion and born of Maroon parents (whose ancestors came from Kromantse, in modern Ghana), Garvey had maintained a singular interest in Africa that kept him curious about the fate of Africans at home and abroad. After traveling throughout the Caribbean and parts of Europe, he realized--to his dismay--two things: (1) Blacks-Africans, no matter what their numbers, always belonged at the bottom of the economic and political scheme of things. (2) This politico-economic condition was erroneously associated with the "curse" of being Black and thus deemed immutable. The result was a crippling fatalism that was nurtured by the Christian churches which not only supported the nonsense that Blacks were the victims of a curse by a drunken and obviously unruly Noah (of Ark fame), but peddled the even greater nonsense that the only redemption out of the curse was in the hereafter; for now, therefore, Blacks should quietly endure their lowly station in this life and wait and wait and wait...

Looking to Africa and seeing that similar conditions of self-hatred and Christian-inspired fatalism prevented political and economic progress, Garvey cast the problem--and its solution--in a global context. Asking questions such as, "Where is the Black man's God, his empires, his governments, his embassies, his industries, his....?" "Garvey pledged to himself that he would not rest until he had turned Africa into the "BLACK STAR of the constellation of nations" (his words). That was the first nationalist use of the term Black Star. While on the surface the term appeared to be contradictory, it was in fact a deliberate, in-your-face attempt by Garvey to turn the tables on the racist imperialists at the time. By this time, of course, not every African was Black, but the majority were and the synonymy (is there such a word?) of the word with Africa was obvious and hence indisputable.

The medium for introducing the Black Star to the constellation of nations was the Universal Negro Improvement Associations (UNIA). Among other things, Garvey formed the Black Star Line Steam Lines to link up Africa's scattered children and get them to live in total fulfillment of their potential. Nkrumah, who came to Garveyism while a student here and later paid tribute to the influence of Garveyism on his Pan-Africanist ideals, adopted "Black Star Lines" for the newly independent Ghana's maritime corporation. (The Black Star in the Ghanaian flag, as well as the name of our national team, are all traceable to Garvey.)

The influence of Garvey went beyond Ghana. Some of the founders of the African National Congress (ANC) were Garveyites; as were some Mau Mau warriors, notably the famous Commander China. Steven Biko cut his teeth on Garveyism. In the United States, Black churches, some of which continue the tradition till this day, started seeing God through Black eyes, as Garvey urged; Gone were those pictures of a dog-nose, white hippie with long hair dangling from a cross and wondering what hit him. Elijah Mohammed (of the nation of Islam) was a lieutenant in Garvey's Auxiliary Corps; the strict ethic of Black pride and self-reliance found in the Nation of Islam is an extension of the Garveyist attempt at making the Black Star shine in a world dominated by cynicism and self-hatred. Malcom's X's father was a Garveyite, and Malcom spoke of the later influence of Garveyism on his perceptions of the Black world. The Black Power movement of the Sixties had Garvey as required reading for its members. The list goes on....

The fact that the Black Star, despite all these efforts, is yet to bare its full radiance in the “constellation of nations” is definitely not reason to give up on the concept or its driving ideology. These things take time. It took generations, in a much simpler world, to wreak the anti-Black havoc that leads some of us to deny our Blackness, and it will take as long, at least, to undo it in a complex world such as we live in now.

In sum, there’s nothing wrong with our Blackness but our condition. Changing that condition, in turn, is but a FIRST step to reclaiming our lost pride. So while the “constellation of nations” waits, I say come, you and I, let’s make the Black Star shine to its fullness. Running away from yourself just won’t do it.

9.27 Black and Proud?, by *Alfred Opono, Ottawa, Canada*

(Monday, October 4, 1993)

I must say I really admire Charles for trying to answer the questions I posed last Friday. It shows he is really interested in the debate and wants to share his knowledge. However, I must also say that I find his answers very amusing, in that they do not really provide the definite answers which would have helped us resolve some of the puzzling questions we have been asking.

I agree that the name “Africa” was given us by the colonialists and that before the advent of colonial rule there were states existing. Let’s, however, go beyond colonialism and talk about some of the earliest African civilizations, for example Nubia. Every account of early Nubian and Egyptian history, predating the balkanization of Africa, tells of dark-skinned people inhabiting parts of the continent. The history of people referring to themselves by the color of their skin goes beyond colonial rule because before the “whiteman” came to Africa, we had had contacts with people who were much lighter in complexion.

I cannot believe that Charles claims the word “Abibiman” was coined out of the word “black”! The etymology of the word “abibiman” has absolutely nothing to do with the English word; in fact, before the Englishman came to Ghana, Ashantis referred to themselves and people with similar complexion as “abibifuor”. The word is built on the root “bibi”. Linguistically, every akan word with that stem refers to a state of being “dark” complexion. The akan word for charcoal is “bidie” and it is believed that it is derived from the root “bibi”. The word “abibirem”, based on the foregoing is, therefore, a reference to the “world of dark people”; Abibiman is the akan word for Africa!

We would be deceiving ourselves if we think that before the advent of imperialism Africans had no concepts of human color; after all, not every African was of the same shade of color! Why do you think Chief Kwamena Ansah of Edina initially refused Don Diego D’Azambuja and his Portuguese sailors a piece of land for their castle? Because they looked different! I cannot tell if that was their first time of seeing a white person but definitely, the contrasting difference in physical appearance, manifested in color, was a major factor in the chief’s initial refusal and hostile reception of the voyagers.

I admit that we are not black, in the technical sense of the word. In “Cry Freedom” (the movie), a judge asked Steve Biko why he is incensed when negative things are said about black people, after all, he Biko is “more brown than black.” Biko replied with a question if the judge would feel comfortable if threats are made against white people, after all he the judge is “more pink than white.” The point I wish to make here is that technically there are no black or white people; however, as I pointed out in my earlier posting it is just a matter of contrast in our appearance which conjures the color contrast “black and white”. I feel comfortable with it and I know many others do! It is wrong to assess the black color as “negative” just because many compound words such as “black magic” etc. have negative meanings. They are different words, and as Adams plainly pointed out the word “white” has many negative meanings when they are joined with certain words. The negativity is not in the words themselves; it’s all in the mind! Deal with it!

9.28 The word “BLACK”, by *Jonathan Bossman “Proud Black Man”, Columbus, Ohio USA*

(Saturday, October 2, 1993)

Adams Bodomo's last mail entitled "Semantics of 'Black'" caused me to rewrite the posting you are reading now. Like Adams, I also went to the dictionary to compile a list of the negative and positive words prefixed by either 'black' or 'white'. Had I not paused in mid-sentence to read his mail, I would have undoubtedly written a very similar letter and come to the same conclusion as he -- that words prefixed by 'black' as well as words prefixed by 'white' do not necessarily convey evil or good, desirable or undesirable.

I'd like to take this theme a step further. The spoken or written word takes on various shades of meaning depending on the intent of the speaker or writer, or the origin (i.e. person from whom the speech or writing emanates)

INTENT:

For example Ghana's Black Stars were named to convey the pride of being Black & African. Here the word 'black' has no negative connotation at all. But when we throw up our hands in despair and mutter "Black Man!" after being stonewalled by an over-zealous Ministries official, the term is being used pejoratively.

ORIGIN:

Another pair of examples can be found where African Americans refer to one another as "niggers". No harm or disparagement is intended by the use of the term. But when Caucasians use the term they are probably referring to a group of people they feel superior to; then the word is being used in a pejorative sense.

Now those who don't like being referred to as 'Black', take a deep breath and calm down because you're not going to like what you're about to read next:

The vast majority of English Language speakers do not, repeat, do not use the word 'Blacks' pejoratively but rather as a simple classification of the Negroid peoples of the world. Just the same as we use "Whites" or "Oboroni" to classify Caucasians. In the US, this is the era of "Political Correctness". The Media would certainly not refer to people of African descent as 'Black' if they were aware that the term was being used pejoratively. But they do refer to us as 'Blacks'. You know why? BECAUSE used in this way, the word 'BLACK' HAS NO NEGATIVE CONNOTATIONS !! PERIOD!!.

I beg to differ in opinion from Charles' point of view. I fail to see the connection between his observation that the European powers coined the name or classification "Black" and his charge that there is a "hidden agenda". Relative to their pigmentation ours could be considered (figuratively) black in color. Why suspect a hidden agenda?

In conclusion, don't call me "Nigger"; Call me "Black", "African", "Negro"..I am the last three. And proud to be.

9.29 Black, White and Racism, by Sowah Simmonds, USA

(Tuesday October 5, 1993)

There is an American saying, "call me what you want, just don't call me late to dinner". We keep worrying about what people call us, what somebody calls you and how you are perceived are two different things. Can anybody imagine a non-African calling us "the people who live south of the Mediterranean and the Red seas, North of Antarctica, West of latitude 52 or Indian Ocean and East of longitude 18 or the Atlantic Ocean

This is a mouthful. A rose by any other name will still be a rose and will have the same pleasant aroma, unless you happened to be allergic to rose.

When I first came to the US many years ago, I stayed with a Caucasian family. Population of the town was 53000 with only 31 persons of my kind. All 31 were students except a Lutheran minister with a family of four. One day during my second week with my new family, the baby of the family asked me at dinner "Sowah why are you so dark, did you eat too many chocolate beans", you can imagine eleven out of twelve people sitting at a table cracking-up with a six year old girl wondering what is going on. Needless to say I told her, when she turns 18 I will tell her why.

Poor Anne got married in 1987 and when we all sat down to eat the day before the wedding with nephews and nieces (this time more than twelve) with groom-to-be I asked Anne if she ever found out why I am so dark, everybody who

was there the first time laughed except Anne who wanted to know why I asked that . Her mother has to remind her that she had first posed the question to me , she denied ever asking such a stupid question.

My own conclusion is that most of these people we come into contact with are ignorant of Africans and we need to educate them.

9.30 Black versus White, by *Kofi Gyampo Lee, New Hampshire USA*

(Friday October 8, 1993)

Suffer me gently as I flog the dead horse one last time but I will be happy if I can get some reaction to this thought:

The use of the words black and white in the Ghanaian languages almost parallels its use in the English language. i.e. whereas white is mostly used to describe positive events, the reverse is true for black.

I can at least say that much for Twi (which is my native language) and Ga (which I speak reasonably well).

In addition to, that our choice of colors for symbolic purposes does usually suggest that white is positive and black is negative.

Now, if the assertions made above are true, doesn't it refute the believe on some netters part (and indeed on the part of some of our political leaders) that there has been some grand conspiracy on the part of Caucasians to denigrate everything black.

10 ETHNICITY

compiled and edited by *Anthony Sallar and Yaw Agyaba*

10.00 Introduction by *Anthony Sallar and Yaw Agyaba*

Ghana as a nation is composed of many distinct ethnic groups. These groups differ in their representation in government and, also, in the extent of technological development of their areas. Consequently, it is not uncommon to hear charges and counter-charges of discrimination. However, solid evidence of institutionalized or systematic discrimination in the allocation of services and resources in the post-independence era is difficult to find. Nonetheless, the issue of “tribalism”, as it is often called, arouses intense passions in most people. It is with this background that an attempt was made to initiate a discussion of the issue.

Using the concept of “nation-state”, Charles Awasu attempted to provide both a theoretical basis of the problem and pointers towards a solution. This discussion was joined by others. The general consensus was that we as Ghanaians ought to learn to live together, that true integration was inevitable no matter how slow the process appears to be.

The selected articles here were not the only ones discussed. Isaac Thompson presented extracts from a two-part rejoinder in the Ghanaian Times of June 17, 18 1993, providing the ethnic composition of heads of major institutions and cabinet members in Ghana. That presentation debunked the myth of Ewe hegemony and showed the gap between perceptions and reality. Unfortunately, that pivotal article could not be located. It was therefore decided to omit rejoinders to it in this section. Also, issues of “ethnicity” appear in some of the other discussions, particularly in the discussions of culture and of Moxon, a “white” chief, in Ghana. Those are appropriately included under those sections (sections 4, 12 ...).

It is hoped further discussions of this issue will move us all into the realization that we are one people with one destiny and conscious efforts will be made to do away with vestiges of ethnic superiority of one group over another. Let us show the way.

Yaw Agyaba
Mawuli Sallar.

10. 01 “TRIBALISM” in Ghana! by *Charles Appadu*

<app@u.washington.edu>
(Tue, 11 May 1993)

Hi,

I have been on the network for only a few months and I so I do not know whether this important (although sensitive) topic has been discussed already. If the answer is no, then I would like to dare and begin a discussion on it. I know that it is a very sensitive topic and we need approach it with wisdom and maturity but I also believe that if we do good job on it, our dear country stands to benefit. I know I am taking risk but I am confident that we have some mature people out there.

I would like to suggest some guidelines that would be helpful in discussions of this:

- (1) What is tribalism?
- (2) History of tribalism in the Ghana
- (3) How does tribalism manifest itself in Ghana and why do you think people are tribalistic
- (4) What are the positive aspects (if any) of tribalism we need to adopt, adapt or improve upon and which aspects of the practice are destructive to Ghana
- (5) How do we do away with the negative aspects of tribalism, or how do we transform tribalism into a constructive force for the benefit of all.

I hope that netters will throw light on this all important topic. At this stage, the only thing I will like to say is that, looking at the rest the world and, especially the rest of Africa, I believe that our [tribal] problems are relatively minimal and that with conscious efforts, we can eliminate them or reduce them significantly! But remember, WE CAN DO IT.

10.02 Nation-State? by *Charles Awasu*

<CAWASU%SUV.M.BITNET@mitvma.mit.edu>
(Sat, 04 Sep 93)

This is to comment on the controversial topic of ethnicity, conflict etc. in the Ghanaian polity. I intend to use the word “ethnic” which technically refers to a group “that shares similar religious beliefs and speaks a common language. I’m using the term from a sociological perspective and very advisedly.

[Introductory comments to the next paragraph have been deleted for lack of clarity - Editor. See comments at footnote].

Busia (1967) defines a “nation as one people, with a common language, bound together by a common heritage and shared experience”. Present day Ghana therefore is made up of groups of “nation states”. I intend to argue that Ghana has not been able to attain the status of what might be called a “modern” nation state. Nation-building has not had any important mark since independence. This is because of factors like, ethnicity, economic malaise, political instability, and the persisting gap between the pace of development in the south and in the north. It is realistic to state that politicized ethnicity - reflecting local, and other group interests has at times overshadowed the mobilizing capacity of the state. To understand the present socio-political problems in Ghana, one has to go back 500 years to answer the question: “What was the Gold Coast and how did it emerge?” In the same breadth one has to become familiar with the actual opposition offered by Busia and others at the time of independence.

In a nutshell, the primary reason for the failure of nation-building is due the inability of successive regimes to “deliver the goods” as expected. For instance:

1. The gap between the development of regions, especially north and south not only remained but deepened. Education and industrialization favored the South.
2. The reasons for the Ewe dissidence/separatism has not been removed. They resented being divided between Ghana and Togo. They also consider the Volta Region as the least economically developed region within the

south. Note should be taken that there are various differences among the Ewes - various chiefdoms/parties. The Ewe separatist movement has since been weakened. For the record, the Ewes are good, loyal Ghanaians; certainly not an "inward-tribalist" group (- a remark made by Victor Owusu).

3. Politics: some point out that the predominantly Akan-led governments of 1967-1979 made ethnic scape-goats out of the Ewes. That hostility towards Ewes (who are supposedly over-represented at the elite level-police, civil service, teaching) was invented in an attempt to find "explanations for the failures of the government and the economy" (Skalnik, 1992,)
4. The threat of Akan supremacy. The close-knit clannish sentiment from Akans expressed in the Danquah/Busia coalitions. Some fear the rise of an all-Akan ethnic [dominance] expressed in their claims to an Akan independent state. Admittedly some of these fears are imaginary
5. Other factors: localism, class cleavage, ruralism, religious loyalties, etc.

Overall, the most ethnic-laden cleavage in contemporary Ghana is between Akans and the Ewes, and particularly between the Ashantis and Ewes. (I have not been able to understand the historico-cultural basis of the tension). According to Skalnik ((1992) p.72) it was invented for political expediency.

In a historical context, ethnic differences exist all over Africa, due to European colonization. Somalia is the only country which is made up of one ethnic group. Such ethnic tensions are used for political gain and in times of economic difficulties, they tend to worsen. I believe Ghana will be spared such severe tensions. I believe this because most Ghanaians that I know do not believe that such "social factors" should be contested in government. This is not cowardice. The numerous fights over land in Ghana can testify to the fact that Ghanaians are not cowards. People are just TIRED of such conflicts and the promises, lies, promises of politicians.

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[Editorial comment: Introductory parts of the second paragraph was damaged in the process of "archiving" and has been deleted. The article, however, contains its fundamental essence].

10.03 Re: Nation-State?, by *Sitsofe Anku*

<anku@unixg.ubc.ca>
(Mon, 6 Sep 1993)

Charles' piece on nation-state makes an interesting reading. I am sorry I can't pass comments on all the points raised, but I will pass some comments. Does a country like Canada fit Busia's definition of a nation-state? Or do we have any countries fitting Busia's definition of a nation and having problems similar (may be only in varying degrees) to those in Ghana. I think we should learn to live together as human beings. Learning to live together should mean making conscious efforts to solve the problems facing us as a people (of Ghana). We have many similarities! We should be tolerant of our differences!We should be good friends! These theoretical definitions (or rhetorics) can provide for academic exercises, but they will not solve our problems. May be what should be done is to redefine nations to fit what we have now, but not to make "nation" an outmoded definition. I think we will have more problems going that route. Keep talking.

10.04 Re: Nation-State, by *Alfred Opoku*

aopoku@ccs.carleton.ca
(Tue, 7 Sep 93)

I must say Charles' exposition on the above subject was interesting; however it also raises a lot of questions for us, Ghanaians, and as intellectuals, so to speak. Before I go on to make a few points and ask some questions, I would like

to offer what I think is a correction to a point Charles made. With reference to the statement by Victor Owusu, as to Ewes being “inward looking”, I believe it was made during the second republic.

Busia’s opponent, Gbedemah, raised it as an issue only when the PFP chose Victor to be the Presidential candidate. Unfortunately, I don’t have any facts/references for that but I remember that because my friends and I had a long debate it. Anyway, that is besides the point.

Charles makes a powerful statement that Ghana has not been able to develop a “modern” nation-state. I wonder what definition he used. In his article, he offered a definition by Busia on what constitutes a nation, none was provided for a “state” nor for a “nation-state”. I would agree that these are different entities and therefore it would have been helpful if he had provided us with the definition he is using. Another point that was made by Charles had to do with the fact that by Busia’s definition there are “nations” within the Ghana. Somewhere down the line, he also talked about how our leaders failed to build a nation due to their inability to fulfill our needs. My question is posed to the entire net, because I understand what Charles means, how do we build our different “nations” or what I may call “ethnic states” into the nation of Ghana? Sitsofe Anku provides a moral-persuasion approach by appealing to the conscience of Ghanaians to learn to get along. That is appealing, but history has taught us that just an appeal for people to get along may not work. What we need, I believe, is the understanding that we are different people coexisting under the same political and economic environment. In view of that we need to build our institutions in such a way as to cater for such differences. Institutionalized sensitivity to differences will ensure that our political appointments, for instance, reflects our

gender and ethnic differences. It is when a section of the population feels shut out that tensions begin to mount. I am reading an article in one of the private Ghanaian newspapers and they were speculating as to who would be the next IGP as Kwofie is about to retire. They talked about likely candidates and in the end seem to suggest that one Bila is ideal since he is a Dagomba, and it would be a politically wise move to broaden the ethnic composition of the leadership of the force.

Finally, I would want to state that what seems to be tension between Ewes and Ashantis is nothing new. Tensions have existed between Ashantis and other ethnic groups (Gas, Fantes, Akims, etc.) since colonial days when these groups assisted the British to fight the Ashantis in the “Sagrenti” war and the battle of Akatamanso (I hope my history is not yet rotten!). These tensions have died down over the years, and the only reason why the Ashanti-Ewe one seems to be persisting is the recent political events in Ghana. On one hand it seems most ethnic groups in Ghana blame Ashantis for the failure of the political system. It must be pointed out that the only Ashanti who has ruled Ghana is Kutu Acheampong! Yet, this mistaken belief is widespread through Ghana. Thus the ascension of Rawlings has been wrongfully interpreted as a challenge of the Ashanti dominance of Ghanaian politics. Unfortunately, events in the (P)NDC era seems to suggest that our current leaders have bought into this theory. Would there have been the same tension if Rawlings, for example, was Dagomba? I presume, the answer would be “yes”, on condition that he consciously pursued the same path. I have taken time to elaborate on this, at the risk of being labelled with all sorts of names, because I have always believed that it is lack of sensitivity to our differences, in all the regimes we had, which is responsible to the lack of cohesion in our attempts at nation building. If we recognize this and devise mechanisms to deal with regional inequalities, we would be on our way to the Ghana we all desire.

Perhaps, I need to take this opportunity to disabuse the minds of those who think some of us are war “mongers”. We have always shied away from talking about our problems, as Africans. What happened in Liberia and Somalia, and in Sudan, did not happen out of the blue. The problems had always existed but the leaders had always been either timid or too scared to tackle it. There is nothing wrong in acknowledging that we have problems in Ghana. Recognizing a problem is always the first step in problem solution. None of us have called for “ethnic cleansing” or encouraged people to take to the bush. All we did was to answer a question posed by Africanus on the possibility of having the Liberian scenario visited upon us. If you don’t agree it can happen, all you need to do is say so and let us know why. It is not good to label anyone a war monger.

10.05 Re: Nation-State?, by *Isaac Thompson*

<ixtst+@pitt.edu> (Tue, 7 Sep 1993)

On Sat, 4 Sep 1993, Charles quoting Busia [Busia (1967)] defined a “nation as one people, with a common language, bound together by a common heritage and shared experience”. Present day Ghana therefore is made up of group of nations. The entire text was an excellent piece by Charles. However, I must point out what appeared be an a-contextual quote of Busia. Busia was simply, in that part of book, saying that “this is what the Europeans say makes a nation. Implicitly, therefore, Ghana is not a nation.” However, Busia opposed this Eurocentric definition of “nation.” On pages 116-117 of the book from which Charles quotes, Busia wrote, “the African situation, in its contemporary context, calls for the building of a nation of different tribes, possessing a diversity of traditions even cultures, inhabiting a common territory, bound together by the desire to preserve their newly won independence and unity, and by goals of economic, social, cultural, and political progress which they share in common, and which they see can be realised only if they stay together.”

Ironically, Nkrumah, an adversary of Busia’s, also believed in pragmatic and non-European rendition of the concept of “nation.” Busia, in spite of his academic pronouncements, espoused political beliefs that threatened to move Ghana away from staying together as a nation. His calls for a federal system, rather than the unitary Westminster system the British introduced in Ghana, was a recipe for NATIONAL disintegration. And Nkrumah faced the difficult choice of ceding to the federalists, the interest of “democracy”, or preserving the Ghanaian national unit all cost. He chose the latter. The ultimate cost was a government which had no tolerance for any dissent deemed harmful to the national interest. Ultimately, that proved to be his greatest undoing, although he preserved the Ghanaian nation as fashioned by history. It is conceivable that if he had not gone that route, the Ghana we know it today might not be the same. I should add that besides the real features of any nation, there are the symbolic features. These may include a anthem, a “national” cuisine, a pledge of allegiance, or even a particular sport. At height of the Liberian civil war, some of the rare occasions Liberians saw themselves as one and silenced their guns was when there were cross-border soccer matches. Right after the matches, the shootings were resumed. In Ghana, we have a few symbols of our own, soccer of course being the least of them. The Gas gave us “kenkey and shitto”, which I have found are enjoyed across the country irrespective of ethnicity. The Ewes gave us “yoke gali”, the Northerners “wakye” and so forth. Ghanaians of all backgrounds of course never cease to take pride in “kente” as OUR “little” contribution to contemporary fashion. Within Ghana itself, we have the ubiquitous “batakari” everybody wears. It is the totality of these symbols, along the historical factors enumerated by Busia, which gives us our identity. How we remain together under these real and symbolic identifiers is a function of many things, as has been noted by some netters. The distribution of economic resources AND of opportunities, as well as political responsiveness/responsibility, are but a few of these.

11 DUAL CITIZENSHIP

compiled and edited by *Anthony Sallar*

11.00 Editorial Comment by *Anthony Sallar*

On this touchy issue, the contributors attempted to justify the need for Ghana to adopt the system of dual citizenship. Most of the arguments in favour pertain to benefits to be derived in the economic sphere. The contributors sought to justify the need for the dual citizenship. The articles in favour primarily were for the need to not “sell” your birthright on the altar of economic necessity.

I also noted that the political ramifications were left untouched. Also, the contributors did not distinguish between a permanent residency status and a citizenship status. The former is called “Green Card (US) “landed (Canada) “getting your stay”(Britain). I know the same pertains to France and other countries. The permanent resident status confers over 90% if not 99% right on the beneficiary of what a citizen might enjoy. This is in relation to jobs, social benefits etc. In the US the only difference between a green card holder and a citizen can be found in 3 primary areas.

- (1) He can not hold most federal jobs. e.g. CIA, FBI, a judge, a Cabinet post, a Pentagon position as defence analyst etc. Consequently people who studied subjects like Nuclear Physics and other National Security jobs have no choice but to become citizens in order to get jobs.
- (2) When he wants his family (spouse and unmarried children to join him, he has to wait for 1 1/2- 2 years whereas the citizen gets his in 6 months to a year.
- (3) He cannot petition for his brothers and sisters to join him. Well, it takes 10 years or more for the citizen even in this category. A citizen can also let his father or mother join him/her.
- (4) In New York City he cannot be a police officer. Anyway who wants a job where a 10 year old can shoot and kill you?

I would like gentlemen and ladies to ponder over the following some questions and issues.

- (1) A Ghanaian/US dual citizen becomes a Foreign Minister in Ghana. He is supposed to meet his counterpart in the US. Which hat is he going to wear? How much trust can Ghanaians have in him. Do you know that the state of Israel does not allow its citizens to have foreign bank accounts?
- (2) What about the elements of accountability. If the Head of State or Minister misappropriates and “splits” the country to his other country which law will prevail?
- (3) Citizenship carries with its responsibilities. All US citizens abroad file their annual income tax returns to the US Internal Revenue Service. The Government allows a \$75,000 tax free income made abroad. They pay taxes on the rest. Are we prepared to file our annual taxes and pay the requisite taxes to whichever government is in power?
- (4) The issue of treason. I am not an attorney but what happens granting that Tony is a Ghanaian and US citizen and is engaged in modes of overthrowing the government in Ghana. That is treasonable. However, if there is no dual citizenship the game is different. Should the Ghana government charge him and try that he be repatriated to Ghana to face whatever court there is -kangaroo or whatever? What of a major political brouhaha which took place about 4 years ago. A Ghanaian turned US citizen from New York City entered Ghana with his Ghanaian passport (In US when you swear that oath of allegiance renouncing the citizenship of whatever country you come from, they do not take your passport). He then engaged himself in an activity which the then PNDC government considered subversive. The government let loose its state security on the Ghanaian-US. In his jail he informed the US embassy that he was an American in jail. The American officials interceded but the government argued and successfully so, that he was a Ghanaian and entered as a Ghanaian.

In conclusion, the issue is a complex one. Let us keep it the way it is. We need not open a can of worms or pandora’s box. After all, if I should decide to become a citizen, and I want to go home all that I have to do is to apply for my visa, pay the \$20 fee and go home. I can engage in any business venture in Ghana, speak my language or dialects etc. I cannot engage in politics because I am not a Ghanaian. That is the choice I have to make. We cannot have it both ways.

11.01 Dual Citizenship, by Zoggyie Nobui Haakayoo (*Form erly Vincent N H Gbielibie*), University of Cincinnati, Ohio, USA

On Dec. 21, Mr. Sitsofe Anku informed members of Okyeame about an Xmas party he attended in Vancouver, Canada. At the said party, a Ghanaian diplomat mentioned an ongoing debate on Dual Citizenship back home. He specifically wanted to know what netters thought about that.

Well, I personally welcome the idea wholeheartedly. In the meantime, I would like to call on those who see the need for dual citizenship as another one being advanced by Ghanaians resident abroad to explain to us why they should so believe. I personally miss the point here. The fact is that many countries allow their citizens the latitude in deciding whether to become citizens of another country without any repercussions, be it political or otherwise. This arrangement can only be beneficial in the long run to the individual and his country of birth.

If the individual is aware and believes that he/she can change his/her citizenship and have the latitude of travelling to his/her country of birth, then that country stands to benefit. This is because the mobility dual citizenship affords the individual will enable the recipient to provide services in whatever capacity. On the other hand if the individual is forced to stay put in his foreign land because you have committed the “sin” of taking on the citizenship of another country, then whatever you may have had to offer to your original country is forcibly made unavailable. For the sake of an argument, let us take our compatriots resident in Germany for example. Whatever merchandize they carry back home to dump on the markets whether they are environmentally friendly or not, or whether they hinder the ability of the local economy to attain self-reliance or not, the fact still remains that the alternative is worse. If any body thinks the government alone and/or resident businessmen can keep the economy going, they are not serious. Business or for that matter all nations are now linked globally. Opponents of this debate will say at this point that it is not necessary for one to be a citizen of a country to do business there. Great! If we have learned anything from the colonialism we all lament so much, it is that the brother you know will deal with you more honestly than just a businessman!

I could give a host of reasons why people take up dual citizenship but suffice it to say that in many parts of the world, the only way to get a decent job (which in turn guarantees the benefits I am talking about here) is to become a citizen of the country in which you are residing.

Mr. Anku wants to know if we should send individual or collective letters home expressing our views on the issue? I favour the collective option because it carries more weight. Who would take lightly an experience that is supposed to be common to most “Ghanaian exiles”?

11.02 Dual Citizenship or Black or White, by *Alfred Opono*

<aopoku@ccs.carleton.ca>

(Friday, 19 March 1993)

The discussion on dual citizenship is rather interesting. When I first heard about the issue during the sittings of the constituent assembly, I was surprised because I thought it was a non-issue. However, with the way netters have responded to the debate I guess it is a topic which should be addressed. I believe that every Ghanaian one meets would acknowledge his unflinching love for the motherland. It is inconceivable that the average Ghanaian would totally denounce Ghana for another person's country. However, it is a fact of life that people are taking to citizenship in foreign countries in order to escape from the harsh economic realities back home. Should we classify these people as unpatriotic? NO! What benefits do the people of Ghana get from such arrangements? It is no secret that remittance from relatives abroad increased the purchasing power of families left in Ghana. For example the vehicles (not counting the smuggled ones) that are turned into taxis and public transportation have continued to keep our transportation system from breaking down. These facts and figures are not reflected in the national income accounting or in the balance of trade because these transactions belong to the underground economy.

There is no doubt that that having a dual citizenship affords a lot of our citizens the chance to remain legally in foreign lands. The opportunity allows them to work and accumulate the money that is sent home for people to invest in real estate, transportation, retailing, etc.

Personally, if the host country has no problem with my staying here and still keeping my natural citizenship, I find no reason why my own country would fuss over it. As Charles Awasu stated, the United States taxes its citizens no matter where they reside. What prevents us from evolving such a system that would keep track of our citizens (including those with dual citizenship) for tax and voting purposes. Having a US or Canadian citizenship does not rob you of your identity. Citizenship cannot be taken away by decrees or law, it is a right! To say that having people with dual citizenship is a national security risk is ridiculous. A risk to whom? My grandmother in the village or Rawlings at the Castle? Maybe I'll settle for risk to the government (even then, only if the govt is insecure like you know which one).

All said and done, I think no one should be castigated for taking a dual citizenship. If I get the opportunity I will take it, if it will enable me to continue with my career plans. It is not an issue of black or white, it is one of having opportunities and utilizing them.

11.03 Dual Citizenship, by *YAW Agyeman*

On March 25, I got the following message from CSIR in Ghana:

“...a number of issues still remain to be resolved, debated thoroughly before inclusion or preclusion from the constitution....”Some of the areas of the constitutional proposal that have produced the most heated debates so far are the enforcement and protection of the constitution, age and parentage of the future president....

“But one issue that had already passed the rubber stamp before being recalled and placed on the agenda for further discussion is the question of citizenship.

“The Assembly had already accepted unanimously the recommendation of the Committee of Experts who drew up the draft proposal to preclude dual citizenship from the constitution on the basis of the 1979 constitution and the Akuffo-Addo report which stated: “We do not want an occasion where allegiance to Ghana is shared with allegiance to some country.”

The 1979 constitution also made it abundantly clear that if a Ghanaian of full age voluntarily swears allegiance to another country and becomes a citizen of that country, then he loses his Ghanaian citizenship.....

Remarkably however the committee noted that citizenship in most countries today is a requirement for securing jobs and most Ghanaian in other countries cannot avail themselves of such a facility because they do not want to lose their Ghanaian citizenship. But the reality is that most of these Ghanaians bring home huge economic gains and invest them into useful ventures to complement the domestic mobilisation of financial resources for national development.....

There is confirmed evidence by the World Bank that Ghanaians abroad transfer an estimated \$300 million annually back home for various projects, an immense contribution to the economic development of the country that is hardly recognized....

In Accra some members of the Assembly are said to be objecting to dual citizenship on the grounds that is hostilities broke out between the adopted country and Ghana the allegiance of dual nationality could be doubtful. Such an argument is porous and can safely be discounted. The notion among many ...that Ghanaians living abroad are either dissidents or refugees is totally wrong and could not be justified in denying the law-abiding and hardworking Ghanaians abroad dual-citizenship.....that Ghanaians abroad have just as much to contribute to the development of the nation as those living there”

Commentary by YAW:

Enuam, this article is obviously endorsing the enactment of a dualcitizenship provision for Ghanaians. While I do not want us to put ourselves in a situation where every one of our kinspeople jump to swear allegiance to other nations for whatever reasons, it remains a fact that past economic and political difficulties have already forced a good many of our brothers and sisters to renounce their Ghanaian citizenship in face of dire necessity. It is not justifiable on our parts to dismiss those of our own people who were thus inclined by circumstances as traitors. That would in my opinion be a horrendous tragedy and lack of wisdom on our parts. There is a fine line between what we would want in an ideal situation and what reality so often imposes on us. For the most part, I do not believe that our brothers and sisters who have had to adopt other citizenship necessarily do so out of a desire to be shed of all traces to their roots. The issue merits our putting our heads together on it. Perhaps a fluid amendment to the constitution is in order, one that will somehow both recognize our people as ours legally and simultaneously discourage a mass exodus in the direction of dual-citizenship. You see, brothers and sisters, it is also true that in dual-citizenship, the subject cannot pretend to neglect his/her adopted nation, and if that nation shows better prospects than the motherland in terms of desirable living standards and the like, then our kin might end up with a conflict of interest whose resolving might entail shortchanging Ghana.

Any thoughts?

I humbly defer...

Peace and goodwill to all.

Yaw.

11.04 Dual Citizenship, by *Francis Akoto aka (alias) gallows*

csfraw@vehka.cs.uta.fi

A good example of a Ghanaian with dual citizenship who has served Ghana well both locally and on the international scene is the footballer Abedi Pele. At present he is a citizen of two countries: Ghana and France. He is without doubt the backbone and brains of the national team, the Ghana black stars. An argument can be made regarding our loss of the African Cup of Nations. We lost the African cup just b/c he could not play in the finals. Are we prepared to lose him ? He is a citizen of France b/c it is convenient for him and his team. With him we even have a chance of winning the world cup in 1994 :-)

11.05 Dual Citizenship, by *Francis Dodoo, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana*

From the discussions on the issue of dual citizenship, I would like to ask the following questions?

- 1) How is dual citizenship tantamount to a renouncement of one Ghanaian-ness?
- 2) How does it breed crime?
- 3) In Ghana today (without dual citizenship) can we “trace who is doing what”?
- 4) Who is the “country”? I thought the nation comprised each and every one of us, meaning that our benefit is Ghana’s benefit? Or does it have to be the govt I am confused by all the talk of “it has to benefit the country, not individuals. One contributor said yesterday that they were not interested in how it benefits individuals but the whole country. At which point does one stop and the other begin?
- 5) Who are all these people who think they are morally superior to anybody who would opt for dual citizenship? Shouldn’t they be at home fighting and helping instead of leaving for their sheltered places to better themselves (instead of the country as a whole)?

11.06 Dual Citizenship, by *Sampson Dankyi Asare*

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There is (in my opinion) no need for any dual citizenship for any Ghanaian and I was happy when I read from our newly drawn constitution that if a Ghanaian wants to change his identity he/she is free to do so but will first have to renounce his Ghanaian citizenship. IN my own views it breeds crime as it becomes difficult to trace who is doing what. As Mike (Mr. Asiedu) pointed out what good does it benefit our country if a person holds more than one citizenship ???

I think we must begin to face realities now. How many Europeans / Americans / Canadians etc will like to renounce their citizenship and take that of Ghana or any other African country?? Some might say it is for economic reasons.. Well good !! If people are going to dodge problems or put them aside and not face facts then our children are going to suffer more than we are doing now!!.

There is economic growth in the West because the forefathers of present day inhabitants sacrificed and toiled for the unborn at that time so that they could also enjoy a better future (today) I have come across very few Ghanaians who will really go to the point of enduring pains for the future sake. If we do not learn to sacrifice for the future then the chances (to quote Ross Perot “Some American are living as if there is no tomorrow) of our children making it better than we seem small, if not zero. (To borrow the words of Dr. H. Limann “The future of Ghana looks bleak” --- speaking in London after his overthrow by the former PNDC and now NDC). To me it is a disgrace, tantamount to selling ones conscience and dignity, to renounce ones citizenship just for a “better” job.

11.07 Dual Citizenship, by *Joseph O. Nattey*

<JNATTEY%KENTVM.BITNET>

Why should a Ghanaian seek dual citizenship? I have a big problem with that. I am of the view that one should be proud of his/her citizenship. I have met some Ghanaians here who call themselves Americans and their excuse is they did that to get better job opportunities. This to me is ridiculous to say the least. There are Americans who can’t get jobs here. I don’t have American citizenship (and I refuse get one) but I do have a good profession.

11.08 Dual Citizenship, by *Francis Dodoo*

<SC0BASF@VM.TCS.TULANE.EDU>, (Wed, 17 Mar 93)

This posting is an attempt to respond to some of the questions posed by Joseph Nattey. In the first place, I think there are separate issues here;

- (1) Obtaining dual citizenship and
- (2) Allegiance to Ghana.

It is sad that he would define people who attempt to obtain dual citizenship as not being proud of their Ghanaian citizenship. I would argue otherwise. Anyone who is not proud of being a Ghanaian would probably seek other (complete) rather than attempt to get dual citizenship. As I stated earlier, it simply facilitates mobility (ever tried moving around Europe or for that matter Asia or the Americas with a black [Ghanaian] or green [passport? I am an athlete and spend the summers travelling from country to country attempting to earn a living. Boy, do I know how much easier it would be with another passport which would improve earning opportunities? In light of this, and unless there is a real danger or problem with allowing Ghanaians have dual citizenship (other than the national security argument which I doubt) why shouldn't we take advantage of it. For example, my academic life involves securing grants for research. Not being American, probably largest the largest pool of money (that is the national science foundation grants) inaccessible because it has a US citizenship requirement, as does the fellowship. So in a way this does put one at some disadvantage relative American peers, especially when you recognize that one of the primary considerations in tenure decisions is an individual's grant acquisition record. Inequality is a fact of life. I know there are some Americans here who cannot get jobs. This does not mean we should not improve other Ghanaians chances of getting these jobs, If we can also, if a Ghanaian in a foreign land calls himself or herself an American IN ORDER TO GET A JOB you have to understand the situation. You and I are both lucky to have "good professional jobs" here. I, like you, do not have American citizenship; but we have to recognize we have been fortunate to be in this situation (having good jobs here). There is a whole host of our country folks who get turned down at interviews simply because they do have neither residency or citizenship in America. This situation may be improved by a favorable dual citizenship law. Should we, the fortunate ones deny them this opportunity? I hope the answer is no.

11.09 Dual Citizenship, by *Kwame Danquah, Copenhagen, Denmark*

Ghanaian officials accuse us of betraying our motherland. That is correct. However I still feel that we should be considered and granted an amount of citizenship (Ghanaian). For no matter how long I should stay in Denmark and no matter how very Danish I should become in my mannerisms, I will consider Ghana as my motherland. I think it is unwise for Ghanaian officials to discourage people from identifying with their homeland. I recall reading that some folks estimated that Ghanaians abroad remit some \$300m back to the Ghanaian economy.

12 GHANAIAN LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

compiled and edited by *Adams Bodo*

12.00 Introduction, by *Adams Bodo*, Section Editor

In this section of the yearbook five groups of issues, all related more or less to our Ghanaian linguistic and cultural situations, are discussed. The first four articles discuss the meaning of the name Akan, giving interesting information about this and other ethnolinguistic groups in Ghana.

In the next three articles the question of whether our African culture is reticent or not is raised and discussed. Given the fact that it is not very common for Ghanaian couples to make remarks such as “me do wo” to one another, can we say that we prefer actions to words in such matters of love?

The third group of articles deals with the question of what language to speak to our children at home. Should we speak only our Ghanaian languages to them? Should we speak only English or the language of the country we live in? Or better still, should we speak both groups of languages? The various contributions try to clarify these and other points in the debate.

The fourth group of articles takes up the experiences of children born to parents of different cultural backgrounds. We are confronted with issues such as what colour to give to such children. Are they black or brown? Is blackness as we talk of it a matter of skin pigmentation or conscience? Even the very term “mixed marriages” is put to question. Is the term appropriate to, for instance, only marriage between a Black and a White or could it also be used for marriages between people of the same pigmentation but of different cultures?

The last set of articles addresses a controversial issue within our cultural set-up. It is a well-known fact that spanking our children as a corrective measure used to be (and probably is still) quite frequent in most Ghanaian homes. In fact, as the lead article for this part of the section confirms, most of us did go through this type of corrective measure in our childhood. This aspect of our culture is compared with the current (western) thinking whereby such a practice is widely considered as child abuse. The question now is, have our parents been abusers, have we really been abused in

our childhood, are we abusers ourselves when we spank our children and will these children themselves grow up to be abusers in this wise? The following articles address these questions.

12.01 Purest of all Races?, by Adams Bodomo, Trondheim, Norway

In this posting I wish to bring up for discussion parts of an interesting description of the Akans of Ghana which appeared in the FROM OUR FILES section (p. 402) of the 8 - 14th March edition of the WEST AFRICA weekly magazine.

Against the background of the fight against vices such as racism, neo-nazism and the use of derogatory terminologies on Africans which have already been discussed on this net, I came across this amazing 1943 characterisation of a group of people who now constitute 40% of present-day Ghana. Aspects of the characterisation run as follows:

“ The Akans inhabit the southern portion of the Gold Coast and Ashanti. Akan is a Twi word, which means the first of everything. Hence Abakan, the first born, Aba-edikan, the first fruit; Dom-edikan, the first army; Kan-tete, the earliest times, etc. The lengthening of the consonant ending gives another meaning. In this form it means “pure” , “unadulterated” or “genuine”. For this reason, the Akans claim to be the first and purest of the races of mankind (emphasis mine). They despise languages other than their own. They call themselves “Okan-niba” which means pure blooded. In their dealings with foreigners, they are sarcastic.”

I have more questions than answers. Is this characterisation still valid for the Akans of today? Has it ever been valid? Is that a picture of a people some of whom I have studied, worked, and made friends, with? Do Akans despise Ga, Ewe, Dagaare or English? Or can Akans who now live in a multilingual, modern democratic country and in a world of constant interaction still afford to despise foreign languages? And how can we reconcile the now well-known traditional hospitality of the Akans (and other Ghanaians) with the assertion that they are or were sarcastic to foreigners? Do such historical perspectives have any ramifications on current issues on the net such as attitude, citizenship, national integration and development?

Or seen from another , more general, African perspective, could this description be part of the ‘Anti-racist racism’ campaign launched by Negritude writers at the time to counteract European racial prejudices on Africans by describing African history and culture with flamboyance, intentional idealisation and pomposity ?

Or is this 1943 description simply an incorrect characterisation of the Akan of Ghana? I hope this will provide an educative discussion of the Akans and their culture.

12.02 Purest of all Races?, by Paul Opoku-Mensah, Trondheim, Norway

Adams Bodomo’s posting on the above topic presents certain issues which must be addressed. I do not think the article as it appeared in “West Africa” was a counter reaction of the Negritude writers to European racial prejudices. I have no doubt that it might have been an apt description of the Akans at a point in history.

Having said this, let me quickly add that it could have been used to describe many other “tribes” the world over: from the Anlo, the Dagomba, the English, through the Norwegian to the Zulu “tribe”. This is understandable because a society not affected by interaction (or limited interaction) with other cultures always has the tendency to see itself as “the society” and more often than not look down on others. The fact that this attitude might be more pronounced in some “tribes” than in others does not in any way excuse any one tribe.

What I am most interested in finding out is whether after all the cross cultural interaction, these attitudes persist. If they do, then of course they have ominous “ramifications” for Ghana, especially against the background of Ghana’s search for national unity and development. I am, however, sure the Akan friends with whom Adams went to School presented

a different picture from what the article sought to portray. If that is the case, (I hope it is) then there is hope. With “education” and some more cross-cultural exposure, these attitudes can be changed.

Those who provide the most danger, with regards to changing these attitudes, and must be stopped are the politicians who, while preaching against these same attitudes, shamelessly appeal to these sentiments for their selfish political ends. (I was in Ghana during the recent political campaign and witnessed this). When these “traitors” are exposed, I am sure we would have a country where the various “tribes” respect and tolerate each other.

12.03 THE AKANS OF GHANA, by *Adams Bodomo*

In this posting I address a specific question that was posed by one netter who unfortunately did not include his full name. The question goes as follows:

“Hi, Would someone fill me in on who the Akans are? Are the Nzemas classified as Akans? Which languages form the Akan languages. Please its urgent, Thank you.” - ‘AS8P000’

I shall try to answer the LINGUISTIC aspects of ‘AS8P000’'s questions, leaving the sociological, political, ethnographic, etc. aspects for other contributors. The various contributions may intersect though.

Akan is a cover name for the following speech forms in Ghana: Asante, Fante, Bron, Akwapem, Akyem, Agona, Kwahu and Wasa. It does not include Nzema, which belongs to another group with languages such as Ahanta, Sehwi, Anyi (Aowin) and Chakosi (Anufo).

Before 1950, however, no language group was known in Ghana as Akan. It was only since the 1950's that the term was first used to refer to the group of speech forms mentioned above. I don't know the exact etymology of the term Akan but I suggest it comes from the verb ‘to speak’ (ka) or the noun ‘speech’, ‘talk’ etc. (akasa). This is not to suggest that the word Akan does not have or may not have had other meanings and the reader can refer to my earlier posting on the net for an interesting 1943 suggestion by one Mr. Djan.

Today, Akan is the most widely spoken language in Ghana after English. Mother-tongue speakers of the language constitute approx. 40% of the population and there are also many non-native speakers of the language who speak it in various degrees of competence. For more information about Akan and other languages of Ghana, the interested reader may consult the following reference: M.E. Kropp-Dakubu, ed. (1988) THE LANGUAGES OF GHANA , London & New York.

12.04 Re: The Akan of Ghana, by *Paul Agbedor*

There was a posting by Bodomo in response to a request made by a netter on the use of the label “Akan”. Another netter, Alfred Opoku I think, replied by saying that the Akan people have been using the term to refer to themselves a long time ago. But I think what Bodomo was trying to put across is that before 1950 (or whatever), the term was not used to refer to the languages spoken by the various Akan groups. So we had such languages as Asante, Fante, Akwapim etc.. It was later found that those languages are closely related, and the name Akan was used to refer to the cluster of dialects (call them languages if you like). In other words, Asante Twi, Fante and Akwapim Twi, etc. are regarded as dialects of the same language, which is now called “Akan”.

So, the term is used to refer to the people, as well as the group of related dialects. The realization that those languages are closely related, made linguists propose a unified orthography for all these dialects. At present, at the GCE O/L, the various dialects are examined separately as different languages, but at the A/L, students study Akan (not Asante or Fante or Akwapim). So in short, the term “Akan” (linguistically) is a superordinate term used to refer to the languages mentioned by Bodomo. There is a distinction drawn between ethnographic Akans and linguistic Akan. I am not very sure about the distinction.

12.05 Ghanaian languages, by *Adams Bodomo*

AKUAMOAHA writes:

“ Hello Adams, Your posting on the Akans is, to my mind, one of the most illuminating pieces on the network.....My curiosity in Ghanaian languages has been heightened indeed. May I therefore suggest that you give netters a regional breakdown of Ghanaian languages. For e.g. the Asante region has only Asante (Akan) spoken in that region. In my own Eastern region we have Akyem, Kwahu, Asante (the people around Koforidua and New Juaben) and Krobo. Perhaps if you could give a more comprehensive regional breakdown I in particular would be very grateful. I hope that's not too much work.”

Thanks for your compliments. I am happy to discuss, learn and be of help. This is a quick response to your request, just a sketch but I assure the reader that even if s/he speaks the smallest of languages in Ghana s/he may still be able to identify his/her language group. Notice also that my grouping is not very radical as it conforms in most respects to existing classifications/groupings. I believe, however, that in addition to being comprehensive, it may also have pedagogical merits over others. Another point, with particular reference to your request for a breakdown into regions, is that the regions are mainly administrative and like our national boundaries, the regional boundaries hardly conform to linguistic boundaries, which are in themselves very difficult to draw ‘cut and dry’. Here is my presentation:

There are ten major language groups or, more precisely, language subgroups in Ghana but these do not conform in a one-to-one matching with the ten regions of the country. Some of these contain very large numbers of mother-tongue speakers while others hardly number hundred thousand mother-tongue speakers. Below is a presentation of the major groups using their cover name. We also indicate some of the individual languages or dialects under these groups with a rough indication as to their regional distribution in Ghana. These are listed in alphabetical order.

1. THE AKAN GROUP

Dialects/languages under this group include the following: Agona, Akuapem, Akyem, Asante, Brong, Fante, Kwahu and Wasa. (Notice that some people still insist that these are languages in their own right and not dialects under any so-called Akan language: I leave that question open here). This language group covers the present-day Ashanti, Brong-Ahafo, Eastern and Central regions. Akan is the most widely spoken language in Ghana after English. Mother-tongue speakers of the language constitute approx. 40% of the population and there are also many non-native speakers of the language who speak it in various degrees of competence.

2. THE BUEM GROUP

This group includes dialects/languages such as Adele, Lelemi, Bowiri, Sekpele, Siwu, Santrokofi, Logba and Avatime. These languages are found in the northern part of the Volta region, concentrating around the town of Jasikan. This a very small group. Together, they number less than 100, 000 basing on 1960 population figures.

3. THE GA-DANGBE GROUP

As the cover name implies this group includes Ga and Dangbe. Dangbe, in turn, includes Ada, Shai and Krobo. This group covers mostly the Greater Accra and Eastern regions. It is quite a sizeable group. If we extrapolate from the 1960 census figures Ga may have half a million L1 (i.e. mother-tongue) speakers and Dangbe slightly more than that.

4. THE GBE GROUP

This group is dominated mostly by Ewe within Ghana but there are others such as Fon, Aja and Mina in neighbouring Togo and Benin. This language covers most of the Volta region, concentrating in the Southern parts. Ewe is one of the most prominent languages in Ghana, with native speakers said to number about 1.5 million.

5. THE GRUSI GROUP

The Grusi group includes languages such as Kasem, Sisaali, Chakali, Tampulma, Vagla and Mo. They are found in the Upper-East, Upper-West and Northern regions, with major towns of concentration being Navrongo and Tumu. Kasem and Sisaali are the most prominent in the group in terms of number of native speakers and general language planning policies.

6. THE GUANG GROUP

Members of this group include Gonja, Achode, Nchumburu, Krachi, Nawuri, Nkonya, Cherepong, Awutu and Effutu. These languages are sparsely distributed around areas in the Northern, Brong-Ahafo, Volta, Central and Eastern regions. Gonja is the most prominent in this group, concentrating in towns such as Bole, and Salaga. Awutu-Efutu also concentrates in and around Winneba.

7. THE GURMA GROUP

This includes Konkomba, Bimoba and Bassari, found at the North-eastern border with Togo i.e. the eastern sides of the Upper-East and Northern regions.

8. THE MABIA GROUP

This includes Dagbane, Dagaare, Gurenne, Kusaal, Mampruli, Buli, Konni, Nabit, Talni, Hanga and Kamara. This group, extrapolating from 1960 figures constitutes 80% of the population of Northern Ghana and approx. 15% of the national population. Dagbane, Dagaare and Gurenne are prominent languages, each of them numbering up to or more than half a million native speakers. The members of this group cover large areas of the three regions of the North, concentrating around towns such as Tamale, Bolga, and Wa.

9. THE NAFANRA GROUP

Another small group, probably the smallest. These include Nkuraeng, Nafaanra and Ntrubo-Chala. These hardly number more than fifty thousand native speakers. These are found to the Western end of the Brong-Ahafo region, bordering Cote d'Ivoire.

10. THE NZEMA GROUP

This includes Nzema, Sehwi, Aowin, Ahanta and Chakosi (Anufo). The last may be mutually unintelligible with the rest, as it is isolated, occurring in the Northern tip of the Upper-East region while the rest are in the Western region. Nzema is more prominent in the group, numbering approx. hundred thousand native speakers in 1960.

This is a short presentation of the languages of Ghana according to how they are distributed in the regions. I have not touched on language planning policies in all these languages such as standardisation, their roles and positions in the mass media and educational policies involving them. I emphasise once again that not all may agree with my grouping, the naming and some of the statistics I tried to append. However, this is my humble contribution to attempts to put sanity into our supposedly chaotic linguistic situation. This is certainly not my last word. I have left out many details in an attempt to answer a specific question. I therefore stand to correction and precization.

12.06 Reticent Culture, by *Lizabeth Asiedu*

(Oct 28 1993)

Hi Netters, I had an interesting discussion with Sharlene (my African American friend) yesterday. She said a Nigerian guy told her that in his culture, the phrase "I love you" is seldom used, and that you say it to the opposite sex when you want to have "sex" (any minors out there?) with them. Sharlene thinks it is important that we continually tell our loved ones (especially kids) how much they mean to us, for example, her mum told her she loved her each night she tucked her up in bed.

Well, I told Sharlene that neither my parents nor siblings have explicitly uttered the phrase "Me do wo" (on paper, yea) to me, however, I have never doubted their love for me. So, it seems in our culture, we practice ACTION, NOT WORDS (motto of Holy Child School, Cape coast). The question then is, are we from a more reticent culture? It is true that ACTION speaks louder than WORDS, but how about combining ACTION and WORDS? It won't hurt. What do you think?

12.07 Love and our Culture, by *Adams Bodo*

(Oct 28 1993)

[illegible]

The question about the reticence of our Ghanaian or African culture is interesting. I suggest that we primarily have a highly multimediac, multisensual, culture of expression. When it comes to such things as love all our senses are involved.

A bowl of tasty microwaved fufu is = to 'I love you', A sheabutter smoothened ebony touch is >= to 'Je t' aime', Hey look, are you dumb, my hair style today says I have been longing for you ever since we spoke. And the pattern on this cloth means This evening I have come to say 'yes!'

[illegible]

A voice answers from my heart:
She is Takpo Dambaalima,
Grand Daughter of Takpo-Sengbogri.
She has come for your life.

(Oct 29 1993)

It is interesting that this subject has come up for discussion on the network. I hereby give my opinion. The question of not expressing love verbally or physically is not new to Africans especially those who have engaged in relationships with Westerners. Africans are accused of not showing affection, passion etc. When asked about the criteria for coming to such a conclusion, they are often told that they don't say things like 'I love you' etc., they don't hold hands in public, they don't kiss in public and, guess what?, they don't buy flowers, among other things. It is no secret that most Africans do not do some or all of these. Thus the question is, do they necessarily have to do some or all of these to show their love or affection to someone? Most importantly, do they have to learn how to do all or any of these?

It is known that after the second world war, the Anglos - British and Americans, compelled the parts of Germany they ruled to learn the English language. I am not trying to praise the French who did not. I am trying to point out that 'if you go to Rome do what Romans do' is not always the norm.

The central thesis of my piece is that you should do what you are comfortable with. Do not give up what you have been brought up with simply because somebody or some group says it is not right. Learn to stand by and defend your culture. More often than not, people have a negative view of something - like our culture - when they misunderstand it. Anthropologically speaking, culture is the sum total of attainments and LEARNED behaviour patterns. Thus it is up to us to explain what we do to people and why we do it, other than succumb to people's suggestions that we are not doing the right thing.

The 'great' western media has always attempted to show that nothing good comes out of Africa. In fact a couple of years ago, that was the title of an article in the 'economist' magazine. We are even taught that it is bad to be a nationalist. Thus in writings about Africa, the word nationalist always carries a negative connotation. Yet we see that Americans who carry flags or erect them in front of their houses and on their pouches are praised on American Television.

Saying 'I love you', etc. amongst westerners, stems from the well known 'reinforcement theory' in psychology. Maybe psychologists on the net will tell you more about this theory. But in the view of the man on the street, reinforcement theory asserts that if a behaviour is repeated several times to a person, it sticks in that person's memory and he/she tends to believe it. Note that this was the same philosophy of the Nazi information ministry. The Nazi information minister Goebbels is quoted to have said that if you tell a lie, and you tell it so many times, people believe it. That is classical reinforcement theory at work.

In the late '70's and early 80's, reinforcement theory was the big buzz amongst behaviorists. They even extended it to the workplace. That is if you could tell your workers that they are doing well and they are good workers, irrespective of the truth, they will tend to be just that. Thus a lot of academics made a lot of money preaching their new found theory/saviour to big business which has always been looking for ways to motivate workers. As to whether reinforcement theory worked or not, your guess is as good as mine. Just looking at the work place now, look at what is 'vogue' and what is not. Reinforcement theory is all but an academic exercise. This lends credence to the fact that action speaks louder than words.

It is a joyful exercise when you live with these Westerners who criticise Africans for not behaving as they do only to find their friends who go about preaching these 'I love you' slogans break up from relationships and marriages after a few months, and especially when they are at a loss to explain where all that 'I love you' went to. They begin to appreciate the African's action speaks louder than words method. A lot of westerners or in fact non-Africans approach our culture with a negative attitude due to what they have heard or been taught over the years. It is up to us to educate them.

Thus, dear netters, if that is how you were brought up, please don't feel shy to try to explain it citing examples to make your questioner use his/her head. There is nothing wrong with what we do. Our culture can be compared with folk wisdom. It is what has been handed down over the ages. Do not discount it without deep thought about its significance. Do not forget that in North America for instance, a lot of acceptable things will raise eyebrows back home. For example, a lot of clearly opportunistic actions are labelled here as 'aggressive', etc. and not looked upon as showing off or negative. So whilst I am not refuting your going along with the so called western culture, and whilst I am not discouraging you from adopting what you perceive as the best parts of it, do it only if you feel comfortable with it and don't feel lost if people tend to question our culture or feel bad about it.

12.09 Speaking English with children at Home, by *Sam*

“RSIV95K%SAUPM00.BITNET” (01 Nov 93)

I just saw a note raising the issue of people speaking English with their children at home. I am very curious. What is really wrong with that? Can someone educate me? I speak English at home with my kids and I wonder what is wrong with that. Some education on this will help.

12.10 Re: Speaking English with children at Home, by *Derryck Lamptey*

(1 Nov 93)

Anyemime! (to pick up on Eliz's salutation),

I trust that when I get round to fathering some children, I will want them to speak as *many* languages as possible. The only problem I see with having children speak a language at home that is not the language they are taught in at school, is that they can be less proficient in the school language, and plunge into a downward spiral, educationally.

Example:

In Britain, a lot of Pakistani families speak exclusively Urdu at home, and children at the language learning age may become proficient in Urdu and not in English. When the time comes to actually build on the foundations of knowledge using English as the medium, say, the kid is still grappling with understanding the language, rather than the information being conveyed. Hence a lot of schools in Pakistani areas have to rely on special-need teachers to supplement their education, and the performance figures for Pakistani children is known to be low.

This is not to suggest that teaching children our national languages is bad. In actual fact, the more languages children learn, the better they get at learning languages.. The thing to watch out for is to not put them at a disadvantage (foundation-wise) as compared to their peers at school.

12. 11 Re: Speaking English with children at Home, by *Isaac Thompson*

(1 Nov 1993)

Sam writes:

“ I speak English at home with my kids and I wonder what is wrong with that. Some education on this will help.”

Comment from “I”:

There's nothing wrong with speaking English at home with your children, unless of course it is done to the exclusion of the parents' mother tongue(s). Why the importance of the mother tongue? Because language is an essential part of a people's (non-material) culture (not to be confused with material, i.e., technological et al. culture.)

On a practical level, speaking English to your children (either here or in Ghana) prepares them for a world in which English and its associated culture continue to maintain uncommon supremacy, thanks to the Americans; they anglicised the world. By the same token, not schooling your children in any Ghanaian language(s) is to prepare them to be strangers in their own land one day. If that happens, they may never forgive you. The choice is clear.

12.12 What you speak at home, by *Charles Appeadu*

(1 Nov 1993)

Hi Netters, I am not an expert on the effect of language on the perceptions of people on cultures. I am just reporting an event/episode that occurred here in Seattle some time ago. I did not have to sit down to make a decision as to what language I have to speak with my children at home. Those who know me will have no problem concluding that I will

Speak Akan. This has nothing to do with my patriotism or cultural centricism. For me it was just a continuity of what I was doing in Ghana. Thus, my older son (who is now five) spoke unblemished Akan (well, as pure as it could be) from the time he was one and half or so until he started school at three. Then he started answering my Twi with English. Of course, I was wise enough to understand why and not force the little boy to reply with Twi. Still my two boys understand Twi perfectly but they do not speak it. Still I speak Twi at home and they reply in English and there is no conflict at all. It doesn't even occur to me that we are speaking different languages! I am serious!

Now the episode: We met another Ghanaian couple in a Nigerian friend's home. The Ghanaian couple have two kids, a teenage girl and a 10 year old boy. When they heard that I was communicating with my children in Twi and that the children understood me perfectly, they voiced their anger at their parents. The girl was particularly critical at her parents for not teaching them Fanti (their Ghanaian tongue). The parents asked me how I did it. I didn't do anything! I just spoke it at home without effort!

The point of this event is that it seems the kids value being able to speak their parents' tongue. If that is true, then for that reason alone, speaking your Ghanaian tongue at home is justified!! Remember, your kids will pick up English pretty fast when they begin school and you have the obligation (I think) to teach them at home, too. After all, my son is the only one in his five year old class who reads (ENGLISH) well, and is often called upon to read to his class. I AM A PROUD DADDY!!!

12.13 Re: Speaking English with children at Home, by *Benjamin Baidoe-Ansah*

(1 Nov 1993)

Amanfoo, Derryck's piece makes interesting reading. I do not think that the poor English language performance of the Pakistani children is due to the speaking of their local language at home. Of course, if children have to learn or use more than one language, then they have to put in a lot more effort because of the interference that the languages will exert on each other. There are a lot of ways to do that: reading more books in English, watching good TV and generally exposing the child to situations that will help them learn the language and also use it. Nothing good comes cheap!

I also think that a child growing up in an English speaking country like the U.S. or U.K. should be able to pick up the language from their environment. I was born in Accra and grew up there. We never spoke Ga at home, but I spoke Ga as well as any Ga kid. Nobody taught me Ga, I just picked it up from playing with friends who spoke the language. How about an Asante child living at say Nima? This child will be able to speak Twi, Ga, and Hausa!! If they get enough exposure in all languages, they can actually speak them fluently. Do we still have excuses?

12.14 Re: What you speak at home, by *Kyekyeku Opoku-Pong, Finland*

(2 Nov 93)

I do not have kids yet. When I do I will speak English to my kids not because I despise TWI which is my language but for the fact that I live in a non-English speaking country and I think my kids may never move to live in Ghana. Since I can simultaneously use two languages with them I have to think of the benefits the language I teach them will bring to them. The official language in Ghana is English. Besides, with English one can really manage in a lot of countries in the world including Ghana

I am not against MR APEADU speaking Akan to his kids but I think it is funny that they answer back in English. IT WOULD BE MORE COMPLETE IF THEY COULD ANSWER BACK IN AKAN. "MO DE BROFO MIKSE MIKSE TWI !!!"

12.15 Re: What do you speak at home, by *Linus Atarah*

(2 Nov 93)

I didn't want to enter this debate on language but now I can no longer hold back the urge to say a few words. People are simply reducing the issue of language into a problem of practicality. "Since I live in a foreign land, it will serve the kids best if they become very proficient in the dominant language of the surroundings". This is a very superficial way of seeing the problem because the issue of language is more profound than that.

Language basically defines what we are, it gives us our self identity. For kids born in a foreign culture, self identity is very crucial for their self confidence. For kids born of mixed marriages this is given an added importance. In Finland, a kid born of a Ghanaian and Finnish parents, may still sometimes be referred to as a nigger by his peers even if he or she can speak Finnish as fluently as any other Finn. This would set him wondering: "what's wrong with me"? "what am I and where do I come from"? The Finnish language alone doesn't give him any security. If the kid can speak Twi in addition, it is easier for him to live with the anomaly of being a Finn and yet not accepted into the Finnish society, just as we adults have been able to cope with racism without damaging our identity. In any case, if the motive for speaking English to your kid is to enable him gain proficiency fast enough to cope up in school, why don't you leave that to people best at it and paid to do just that. Kyekyeku's children may never move to Ghana but their search for identity would continue to be with them for almost all their lives.

12.16 Re: Re what do you speak at home, by *Akosua Addo*

<aaddo@unixg.ubc.ca> (2 Nov 1993)

Linus Atarah's comment about kids born in mixed marriages is quite interesting. In as much as I do agree that it is good for the child to speak a local Ghanaian language, I believe this does not guarantee the child's acceptance into the Ghanaian community either. We have words like "mulatto," and "half-caste". I do not think these words are exactly gratifying. I believe a child born into a mixed marriage should grow to appreciate the richness of his/her identity and seek to learn languages for that reason. I am still called "obronyi" when I go home to Ghana even though I am Black and I speak Twi, Fanti and smatterings of others languages. I was born into a mixed marriage so

12.17 Re: Speaking English, by *Alex Aboagye, Trondheim, Norway*

(3 Nov 1993)

Okyeame wo ho?

It is my considered opinion that the ability to speak and understand several languages is an advantage in addition to the other reasons like cultural identity, etc. Thus, parents should help their children take advantage of the language possibilities available to them whilst they are young and their language learning ability is at its best. It doesn't hurt to know one more language, does it? But not being able to understand a language can be a great disadvantage.

For children living outside their own cultural environments the home is sometimes the only place to learn their mother tongue. If the parents refuse to speak it with them they don't have any other source to learn from. I think it is our responsibility as parents to teach our children our local language. Here in Norway, the authorities go to every extent to recruit teachers to teach pupils their mother tongue. It is part of the school curriculum. I think it will not augur well for one's national identity if others go to every extent to teach your ward his/her mother tongue and you object on the grounds that s/he doesn't need it. Yes, we must teach our children to speak the language of our host countries very well, but not at the expense of their own mother tongue.

12.18 Home Language is the language spoken where I am!, by *Tchaka*

(3 Nov 93)

There have been some interesting comments on the issue of language. Naturally, I feel that my contribution is needed. Let me clarify that I am not an expert in Linguistics, Sociology, Psychology or the like. I am merely here to tell how my parents brought my sister and I up.

We seem to have a 'live it and take it all' attitude. I first learned Twi (the Nkoranza version) and did not begin English until I returned at the age of 4 to the US. I went back and forth between the two countries and used English and Twi regularly. No problem. I do not speak my mother's tongue (Sisaali), but can understand some (especially when she yells at me). Our family uses English and Twi regularly without even thinking. Responses can be in either. Even my father (broni) joins in.

My sister (13 years younger) began with English but added Indonesian (we lived in Indonesia). She juggled those two with Twi. Her English suffered a bit because the family moved to Egypt and she began juggling Arabic as well as more Twi (due to summer vacations in Techiman). But being in Ghana I'm sure she's gotten into the Owen style of Ashinglish (but with a Sisaali twist).

I guess my point is, be yourself and let your children learn the outside and inside languages. Speak as you always do and the kids will pick up. Children don't have as much to learn which is why they do well with languages. Maybe your child will not speak much Twi or Ga, but the base is all that is needed. I can barely muster 5 words in Sisaali now, but if I return I will remember a good deal. I couldn't speak Indonesian worth a penny a few years after leaving. Ten minutes after returning I was thinking in Indonesian! For a second I thought something was wrong. So just give that base and let the rest take its course.

12.19 Re: Speaking English, by *Derryck Lamptey, Sheffield, UK*

(3 Nov 93)

I subscribe to the views of Alex Aboagye on the present topic of language. In Wales, a lot of Welsh people resent the English for trying to obliterate the Welsh language, and prevent it from being taught in schools. A lot of Welsh people I know are proud to speak Welsh within the U.K. as it constantly provides a source of identity to them. The Irish are in the same situation over the Celtic language.

The ridiculous situation exists in the British parliament, where it is illegal to speak Welsh (even in debates about Wales!), but it is legal to speak Normandy French (from a neighbouring European country)!!

12.20 CHILDREN & ENGLISH LANGUAGE, by *Francis Y Owusu*

(2 Nov 1993)

I have followed the discussion on the above topic with interest precisely because I have two boys in this "Englishland". For me and my wife, language has never been a problem. We have continued our practice of speaking Twi at home. The kids, who have been out here for a little over two years, can speak English as any American child (with no accent!) They can equally speak Twi just like any Ghanaian kid back home. I am not a specialist in Linguistics, but what I know is that a child who can speak more than one language can easily learn more languages (my children are also learning Spanish). What is interesting is that if I get a visitor who is a Ghanaian, the children will speak Twi, if I get an American visitor, they speak English. What I am driving at is that, speaking a Ghanaian language at home with your children will not prevent them from being fluent in English.

We don't have to simplify the issue at stake, for, it goes beyond speaking English language at home to include how we train our children i.e. whether to be like Ghanaian or American kids. The choice is for the parents, but the children will hold us responsible if we do not train them in a way that they can fit well into the native society.

12.21 Languages, by *Akwele S. Bortei-Doku@Dartmouth.EDU*

(03 Nov 93)

I know that we do not speak Ghanaian languages in the classrooms and in the offices, but I also believe that life does not end there. Speaking my own language makes me feel more like an individual because the foreigners can see that there is another part of my life that is of value to me and which I wish to preserve.

I also believe that in foreign countries parents should teach their children how to speak their Ghanaian languages because (from the little I have seen) if they don't, who will? Thanks to my father, even though I spent my early years in a foreign country I don't only speak Ga; I can read and write Ga too.

12.22 Language at home, by *Samuel Aggrey*

<egyir@unixg.ubc.ca> (3 Nov 1993)

I have been following the language debate for a while and I will like to contribute. Although kids are fast in picking up languages, there are a lot of individual differences. African Americans are still struggling with identity crises: from Negro, Nigger, Afro American ...to African American. The question I will pose is, if you start your kids with your native language before they start school, will it make your kids less competitive? NO. With respect to the children I have come across from different countries in Europe and North America who have no knowledge about either English, Dutch, German etc., they only suffer a little setback for about a year. They pick up the language and do well. The performance of the kid depends MOSTLY on his/her own IQ. Grades 1-3 are not competitive grades. They mostly draw. Mr. Appeadu's kid speaking back in English is not uncommon. When the kids start school, they spend most of their time outside their home. They speak English or Greek more than Akan/Ga/Ewe. If the kids maintain the language through adolescence (after having built their ownself confidence) they will even prefer to polish the native language and speak it all the time and be FOREVER grateful to their parents. There is nothing wrong with speaking English at home. When I was in Ghana we spoke English more at home than Fante. The possibility of losing my native language wasn't there, but over here it is possible. I think parents should boost the confidence level of the kids because I believe the kids go through a lot in this environment on issues of self-esteem. Some kids brought from home may think that in order to get accepted by their peers they have to do away with the African legacy (which includes the language). In a year or two they forget everything. I know 2 kids A and B. If kid A is playing with his white peers and you call him by his Ghanaian name he will not respond. If a white person asks kid B how he is called, he will tell you his English name and add that he prefers to be called by his African name. Both kids are 8 years. One thing I have noticed is that most of the kids born of Africans, after going through the identity and self-esteem crises want to get connected to Africa and they always wished they could SPEAK their native language.

12.23 Re: Languages, by *benjamin baidoe-ansah U*

<bbaidoe4@mach1.wlu.ca>

(4 Nov 1993)

Amanfoo,

Akwele has touched on something interesting: she can read and write Ga! I wish I could say that about Ga and the other Ghanaian languages I speak. Since starting to speak Fanti with my daughters, I have realised the inadequacy of my Fanti vocabulary. I have ordered some books from Ghana to help me since I think it will be a bit absurd to insist on my daughters speaking Fanti when I can hardly provide them with enough vocabulary to do so. It is a shame that some of us barely know our local languages, even though we were brought up in Ghana!!

I admire Akwele's father for his effort (it certainly must have taken some effort). Ayeeekoo!

My wife and I will like to learn from anyone who has gone through the experience of teaching Ghanaian languages to their children. We will appreciate any suggestions and titbits.

12.24 Re: Language at home, by *Kwesi Baidoe-Ansah, Canada*

<bbaidoe4@mach1.wlu.ca> (4 Nov 1993)

Amanfoo,

I agree with Sammy's point about African children wanting to link to Africa in later years. I want to draw our attention to the current wave of afrocentricism making its way across the U.S., Caribbean, etc. There is an increasing

interest being shown in Africa by our African-American sisters and brothers. There are a lot of schools teaching African culture to black children in the U.S., school children have made trips to Ghana etc., to learn about Africa. Infact, I understand some African-American children are learning Swahili in the U.S.!! Such an identification with Africa is on the increase.

I find it interesting that some of us, born and bred in Africa, are moving in the opposite direction! If the Afrocentric tide continues, as I suspect it would, then those of us ready to throw away our children's African identity will have a lot of explaining to do to them later!! I just hope it will not be from the wrong end of a gun!!

12.25 The Color Bar, by *Tchaka, Virginia, USA*

(Wed, 3 Nov 93)

I am ready to start some static so if you want a ride, let us begin a new debate. According to Akosua:

"... I believe a child [born] into a mixed marriage should grow to appreciate the richness of his/her identity and seek to learn languages for that reason. I am still called obronyi when I go home to Ghana even though I am Black and I speak Twi, Fanti and smatterings of others languages. I was born into a mixed marriage so"

It is this last point that I want to explore. Akosua (and anyone else interested in answering), what makes you think you are Black? If you were born into a mixed marriage as you say, I cannot believe that you are Black. No ma'am. You are 'obroni nkatie'! Not Black. Speaking different languages does not create race, but this is not the point I am raising. I am highly curious by which standard of rules a determination of your race was obtained. Please do not use the American rules; we know they are wrong!

12.26 Re: The Color Bar, by *D.Lampthey@sheffield.ac.uk*

(3 Nov 93)

I just have a humble opinion on the issue of color bar, as initiated by Tchaka, I will contend that nobody on earth is black. If you were black, you would not be seen, and you would absorb all the light around you!

Having said what we are not, what now. We are brown, and really just haggling over where to draw a line. To say someone can be black (or not) on a genetic basis is to fling millions of "Afro-Americans" into a racial purgatory, as a lot of Afro-Americans have white blood in them, and a lot of White americans have blac... oops (African) blood, in them.

My dad is pure "ganyobi". O.K. well, not quite. His mum is Ewe and his dad Ga, mentally, he is Ga. My mum is 5/8's pure Portuguese, and the rest mixed. When our family meets, the side that married Indians, etc. produce a spectrum that ranges from blonde hair to kinky hair!

Given all this, genetically I am a mutt. But my Conscience is black. That is the most important thing! There are pale-skinned people in Jamaica for, example, who are more "black" than most of us. Why? Because its in the mind.

12.27 Re: The Color Bar, by *George Owusu*

<gow@unixg.ubc.ca> (3 Nov 1993)

Tchaka writes:

"...It is this last point that I want to explore. Akosua (and anyone else interested in answering), what makes you think you are Black? If you were born into a mixed marriage as you say, I cannot believe that you are black..."

Comment from George:

Well, for your information, she is black, just as any of us. So what is your problem? I think you probably misunderstood her. She might be right if she said she was born into a mixed marriage. My understanding of mixed relationship does not refer to only “oburoni” and “bibini”. As long as there is a difference in the cultural background of the two parents involved, be it two Blacks or two Whites but from opposite ends of the globe I consider this to be a “mixed” relationship. Maybe Ms Addo was born to two Blacks but from different cultural backgrounds, hence her use of the word “mixed”.

12.28 Re: Color bar, by *Akosua Addo*

<aaddo@unixg.ubc.ca>

I wish to thank Tchaka for his comments on this “color bar” issue. I believe in an earlier posting on culture and language, a netter drew on the story of a Ghanaian-Finnish boy. This netter, I have forgotten who, alluded to the fact that this boy was called a “nigger”, etc.. inspite of the fact that he spoke Finnish, and was part-Finnish. I was responding to an issue on “identity” and “acceptance” via language. If by calling myself black, I confused you, I am sorry.

I think what is most important for anyone is a sense of self-worth, what we educators like to call self actualisation. We need to learn to appreciate ourselves for who we are regardless of what labels others may try to impose on us. I will reiterate that the purpose of learning our ethnic languages must be in appreciation of who we are as Ghanaians or as part-Ghanaians.

How do you define “race?” I am curious. How did you come to the conclusion that I was “abro ni nkatie?” Pardon my ignorance, but what really are the American rules for determining race? I would appreciate it if you educated me on that. I do not know them so I did not use them. Comments are welcome!

12.29 Re: Color Bar, by *macdaddy*

<wto3e@darwin.clas.virginia.edu>
(4 Nov 93)

After hearing a few responses from Derryck, George Owusu, Akosua and others, I figure I need to add more. Hopefully, things will be a bit clearer.

The reason I chose to start ‘The Color Bar’ is because of my own experiences. I am 37.5% Irish, 12.5% Welsh, and 50% Strong Sisala (hence: half and half). I was raised in Ghana, and was called ‘broni’. As far as I can tell, I thought of myself as white.

I then moved to Chicago. While I can recall being called ‘nigger’ only once, it was clear I was not white, simply by looking at white people. Returning to Ghana, I could not be black. No way. Just as Akosua could not be seen as black. My first language is Twi and at that time, I was ‘native’ in the tongue. Yet I could not be black. I return to the US and I am black. I move to Indonesia and I am considered ‘Saudi’. Basically, I am not black or African or in anyway associated until I explain my heritage. At that point everyone wants to know if I am a boxer!

While in college, I visited my parents four times in Egypt. According to Cairoans I CANNOT POSSIBLY BE BLACK! Nope. I am one of them and in their minds that is final. So I have been tossed all around. If I was not so self-confident, holding my self-worth soooooo high, yet maintaining great humbleness [:-]], I would be a basket case.

Here in America, there is the ‘one-drop’ theory in which people having a drop of black blood are automatically black. The actual figures are one-sixteenth or one-thirty second. These laws were implemented in the slave days by masters to ensure property rights to children born out of relationships or rapings of female slaves.

Regardless of what anyone chooses to call me, I do not feel black. I will find time and expand more on why I do not feel black.

12.30 First generation Ghanaian, by *Vijitha Mahadevan*

<EIF8TMO@MVS.OAC.UCLA.EDU>

(04 Nov 93)

I've been following this whole discussion of color and what constitutes being "black". I was curious as to how you would consider someone like me. I consider myself Ghanaian, and a first generation Ghanaian at that. I was born in Kumasi, went to primary, then secondary school there, then after finishing my A's I came here to university. But the point is, my parents are Sri Lankan--they moved to Ghana in the 50s and all of their children were born there. Although we did visit Sri Lanka now and then, we the kids always considered ourselves Ghanaian. Since my father worked for UST, most of our friends lived around Tech campus (or were from school). The Indian business community would sometimes make overtures to our family--to join their relatively closed circle--but we felt very distant from them. So, given what I have said, what do you think? By the way, I do happen to be one of those Dravidian Sri Lankans so my skin happens to be dark brown, but as for me I prefer to not even bring up the issue of color to my advantage since that's only skin deep. Probably my scepticism comes from having been here for long enough to find out that a lot of the black Americans I have met are so far removed from being African, that I have started looking beyond that. But that's another whole issue. Anyway, I would be interested in getting your responses.

12.31 Color Bar (the rest of it) by *macdaddy*

<wto3e@darwin.clas.virginia.edu>

(4 Nov 93)

I am presently in a group (no real name) here at UVa which consists of students with mixed heritage. Most of us are 50% -50% but not solely black and white. The reason we gather is to discuss our experiences, mostly in American society. Henceforth I will speak on behalf of us black-white mixtures. As mentioned before, we are Black by law. Among most Black Americans we are forced to choose: we are either "down with it!" - meaning all out Black; or we are "sell-outs", "wannabes" (meaning 'want to be White'), or Uncle Toms, etc. Not every 'Black' person wants to listen to rap or go to the same parties, or play basketball, etc. Imagine the faces when I told people that I occasionally listen to heavy metal!

On forms for standardised tests, university applications and the like, there is a section for race that leaves us in the dark. Here is an excerpt from the application for the US Foreign Service 1993:

Black. A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa. (etc.) White. A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa... (-I dont agree with N.Afr)

Not bad, but then it says choose one. So I am forced to deny one side of me.

Let me make it clear that I do not have a problem with being Black or with Blacks or whatever arguments anyone may have. On the contrary, I love the heritage obtained from my mother. I would not trade it for anything. I also do not have a problem with being called Black (or for that matter Green, or Polka-Dotted). I just do not like being forced to take that label and in one way or another deny the White side of me. I also love that side of my family.

As for not feeling Black, please do not take it the wrong way. This is a result of my upbringing which I explained in my last post. It does not mean that I am better than anyone who is Blacker'. Here in the US, the natural reaction is "Oh, so you're better than us?" This is the lack of self-pride, self-worth, and self-confidence that plagues much of Black America. In my mind NO RACE IS INHERENTLY SUPERIOR (sorry Hitler!). If I am better than you, it is because of something I do (or did), NOT because of my racial make-up (and vice-versa).

I will conclude by saying that in the group I mentioned at the beginning, no one rejects being Black or 'Blackness'. Rather we want the world to know that we are not going to deny the other half. Nor will we change our way of life to appease the 'Blacker than Thou' groups.

12.32 re: Color Bar, by *Kwesi Baidoe-Ansah*

<bbaidoe4@mach1.wlu.ca>
(4 Nov 1993)

Amanfoo,

The question about who is a Black, or for that matter, a White, Indian, etc., has been one that I have been toying with for a while. I do not have any problem WHATSOEVER with a child born to a Black and White parent calling THEMSELVES black. In such a situation, if the child says he or she is Black, then she/he is Black (as far as I am concerned).

My interest is in the situations where someone else does the definition. Gen. Collin Powell looks as much White to me as he is Black. Why can't he say he is White, assuming he wants to call himself White? There seems to be some unwritten (or is it written) rule that in such situations the child is Black, regardless of whether they see themselves as White or not. If one parent is White and the other is Black, then the offspring of such a marriage could be a Black or White depending on how they want to classify themselves. So why can't they call themselves White, if they want to do so? I need some answers, especially from those who have Black and White parents.

12.33 Re: Color Bar, by *Isaac Thompson*

<ixtst+@pitt.edu> (4 Nov 1993)

Tchaka writes:

"... The reason I chose to start 'The Color Bar' is because of my own experiences. I am 37.5% Irish, 12.5% Welsh, and 50% Strong Sisala (hence: half and half)..."

Comment from I:

I was struck by the precision and confidence with which you portray your genetic background, granted that the decimals might have been used in jest. For a moment I thought I was reading the Great Kau Debate all over again, complete with its tables of percentages.

If you talk to your Irish and Welsh relatives you would discover they are probably made up of more percentages than you are: They may, for all you know, be derived from Italians, Aryans, Greeks, Nordics, Celts, etc., Take each of these and look for their percentage constituents as well and see if you can find any paper large enough to hold the kind of flow chart you would come up with.

My point is, genetically, we are all amalgamations of one kind or another. Even the darkest "nigger" is to some degree or another. To reduce these amalgamations into numbers and then use those numbers in some micro-, "hypy"-technical definitions of self is to embark on a futile search for identity. We are what society has decided we are: No one is born a Ga, Busanga, Frafra, Welsh, Greek, or Sisala; or Isaac, Tchaka, or Akosua. If I present you with two, minute-old babies, you won't be able to tell me which is Brong and which is Ibo. They could both be "Fanti"; yet raised by Dagomba parents, they would be Dagombas--by social definition.

Your continual search for identity because Egyptians and Asians consider you something other than what you think you were, in my opinion, is the wrong approach to a problem that is world-wide. Ghanaians (and perhaps other Africans) are fond of considering anybody who's not Black (Chinese, Arabs, Japanese, Indians, etc.) as "White". That is OUR problem, arising from our own ignorance, not theirs, and there is no need for them to re-define themselves because of our ignorance. Just as YOU shouldn't go looking for a new name or a new face everytime you are mistaken for someone else. Let the "mistake" worry about that. By the way, have you ever wondered why Arnold Schwarzenegger's name means the "Black Plow Man"? Check it out.

12.34 ABUSER or WHAT?,by Clement, Victoria, B.C

EOJ@UVVM.UVIC.CA
(06 Nov 93)

Agoo,

Not long ago, my 'white' friend and I watched a T.V programme on CHILD ABUSE. We sat down and listened to the 'experts' discuss what it is and how it affects the child in his/her later development. Their main point is that parents or people who hit (spank) a child are ABUSERS and that that child is also more likely to be abusive (in any form) in later years.

After that I had a long argument with my friend about the programme. I told him that, at least everybody that I know back home has been hit before and that I don't think that was or is ABUSE and that all of us have grown now into fine individuals with no problem at all about those days. In fact those days have really helped us to cope with life here in the 'white man's' world.

The question I would like to ask is, are we, our teachers and our parents ABUSERS OR WHAT? For I know that, anybody born at home or who went to school up to primary class six in Ghana has been hit, at least once, by somebody as a form of discipline. Personally I don't think I have ever been ABUSED. Or was I born and bred in so much abuse that I see nothing wrong with that? I want to know.

12.35 Re: ABUSER or WHAT? by Samuel Asomaning

<asosam@unixg.ubc.ca (8 Nov 1993)

The piece by Clement makes interesting reading. I am not here to run down psychology or hold back development. In fact, I am for good psychology based on demonstrable facts and very solid scientific grounding. Also, if there are good things in the society here we can pick up, I am all for that. Pardon me, I am a 'techie' so I don't like heresy evidence.

I just wanted to point out that most of this stuff is based on psychology some of which is suspect at best. Remember all those 'black man is dumb' theories put up by American Psychologists in the 50's and 60's? My statistics professor used to say that those guys will go around measuring white peoples height, the size of their heads and other physical characteristics and correlating the data so obtained with their IQ's. They will then use these correlations to predict the IQ's of other people. We all know that having an association between two sets of data means nothing don't we?

Most recently is the Canadian professor Philippe Rushton or what have you. He also went around measuring the sizes of dead people's brains (of different races) and their penises (ooooOOOOps!!!!). He then in the name of academic freedom proclaimed that black men had the smallest brain of all the races so they are the most dumb. And they of course had the biggest penises so they are the most sexually active. The medics will have to help me out here because I don't see the connection very much. (I am not advocating political correctness here , just that the research sucks, so bear with me).

My point is that buyer be ware. If you pay attention to a lot of these psychological rantings, the only conclusion you will come to is that we are ma-f-adjusted. At least I know I am not and none of the people know is. No wonder some of these theories and findings are called pop psychology. They are pieces of crap (OOOOOOOOOOOOOPS!!!!).

By the way if you have a kid who only speaks 'brofo' at home the American or Canadian way and who grew up on fast food and has never heard about 'fufu', then be on the look out and hide your cane for he will not only ask you whether Africans live on trees or wear clothing he will also accuse you of being a child abuser.

12.36 Re: ABUSER or WHAT?, by Akosua Addo

<aaddo@unixg.ubc.ca> (8 Nov 1993)

I was chatting with one of our Ghanaian sisters here. She did not know about this discussion. We normally deliberate on different social issues. Well, she told me she had made a similar statement regarding our forms of discipline. I was quick to agree with her. I said “ Yes, we are alright. We have grown up just fine.....” She added that she was asked “Are you really alright?” ‘You’ here refers to Africa.

Maybe we do have to look at our forms of discipline again. Do not get me wrong. I am not saying we should stop disciplining our children. Could it be that by instilling fear in children we are stifling their creative abilities? Do we really need the cane? Are we conditioning them to only respond to the cane? Could this be the reason the third world is still plagued by coups? I know this is a wild link but think about it for a moment. Is it that we have been enculturated to respond to force, fear, violence?

When we go home after studying overseas many of us complain about the bureaucracy, and the mystery that seems to be created around superiors. Many of us get frustrated because we are not being “allowed” to try new things. We decide that starting something on our own may be the answer. At least we do not have to answer to anyone. When that fails we take up appointments overseas.

I love the way our kids are polite, and have a great respect for elders. It is pleasant being around a Ghanaian kid. We carry those values with us when we grow up. How does it affect the way we respond to challenges? Please take what I have said in good faith!!!!!!

12.37 Re: ABUSER or WHAT?, by *Sitsofe Anku*

<anku@unixg.ubc.ca> (9 Nov 1993)

Akosua,

Have you been “disciplined” as child? I guess so! If yes, have your creative abilities been stifled? I think it is the extent to which you use the cane, but you need to combine the use of the cane with explanations, giving directions, and allowing kids to take supervised risks. What goes with the way kids are trained here unsupervised? You all know the mess and I don’t want to bore anybody with that. When we “discipline” our children, we are only supervising them. White family friends have asked me how come my kids are so respectful and disciplined; I should tell them how I make it. But I have not stifled my kids creativity. They top in their classes in most subjects and they were able to organise plays to stage for my friends, without any input from me. I was “disciplined” but my creativity is not stifled. Don’t forget you need a disciplined mind to be creative.

12.38 Abusers, by *Ato Quayson, Cambridge, England*

(LAQ10@phx.cam.ac.uk) (09 Nov 93)

It is interesting that this issue of child discipline is being raised now because it is a topic I have been debating with some friends recently. Before we can assess the total effect of the disciplinary measures meted out at home, I think we have to take account of how the society as a whole enforces values and how it creates an environment which projects a sense of punishment and reward.

For some time now, there is a case raging in a British court in which two children aged 11 and 12 are accused of abducting a child of two from a shopping mall and taking him about five miles away to have him tied to a railway line. What interests me about this particular case is that several witnesses saw the three children at different points in their journey. The testimony of the witnesses is that they realised the little kid was clearly in distress, but the general response to the children was either to tick them off for roaming aimlessly or to ask them to go home. The question for me is this: WHY IS IT THAT NONE OF THE ADULTS DECIDED TO TACKLE THE CHILDREN IN QUESTION AND TAKE THEM TO THEIR DESTINATION ASSUMING THERE WAS A CLEAR ONE? WHY IS IT THAT NO ONE PAID MORE ATTENTION TO THE OBVIOUS INCONGRUITY OF TWO YOUNG TEENAGERS LEADING AN OBVIOUSLY DISTRAUGHT TWO-YEAR-OLD?

This, I think, could never have happened in our country where every problem is the concern of everyone else. I have even heard of cases in Ghana where loitering children are “arrested” by other older children and taken to police stations. This brings me to my point on the context of discipline back at home. If the parents carry out their responsibilities properly while administering the cane there is no way the child will grow to become unbalanced. The whole culture itself institutes a balancing mechanism by which the child grows to understand that there is an atmosphere of caring even when there is harsh punishment at home. The problems of imbalance cannot be limited solely to the disciplinary regimes that parents adopt for their children; there are other factors like the child’s growing perception of the value-system of the world-at-large and also of his peer group. This is of course not to suggest that our disciplinary regimes do not need re-examination in the context of changing requirements, as I would imagine Akos would demand, but we cannot isolate these from the general socio-cultural context within which these disciplinary regimes operate. For my part, I would certainly not support reckless spanking and caning on the flimsiest of excuses; but I would also shy away from zero spanking and the general “liberal” attitudes that operate in Western homes.

12.39 Re: ABUSER or What!, by *Kofi Amoah*

<amoah@maple.circa.ufl.edu> (09 Nov 1993)

Yo Netters,

According to “Sam the Man”, Phillipe Rushton went around measuring...snip...snip.. and concluded that blackmen/women have the smallest brains therefore they must be the dumbest. Though I haven’t seen the said article, to be able to make such a conclusion from a study like this, one must match the subjects for a lot of extraneous factors. This is b’cos factors such as conditions during gestation, obstetric care, conditions during delivery (e.g. overt or covert head injuries), nutrition in the formative years, head injuries during one’s lifetime and brain tumours all figure prominently in brain size. From personal experience at Korle-Bu’s Pathology Dept (I did over 2000 autopsies), I found that my patients with a history of mental illness or malnutrition e.g. kwashiorkor had smaller brains than their peers. So, to make such conclusions without taking into account all these factors is academic dishonesty (or maybe he had ulterior motive such as sponsorship by the KKK) The point I want to make is, it is almost impossible to match your subjects for all these factors unless you start at the time when your subjects are conceived!!!!. So these are the facts. I leave you to make your wn conclusions, bearing in mind the fact that blacks everywhere are usually at the bottom of such things as obstetric care, etc. As for the size of one’s genitals, the only effect it has on sex is psychological. There is no scientific fact to prove that size of penis corresponds to one’s sexual escapades. If this is true, then the opposite must be true, i.e. no sexual activity will lead to dysuse atrophy. As far as I know, size of penis is genetically inherited. There are whites with big ones and there are blacks with a variety of all sizes (at least, some of us can attest to this from our bathroom experience in boarding houses during our secondary school days).

13 LITERACY AND DEVELOPMENT

compiled and edited by *Adams B. Bodo*

13.00 Editorial note by *Adams Bodo*

This topic developed out of discussions on Educational reforms. As the editorial board began to compile and edit the rather extensive topic of Educational reforms, it became clear that the issue of literacy and development merited a separate treatment. Some of the articles referred to here can be found in the yearbook's section on Educational Reforms.

13.01 Re: Edu. Reforms (Educated vrs Literate), by *Adams Bodo, Trondheim, Norway*

Our discussions on educational reforms have highlighted the role of participation. Ebenezer Annan, for instance, has interesting ideas and counter-ideas about the role of parents, students and pupils in these reforms. It has, however, also drawn attention to the fact that in the course of our debate we have to clarify the difference between EDUCATION and LITERACY. In response to Aboagye's views, Annan writes:

"Finally, in support of Alfred's piece, Alex Aboagye indicated that it takes an educated populace to ensure the development of any society. I must say that Aboagye's axiom is leaking with fallacy. The knowledge and ability of illiterate members of society can no longer be discounted. If development is to be workable and especially sustainable (and I use the term sustainable with ample caution), if development is to benefit the poor and vulnerable in society then the educated must learn to appreciate the wisdom of the illiterate. Development whether through educational reforms or other projects is about progress but it is also about mutual respect within the entire society."

I am not sure we can talk about a false premise (i.e. a fallacy) here once we understand who constitute the 'educated populace' of a country and what role they play.

Education, as most of us are probably aware, deals with the development (either by systematic instruction OR by experience) of an individual's character and mental powers. To educate a person then is to train a person intellectually, morally and socially.

From the above, education is certainly much more comprehensive than literacy, which by itself basically means training somebody to read and write. To be literate means to have a good chance, an efficient tool to get educated but canaan would not have been reached yet. It is only when some functionality is added to literacy that it begins to get nearer the comprehensive notion of education.

I even dare say that education, if it means attaining intellectual and moral awareness of one's particular society, does not always include literacy. By extension from this premise therefore illiterates within a society are not excluded, necessarily, from the 'educated populace'. I suppose therefore, and I am quite sure by interaction with him, that when Alex talked about the 'educated populace' he did not exclude illiterates.

In fact, as we all know probably, some illiterates in the Ghanaian society are even more politically conscious and community-oriented than some literates. By personal experience, I know that in some communities some illiterates more readily avail themselves to community labour than some literates: they are eager to build projects, to clean the environment etc., while some literates think that such menial jobs befit only illiterates, only 'uneducated' (by their definition those who haven't been schooled, and who therefore cannot normally read and write), in Ghana.

In this sense, somehow, probably by their own experience and traditional ethics such illiterates are more educated in such communal matters than such 'white-colour' oriented literates.

To conclude from the above, based on these two important concepts, I would categorise the Ghanaian populace as follows:

- i. The Educated literate populace
- ii. The Uneducated literate populace
- iii. The Educated illiterate populace and
- iv. The Uneducated illiterate populace.

Of course there are no watertight boundaries between these divisions, but I would say that probably more than 50% of Ghanaians are still in groups iii and iv. As for groups one and two it will be difficult to stick one's neck and say which one of them has greater numbers. But certainly the most dangerous group is the uneducated literate population. It is to this group that the adage 'half education is poisonous' applies most. Sadly enough, such people are in touch with groups iii. and iv. at the community level and they are relied on because they have a powerful tool (literacy) to gather information but do not have a powerful tool (the intellectual, analytical mind) to digest and interpret this information adequately.

That is why the issue of civics (the study of the rights and duties of citizenship) should be of prime importance as we discuss the content of the educational reforms back home in our dear Ghana.

13.02 Education vrs Participation: Literacy, by *Charles Awasu, Syracuse, New York*

This is in regard to the earlier comments on participation. When I mentioned participation in my posting, I was more concerned about the community level. Evidently, most governments including the PNDC had not been democratic enough to allow for mass participation.

However, community participation used to flourish during the period of the religious schools. The local authorities that took over from the religious organisations have not been very good at allowing for community participation in the running of schools.

On the question of literate vrs illiterate participants, I think that is a non-starter. I admired Adams categorisation of the un/educated populace. As Eben indicated, participation in school programs especially at community levels does not need educated skills.

My concern however is with the terminology of “illiteracy”. Which class of the populace do we refer to as illiterates? In what are they illiterate? Is it in the English language or Fante/Ewe/Twi/Dagbani or in the numerous Kwa languages? I think it is grossly unfair to refer to people as illiterates. Most of our people don’t need English to function in their environments. Most of our local “capitalists” e.g. cocoa farmers, traders, fishermen, cattle herders and the majority of the population are able to function without the English language. Let’s get away from this Euro-centrist definition of who is literate or illiterate.

As for education there are several forms of it that occur outside what we know as the “formal classroom”. The training of our herbalists, artisans, farmers and the host of our drivers etc. are all forms of education that can be classified as non-formal and informal.

Its time we redefined some of these terms when referring to our people. What we need to know is that some of these terms are obsolete. Will anyone call a French an Italian or a German citizen un/educated as illiterate because s/he is not literate in English? I consider most Ghanaians literate.

13.03 Re: Educational reforms, by Alex Aboagye, Trondheim, Norway

Okyeame wo ho?

Ebenezer Annan wrote:

“Finally, in support of Alfred’s piece Alex Aboagye indicated that “it takes an EDUCATED populace to ensure the development of any society”. I must say that Aboagye’s axiom is leaking with fallacy. The knowledge and ability of ILLITERATE members of society can no longer be discounted.” (Capitals mine)

On the above I wish to state that you’ve misunderstood me here . I make a big difference between an ILLITERATE and an UNEDUCATED person. An illiterate is one who has not learnt to read nor write. Such a person may not necessarily be uneducated when it comes to certain issues. On the issue of civic rights and responsibilities, my understanding of an uneducated person is one (either literate or illiterate) who is not aware of his fundamental rights as a human being nor his civic rights and responsibilities and/or the workings of the system in which s/he lives. I think it is possible for a person to be an illiterate and yet be better educated than another person with a university degree when it comes to civic rights and responsibilities or some other specific issue.

So many of us, whilst being literate, and possibly well educated in certain issues, are at the same time, uneducated when it comes to some other issues. Perhaps this is just a semantic problem and whilst being careful not to draw attention away from the issues at stake I at the same time think it is an important and relevant difference, at least, to my postings.

And thus I will not vouch for a person to formulate a curriculum for me or my children simply because s/he is literate or because s/he has many academic titles or simply because we need to involve people. Yes, we need to involve people but we must involve them where they are best trained. The main point of all my postings in this educational reform issue is to press home the issue of making fundamental human rights, civic rights and responsibilities a part of our educational curriculum. I feel it is an important part of every person’s education. And I feel that we need EDUCATED people to formulate it.

I stated that civics was part of our educational curriculum in the old system. But it consisted of learning by heart the names of heads of ministries. That, in my opinion, is no civic education and possibly reflect the kind of people who formulated it, and/or maybe the kind of teachers who taught it. If we are to get anywhere and be sure that we have citizens who understand their rights, privileges and responsibilities in their society, we need to ensure that we teach a good and uniform curriculum on these issues and not leave it to parents nor individuals because that can lead to different sectors teaching God-knows-what to their children with it’s foreseeable undesired consequences.

13.04 Re: Education vrs Participation: Literacy, by *Adams Bodom*

This is in response to Charles Awasu's (mis)understanding of the term 'LITERACY/ILLITERACY'. Charles wrote:

"My concern however is with the terminology of "illiteracy". Which class of the populace do we refer to as illiterates? In what are they illiterate? Is it in English language or Fante/Ewe/Twi/Dagbani or in the numerous Kwa languages? I think it is grossly unfair to refer to people as illiterates. Most of our people don't need English to function in their environments. Most of our local "capitalists" e.g. cocoa farmers, traders, fishermen, cattle herders and the majority of the population are able to function without the English language. Let's get away from this euro-centrist definition of who is literate or illiterate...I consider most Ghanaians literate."

Charles, this is one particular term which has nothing much to do with Eurocentrism or Afrocentrism or what have you. As I tried to explain in a previous posting LITERACY by definition is basically the ABILITY TO READ AND WRITE. It doesn't matter the language in which you can do this. Another dimension is that literacy deals with only written aspects of language. Infact, you can speak English perfectly i.e. you can have a good command of oral English but if you cannot read and write English or any other language, you are an illiterate. In that sense it is possible to get illiterates in Britain and America, though these people may speak their version/ dialect of English fluently.

This is exactly the case with us in Ghana. Even though most people in Ghana speak the languages fluently they cannot read and write in these languages nor in any other languages. That is why a large proportion of Ghanaians are illiterate. To your question whether literacy in Ghana is defined with respect to English or Fante/Ewe/Dagbani/Twi, I wish to inform you that whichever way you choose the prognoses/statistics are not good for Ghana. As I have already mentioned in my quite lengthy paper (see the section on Ghanaian Languages), because of the deliberate play down on Ghanaian languages by the Colonial administration and even some of our own politicians, what is often called 'mother-tongue' literacy is not very developed in Ghana. We hardly even had acceptable orthographies in our languages until quite recently. The sad fact is that even though a lot of us are literate in English or French or Swahili most of us (even on this net) are not literate in our respective mother-tongues. Some research (combined with educated guesses) have shown that most schooled Ghanaians, when they choose or have to communicate with other Ghanaians, including relatives and close friends who they share a mother-tongue with, communicate through a non-Ghanaian language (mostly English). So you see most Ghanaians are illiterate in even their own language.

Since we are now into the era of 'I have been doing this and that before I came out...., I worked here and there and therefore know this and that more than most people' I will beg the indulgence of netters and say that these are issues I have had the privilege to research into and work with in Ghana. And I know some netters who have also done this. We are certainly ready to share our knowledge and even learn more.

So Charles, I will have to disagree with you and say that the term under discussion has little to do with eurocentrism and to say the following:

"Its time we redefine some of these terms when referring to our people. What we need to know is that some of these terms are obsolete. Will anyone call a French Italian or German citizen un/educated as illiterate because s/he is not literate in English? I consider most Ghanaians literate." is simply a misunderstanding of the term. I don't see how you can redefine this basic technical term when referring to our people. The French or Italian or German may be illiterate in English but if he can READ and WRITE his/her French, Italian or German s/he is literate, if s/he cannot then s/he is illiterate. I consider almost half of all Ghanaians to be illiterate. Of the other literate half there is even a tendency to relapse, especially with the coming into place of illiteracy-promoting structures such as the JSS. All hands must therefore be on the deck!

13.05 Re: Education vrs Participation: Literacy, by *Stephen Agyepong*

agyepoing@hpanry.an.hp.com

Adams wrote:

“Charles, this is one particular term which has nothing much to do with Eurocentrism or Afrocentrism or what have you. As I tried to explain in a previous posting LITERACY by definition is basically the ABILITY TO READ AND WRITE. It doesn’t matter the language in which you can do this. Another dimension is that literacy deals with only written aspects of language.”

After reading Charles’ response to a previous mail I got confused about the definition of literacy so I picked up my “The American Heritage Dictionary, 2nd ed, 1991” for the definition. It reads:

“literacy n. The condition or quality of being literate, esp. the ability to read and write.
literate adj. 1. ability to read and write. 2. Knowledgeable; educated. 3...”

I am really confused. Adams is it possible Charles could be right “some?”

13.06 Re: JSS and Educational Reforms, by *Alfred Opoku, Carleton, Canada*

Amanfuor,

I have just realised that I have unknowingly steered the educational reforms debate in a whole new direction! All the talk about participation and literacy seem to stem from the fact that I did not see this government as willing and able to consider the thoughts and ideas of others, outside the narrow confines of government. I agree, in toto, with Ebenezer on the fact that the need for participation in decision making cannot be overemphasised, and that is why I find it difficult to understand why Ebenezer has taken my last posting totally out of context. I did not say that “parents are generally illiterate and have little or nothing to contribute to educational reforms”; I did not even imply that! My contention is that most parents do not know the details of the current reforms except for what they have been told by the P(NDC). This is where the word “educated” comes in. Adams has done a good job in defining for us the words “literacy” and “education”; but has it occurred to anyone that to be educated is not just studying in the classroom or gaining life’s experience, but rather it is used in the sense of acquiring information. In this era of information technology, one can be educated on one subject and uneducated on the next! Though I did not use the term, I believe what I was trying to point out is that most parents are not educated on the matter of educational reforms. This has nothing to do with whether they have spent a greater part of their lives under the tutelage of someone who needs a shave badly! If you want to categorise this, in terms of Adams classification, perhaps you could say parents are “uneducated literates” and “uneducated illiterates”, remember the emphasis is on “uneducated”! Thus I agree with Charles that the debate on “literate and illiterate participants is a non-starter”! That is besides the point!

Again I did not say primary school kids must be represented by university students! What I did was to raise the point that given the rather low tolerance level of the government for the other opinion, it is difficult to envisage them listening to students. I cited university students as the more articulate and intelligent portion of the student population and that “if university students cannot have an opinion on such a sensitive national issue, who else can?” At no point did I state that varsity students should represent all others! On the issue raised participation must involve all segments of society, I still find it rather difficult to see how primary school children can contribute to such a policy decision. Yes, they are also the objects of the system of education, but come on, are we talking of reforms in the short term or in the long term? Are we just interested in reforming segments of the educational system or are we really interested in reforms which tackle the relevance of each segment and their interrelationships towards a greater national objective? Are we saying these kids who can barely write their names (and I presume that since all segments of society must be included, we need to have representations from kindergarten to Gods knows which level) can fathom the complexities of what our nation needs and how their curricula can be restructured to suit those needs? I guess not!

Certainly, participation is the key to real development and democracy. We need to listen to other opinions when it comes to such important national issues. My contention is that Rawlings and his band of merry men (and women?) are yet to realise this universal truth. They believe that “power belongs to the people” and when you represent the people (no matter how poorly or controversially) you have the right to appropriate that power of choice and decision making. Ebenezer should understand that when I quote Krobo Edusei, it wasn’t to support my own view but to draw a parallel between what he said and the current behavior of the government in their response to other opinions.

As for the confusion over the use of the words “literacy” and “education”, I think we need to know that the English language is quite flexible in several instances and there are times when we do take liberties in the use of words. Each word has several meanings, not to talk of connotations; it is in this regard that I call on fellow netters to be sure of the context in which a word has been used before drawing conclusions and dragging us into heated debates. All it takes is a personal note to the writer of an article for some clarifications. Having said that, let me state my support for Alex Aboagye’s assertion that “it takes an educated populace to ensure development” - and I am sure Alex means people who are well informed and not necessarily those who have endured ten or more years of such perplexing questions as “if it takes six days for ten men working ten hours a day to build a bridge....” That is not to say that we do not need more literacy in our society or that literacy is a sufficient condition for development. Whether literate or not, a person can be uneducated as Adams and Alex have explained; an uneducated person is unaware of rights, and of plain facts! And who says only illiterate persons are uneducated? No one puts it better than Kofi Awoonor when he sighs “....the ignorance of the learned!”

13.07 Literacy, by *Adams Bodomo*

Stephen Agyepong wrote:

‘After reading Charles’ response to a previous mail I got confused about the definition of literacy so I picked up my “The American Heritage Dictionary, 2nd ed, 1991” for the definition. It reads:

literacy n. The condition or quality of being literate, esp. the ability to read and write.

literate adj. 1. ability to read and write. 2. Knowledgeable; educated. 3...

I am really confused. Adams is it possible Charles could be right “some?” ‘

Steve, thank you for drawing our attention to this aspect of the debate.

As you can see, your dictionary or any other good dictionary confirms the fact that this term is BASICALLY the ability to read and write. This is the basic meaning of the term in whatever continent, in whatever language and we can hardly apply it differently in Ghana. The fact is that most Ghanaians cannot read and write, whether in English, French, Hebrew, Akan or Kusaal...(though this does not mean that they are not educated nor clever nor useless or have no ideas to offer us).

Remember that I said in a previous posting that one does not have to be literate to be educated (i.e. to develop your intellectual, moral etc. capabilities) but that literacy is a very good tool to getting educated, to getting informed, aware, intellectually, morally about issues around you, around your society, especially in this information age.

In this information age if you are literate you have all the chance to be educated, to be ‘knowledgeable’, with the right training, by instruction or by experience. So you see from literacy, it is much easy to be ‘knowledgeable’, to be ‘educated’: We are beginning to EXTEND the meaning of the term. Remember that someone said English (or for that matter, any other language) is so flexible. Actually, users can be extremely flexible and all lexicographers (dictionary makers) try as much as possible to capture these flexibilities, bringing in ‘extensional’ meanings. That is what the dictionary you consulted tried to do, in my (informed?) opinion.

However, we cannot ignore the basic terminology: literacy and say that most Ghanaians are literate. I wish most of us were literate, I wish we could all read the daily papers in English or Akan or Ewe, I wish we could all write a letter or two, if and when we want, from whatever village we are in Ghana, and tell the government that we are not impressed about the educational reforms, about this illiteracy-promoting JSS that we call educational reforms.

Some of these basic problems have not yet been resolved in Ghana, the statistics are ugly: how nice it would be if we could all read the forms we fill, no more thumb printing; how nice it would be if we could read party manifestos, ballot boxes; no more manipulations, no more rigging.....In future finance ministers should understand these hard, Ghanocentric facts and give out more money for us to make everybody in Ghana literate, for us to make everybody FUNCTIONALLY literate. It is an important consideration in the educational reform process!

13.08 Re: Literacy, by *Charles Awasu*

Adams said:

“Steve, thank you for drawing our attention to this aspect of the debate...As you can see, your dictionary or any other good dictionary confirms the fact that this term is **BASICALLY** the ability to read and write. This is the basic meaning of the term in whatever continent, in whatever language and we can hardly apply it differently in Ghana. The fact is that most Ghanaians cannot read and write, whether in English, French, Hebrew, Akan or Kusaal...(though this does not mean that they are not educated or clever or useless or have no ideas to offer us).”

Adams, it seems you’ve assumed that the dictionaries (whatever edition) is distortion-proof. If that’s the case, then could it be that you accept the “universal” (whatever that means) dictionary definitions for the following words: **BLACK, NEGRO, NEGROID, NIGGER** etc. which apply to African ethnics? Granting that you accept that the dictionary is the all-said-all (which I don’t) then the cause of the politically correct movement and the postmodernists have no “universality” to you, right?

“Remember that I said in a previous posting that one does not have to be literate to be educated (i.e. to develop your intellectual, moral etc. capabilities) but that literacy is a very good tool to getting educated, to getting informed, aware, intellectually, morally about issues around you, around your society, especially in this information age.”

Here is where your analysis is flawed. It is flawed because you seem to have bought into the western notions of “civilised” and “modern” and “informational world” where everyone who can’t read and write is “primitive”, non-functioning and “can’t-do-anything”. I’m sure there are several people who will want to remain in a “non-modern, non-civilised, and non-informational age”

“In this information age if you are literate you have all the chance to be educated, to be ‘knowledgeable’, with the right training, by instruction or by experience. So you see from literacy, it much easy to be ‘knowledgeable’, to be ‘extensional’ meanings. That is what the dictionary you consulted tried to do, in my (informed?) opinion....However, we cannot ignore the basic terminology: literacy and say that most Ghanaians are literate. I wish most of us were literate, I wish we could all read the daily papers in English or Akan or Ewe, I wish we could all write a letter or two, if and when we want, from whatever village we are in Ghana, and tell the government that we are not impressed about the educational reforms, about this illiteracy-promoting JSS that we call educational reforms.”

Your wishes for a literate society prove the framework from which you are operating. Reading does not mean a thing to anybody if they can’t afford to buy a newspaper, if there are no newspapers to buy, if there is no library. There is no set connection between reading and writing and how people solve their development problems.

“Some of these basic problems have not yet been resolved in Ghana, the statistics are ugly: how it would be if we could all read the forms we fill, no more thumb printing; how nice it would be if we could read party manifestos, ballot boxes; no more manipulations , no more rigging.....

You’re right with the problems of statistics. How do you measure literacy? What is the set standard? Most often a crude measure based on self-reporting and questionable assumptions are used to determine the rates. Can you tell how you arrived at your assumptions of who is literate and illiterate in a multilingual country like Ghana?

“In future finance ministers should understand these hard, Ghanocentric facts and give out more money for us to make everybody in Ghana literate, for to make everybody **FUNCTIONALLY** literate. It is an important consideration in the educational reform process!”

Again, operating from your narrow elitist framework you assume without any facts that there are Ghanaians out there who want to become literate? Fine, but have you or anyone else bothered to ask them if they want to? Or you claim to think for them? Is that another top-down approach? Most of the so-called literacy campaigns that have been

undertaken in the country were more for political agenda than an honest enterprise. The primers were full of political slogans. Is that what you dream of as “fraud” free elections etc. Can you honestly say that your type of literacy will eradicate “rigged” elections or that is another wishful thinking? Contrary to your wishes, “literacy” has no effect on peoples “correct knowledge”, “correct attitudes” or the “desired modern behaviour”. It is the same people you and others refer to as “illiterates” that cultivated and made Ghana the largest producer of cocoa. I bet you, you can tell the difference when the society gets “literate”. Since there is no set believable standard to determine which proportion of the society is “illiterate” my earlier call for redefining the term is still valid. From the world development tables (1992) the western nations claimed to have less than 5% illiteracy rates. The United States claims 1% illiteracy rate. Does anyone have the idea why these countries under-report the rates? Adams, I know this is your arena, but instead of worrying about Ghanocentric facts, (which you did not state) please take a tour around the countryside and ask the people (illiterates) whether they desire literacy before you impose any foreign values on them. I’m no expert in this area, but majority of the people I socialise with in the countryside, read the scriptures, (Bible, Koran) and do sing from Hymn books. I bet that’s how far most will go with the so-called “information age”.

This is not to say that I am against education, learning to read, write or count in any language. But I think people must be provided with opportunities so they can make decisions that affect their own lives and not be dictated to by those who “know the right way”. That was the gist for my earlier call for participation.

13.09 Participation and Literacy, by *Ebenezer Annan, St. Mary’s, Canada*

I wish to point out a few inconsistencies in the reactions by Alfred and Alex to my recent posting. First of all I am sorry to have misread Alfred. He seems to claim that he did not mean what I thought he meant. I guess, we are all vulnerable and for that matter fallible and therefore sometimes our postings lack clarity. This is what may have led me to take a certain view of the posting.

What bothers me, though, is the fact that although Alfred seems to agree that all segments of society should be allowed to participate in, the decision making process, he still can not appreciate or see how school kids can contribute anything to educational reforms. First, he said that school kids can barely write their names. Secondly, he considers them to be the objects of the educational system.

I wish to point out that we cannot talk about “participation” when we consider the would-be beneficiaries of change as “objects” and not “subjects” of change themselves. This perhaps is the reason why my friend may have wanted University Students to represent the student group. Of course Alfred believes that they are the most intelligent and articulate portion of that group. My fear here is that Alfred was only trying to defend himself without changing his view.

If we agree that being educated does not necessarily mean one is adequately informed on certain issues as Adams pointed out, then it would be fair to argue that university students may not necessarily be informed about the current conditions and circumstances in the various schools. Let us bear in mind that the educational reforms in Ghana did not only target the curricula but various administrative and logistic issues. I hope Alfred was not suggesting that all school kids can barely write their names and therefore there is nothing they could contribute to the process. During the period of educational reform the issue of school uniforms also came up. Whether the policies are right or wrong is another issue but it is interesting to note that the yellow and brown uniforms which were chosen for pre-secondary kids in the country was the result of consultations with school kids in several schools in the Accra/Tema metropolitan area. This was at least a contribution.

The argument that parents do not know the contents of the curriculum of their kids is a minus for participation and not a credit. Why should parents not contribute to the process of imparting knowledge to their kids. This, in part, is the cause of apathy on the part of many parents in their children’s training and education. I am of the opinion that parents almost always have an idea of what their kids intend to be in future and therefore whether they are illiterate or not must be given the opportunity to contribute to help their kids realise their dreams. Is it too much for a cocoa farmer to encourage a child to become an agriculturalist so as to take over the farm in future or learn better methods of cultivation and conservation? No!!

Without digressing too far from the rather healthy debate, I think It is fair to point out that Alfred's posting speaks clearly for itself and I wonder whether he really believes in participation and if so what kind of participation. We certainly seem to differ on the concept of participation here.

13.10 Re: Literacy, by *Mahamadu Bawumia, Vancouver, Canada*

In the debate on literacy, I think Charles Awasu's latest contribution in response to Adams is quite off the mark. The basic problem with Charles' argument is his insistence on linking literacy with Eurocentrism. As Adams pointed out earlier, there is no link. Literacy is the ability to read and write. It is not language specific. China reports a 73% literacy rate (UNDP Human Development Report 1992) and I don't think many of those are in English. In the same Report, Ghana's literacy rate stands at 60%. Charles was correct in pointing out the deficiencies of these statistical measures. There is in fact a deficiency associated with many indicators. The concept being measured however should not be at issue. It is fairly clear.

There was nothing in Adams' posting to suggest that he thought everything in dictionaries were correct. Adams' also never suggested in his postings on this subject that the illiterate were primitive and non-functional . I think this is verging on deliberate misrepresentation but I am sure Charles did not intend that. Adams made the point, quite rightly, that some "illiterates are more politically conscious and community oriented than some literates" and also that some literates could count on the wisdom of the illiterate. Insisting on a redefinition of literacy is not very productive.

On literacy and development, there are studies which have shown a clear link between farmer literacy and agricultural productivity (See the World Development Report 1982 for example) but I suppose Charles will argue that such studies have a Eurocentric bias. I don't think the concept of reading and writing originated in Europe anyway.

13.11 EDUCATIONAL REFORMS (PARTICIPATION), by *Paul Opoku-Mensah, Trondheim, Norway*

Amanfuor,

In talking about participation in the educational reforms, one of the issues which must not be forgotten is the low participation of female students in all phases of the educational system. The issue of low female participation was one of the determining factors for the implementation of the government's tertiary educational reforms. As one of the "goals to be achieved in the process of change", the governments "white paper" on the tertiary educational reforms seeks to inter alia, "significantly increase the proportion of women students:"

The fact remains that as at now female students are still unacceptably underrepresented in our educational institutions (just look at the Okyeame list and you'll see what I mean) and in talking about participation we must consider practical ways of correcting this imbalance.

I remember Alfred Opoku's piece on Rawlings' cabinet (refer to "The King's own men") in which he was bemoaning the low representation of women. I have tried rationalising this situation (unsuccessfully though) by saying to myself that the present political party (NDC) has very few "literate-educated" women. But this obviously is a simplistic explanation. A better explanation is given by a UNICEF-sponsored research on the situation of Women and Children in Ghana (I find it the most comprehensive in this area) which concludes, among other things, that "...generally in all Ghanaian societies, women are not considered the equals of men" (UNICEF 1990; Ghana: Situation Analysis Of Women and Children)

The definition "Society" in this context should not be limited to the various ethnic groupings but must extend to all the components of the "system". Taking this definition therefore, the indictment of the study is: in the political society, educational society, police society, Akan society, Dagomba society, etc., etc., women are not considered the equals of men and hence marginalised with regards to leadership and other opportunities. What are some of these attitudes which still make us think that women are not the equals of men, and how do we overcome these attitudes to ensure that

women become an integral part of the Ghanaian society with regards to decision making and enrolment in our educational institutions?

In a country where women constitute at least half the populace their continued marginalization cannot be justified and in talking about participation, the earlier we start talking about their participation in our educational institutions the better it will be for all of us.

13. 12. Re: Participation, by Alfred Opoku

Amanfuor,

I still find it difficult to understand why some of us find it difficult to take articles for what they are worth and rather give their own meanings to them. I hope I do not antagonise Ebenezer, but his recent posting, in reply to mine, still contains misrepresentations of what I have been saying. I cannot understand why he thinks I want university students to represent all school children! What I referred to was an isolated case in which I opined that primary school children may not have the necessary understanding of the issues involved to make them worthy participants. I may be wrong that some primary kids can barely write their names, but nowhere did I state that “ALL SCHOOL KIDS can barely write their names” (emphasis mine). In a debate of such nature the deletion of a single word or the addition of another changes the entire meaning of a sentence and give gross misrepresentations of an idea.

Granted that some primary school kids can contribute useful insights to the discussion on education but Ebenezer did not consider the full import of what I said in terms of their contribution to the overall discussion vis-a-vis national objectives. Until today I did not know that some of these kids had a hand in the introduction of the ugly school uniforms they are now wearing. I always thought it was brought into being through the single ambition of Aanaa Ennin (the then PNDC member responsible for education), the cause of one of her several conflicts with the then secretary for education Joyce Aryee, but I digress! As Ebenezer rightly pointed out, I believe in participation; however, I am also a realist and a pragmatist! I understand participatory democracy to mean the involvement of all segments of the society in decision making, on matters affecting the general society, but I also know that I do not need to be consulted about each and every decision the president makes. In matters affecting the fishing industry I think it is right for members of the fishing community to be involved more than the cocoa farmer. In this matter of educational reform I believe students and their parents need to be consulted more than the fishermen (unless that fisherman is also a parent). It is in the context of practicality that I have argued that in all seriousness primary school kids (again stressing all levels - from kindergarten to primary six) cannot be effective contributors to the current debate. Others may think otherwise, and they are entitled to their opinions but I hope no one is challenging my assertion that university students are the most (a relative term) intelligent of the student population. Obviously, that does not make them representatives of the group, but my argument still stands that if the government would not listen to these “matured” students, they would definitely not tolerate the “immature” ones. Please note that this statement does not pretend to imply anything on who should represent the student body!

It is cool that we, at this stage in our academic lives, take ideal positions and advance the cause of democracy and participation; let's not forget however, that it is also cool to acknowledge the realities of life now rather than find out too late and be riddled with broken promises to the people. One such reality is that while we clamour for real participation, it may not be possible to include EVERYONE in each and every policy making decision! Sad, but true!

13.13 LITERACY & DEVELOPMENT, by Paul Opoku-Mensah

Amanfuor, these are some comments on some aspects of Charles Awasu's latest posting.

Charles Wrote:

“Reading does not mean a thing to anybody if they can't afford to buy a newspaper, if there are no newspapers to buy, if there is no library. There is no set connection between reading and writing and how people solve their development problems”.

COMMENT

1. Accepted, on the assumption that we are talking about a closed society which operates without reference to other societies. The reality on the ground is however different. All development problems must of necessity be solved with reference to what is happening in the wider society. If not our discussions on development alternatives would not have called for an integrated approach—an approach that takes the “good” aspects of what others have and fit it into our own circumstances. The best way to do this, in my opinion, is to be able to read what is going on around us.
2. Further “reading might not mean a thing to anybody if they can’t afford to buy a newspaper..” but obviously you learn how to read before buying a newspaper. Apart from that, as Bawumia pointed out, studies have shown that there is a link between literacy and development. While most of these studies accept the fact that literacy is NOT development, i.e. literacy mainly is an enabling rather than a causal factor, they nevertheless confirm the viewpoint that development projects are more likely to succeed in literate environments (see Lochead et al., 1980; Oxenham, J., 1980; Jamison n& Moock, 1984; Shultz 1989; World Bank, 1989, UNESCO, 1988; etc., etc.!).

While I cannot vouch for the accuracy of these studies there is no doubt in my mind that “without literacy, development limps on one leg” (Bhola, 1985) Let me give an experience I had on a research trip to Kpaligu in the Mamprusi district of Northern Ghana some time ago. I met this woman who had gone through an adult literacy program and had gone to the market and challenged (successfully) the toll collector who had given her a ticket for 50 cedis and demanded 100 cedis (she still had the ticket). She could do this because she had been empowered with the tool of literacy to read what was on the ticket and hence break the hold of structures that had for a long time taken advantage of her illiterate situation to exploit her. Such a woman has a whole new world of possibilities open to her. If this would not eventually lead to an improvement in her finances, and eventually her “development”, I don’t know what will!

Charles again wrote:

“...you assume without any facts that there are Ghanaians out there who want to become literate? Fine, but have you or anyone else bothered to ask them if they want to? Or you claim to think for them? Is that another top-down approach? Most of the so-called literacy campaigns that have been undertaken in the country were more for political agenda than an honest enterprise. The primers were full of political slogans. Is that what you dream of as “fraud” free elections etc. Can you honestly say that your type of literacy will eradicate “rigged” elections or that is another wishful thinking”

COMMENT

1. Asking all illiterates in the country if they want to be literates before initiating NATIONAL literacy campaigns? Interesting!! Anyway as far as I know, people are encouraged to join adult literacy classes. None is coerced into joining. That is why these days the emphasis is on “functional literacy”, i. e. literacy that takes into account the people’s socio-politico-economic situation. So for example an illiterate farmer is going to be taught to read and write about farming practices like the application of manure etc. This makes the literacy “functional” to their immediate surroundings. This, hopefully, will motivate people into joining the classes without their being forced into it.
2. I agree that most of the time, the government’s literacy campaigns have a hidden political agenda and some of their “success” stories are questionable (to say the least) but even here, I have not as yet seen any of the primers which contain political slogans. (I wonder if there can be any government policy without a political agenda. Having a political agenda does not make a policy a dishonest one).

But here let me add that most of the adult literacy programs I find successful were those initiated by NGOs (notably the mission organisations) some of whom have had programs running for more than 10 continuous years.

3. No adult literacy practitioner can confidently say literacy will eradicate rigging (and I’ve not heard any making any claim of the sort). But there is no doubt that literacy could make people conscious of their rights etc. as citizens. (I know of an NGO which translated the present constitution into Adele, a Northern Volta Regional language, for the products of their literacy program. For all intents and purposes these adults will be more conscious than their counterparts who cannot read. And who knows, the end result will be a people who “no go sit down” for people to deceive them again and who says this can’t possibly prevent “rigging”?)

PS. I want to raise the issue of Okyeame's functionality again. Can't we (at least) have a way of "electing" people who will compile some of these discussions for easy reference?

13.14 Literacy, by *Paul Agbedor, Victoria, Canada*

Fellow Netters, I must say that the debate on okyeame has been quite interesting, with the hottest issue now being the subject of literacy. Adams gave a vivid posting on the issue and the reaction to that posting by Charles made me wonder a bit. Anyway, there couldn't have been a better reaction to Charles' posting than those of Mahamadu and Opoku-Mensah. But I just wish Charles would clarify a few issues. He writes: "I'm sure there are several people who will want to remain in a "non-modern, non-civilised and non-informational age". Is Charles one of those people? He also writes: "reading does not mean a thing to anybody if they can't afford to buy a newspaper, if there are no newspapers to buy, if there is no library". I'm wondering why Charles didn't quit school in his "cyto" school days when we had no libraries. I wonder if he could afford to buy newspapers when he was in school. Mind you, when we talk of literacy, we are not only referring to "adult literacy". Literacy is part and parcel of formal education, and I wonder if Charles would have been here without it. If literacy is good for some, it should be good for others, even if they can only read the Bible with it.

13.15 Literacy, by *Charles Awasu*

I'll say those who support the literacy idea have written good pieces in its defense, i.e. Adams, Mensah and others. Contrary to what others might think, I'm not against people learning to S-P-E-L-L. Obviously my position on the subject is not a popular one. All the same the advocates see it as deterministic and therefore refuse to see any good points in the other side of the debate.

1. The non-formal division of the Ministry of Education recognises over 100 different languages being used in Ghana. If that is the case, the arguments for so far have ignored the reality on the ground. It is not clear what the much talked of benefits will mean in such a multilingual setting. I guess then that the reality states that for the said benefits to become tangible, "illiterates will have to undertake multiple literacies: one local language, one regional language, and one national language. In the Ghanaian case then, anything short of these three languages becomes a waste.
2. Adams, in his interesting language piece advocated for the use of the government approved 9 languages. He however ignored the historico-cultural context. Of course such a selection amongst over 100 other languages does more harm to those stuck to their mother tongues. Such a position also does not take into consideration the concerns of "acephalous" groups and the "hidden" conflicts, ethno-cultural differences e.g. the Tsito/Peki, the Nanumba/Kokomba etc.
3. On the case of intervention, it is also clear that the proponents see nothing wrong in intervening in peoples lives. This is in contradiction to the view that people everywhere need to intervene in their own lives and to invent their own destiny. Of course others might argue that interventions for the sake of social change is good, but who makes the intervention, what style and what is the locus?
4. What happens to cultural sensitivity? Suddenly rich oral traditions are been forsaken for the ability to spell in languages other than the mother tongue. Self-identity, cultural distinctiveness becomes a loss under authoritarian type experiments.
5. One of the pieces "for" mentioned a 73% literacy rate for China, but forgot to add that in China, it is only Chinese. In Europe and other countries literacy is easier to achieve due to methodologies and approaches that elevated dominant languages, e.g. French. Also according to Dyken (1990, p. 43) in Europe minority languages are closely related both culturally and linguistically. The same cannot hold true for Ghana, where majority of the languages lack orthography.
6. Since 1953, UNESCO has kept literacy drives on "high road" culminating in 1990 as the year of literacy. Tons of money have been pumped into literacy' campaigns that have yielded no significant results. It just seems like another "lets remain in business" conspiracy. Even in Tanzania, which had the most extensive literacy drive, a study by Carr-Hill, Kweka, Rusimbi & Chengelele (1991) found that "Literacy and numeracy...mean so little, both

objectively in terms of actual impact on development, and subjectively in terms of the importance people attached to them.” p. 328.

7. Sure, there are too many people who can’t read and write in Ghana but, for me, the most effective way to reduce that is by FREE AND ACCESSIBLE PRIMARY EDUCATION FOR ALL.

DISCLAIMER: I wish to restate that I am not against people learning to spell. Also, I am not against the work of the Institute of Adult Education with the great Prof. Greenstreet, et. al. I am a strong advocate for participatory adult education. But the debate on literacy has both sides to it and I decided to present the opposing side. I wish to apologise for the use of any “emotional-sounding phrases” that might negatively impact my contributor friends.

13.16 LITERACY & DEVELOPMENT, by *Paul Opoku-Mensah*

I cannot help but comment again on some of the issues raised by Charles in his latest posting on literacy.

1. Yes, there are so many languages in the country but the fact remains that for reasons of finance, co-ordination, and lack of teachers, among other things not all these languages (officially), can have literacy classes (I am limiting my discussion to adult literacy) established in them. But even here, some of these languages have literacy projects going for them (courtesy of NGOs notably the Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation, GILLBT, an affiliate of the University of Ghana). The Non-formal Division of the Ministry of Education has accepted the work of these NGOs (and is even encouraging such organisations to extend their work to the other unwritten Ghanaian languages). Most of these NGOs are providing facilitators for the current national functional literacy drive.
2. Illiterates do not have to “undertake multiple literacies” before literacy becomes functional to them. The issue here is not how many languages a person is literate in, but how functional literacy is to him/her. The examples I gave in my last posting on the woman from Kpaligu and the Constitution being translated into Adele show that an individual can be literate in just his/her mother tongue in Ghana and still find it very useful.
3. Charles again states that “it is also clear that the proponents see nothing wrong in intervening in peoples lives”. In a segmented society like ours, interventions must be made with reference to overall national developmental aspirations and not just the wishes of a group of people. Even here, national policies (on whatever issue) are formulated in consultation with interest groups etc. and that is why we have a government that is, hopefully, representative of the people and also have a broader perspective of issues. For example, I know of a particular society in Ghana who opposed the digging of boreholes in their community although most of them were infested with guinea worm from their polluted dams; I know of some people who vehemently opposed immunisation campaigns etc. should not be extended to such communities because they don’t want them?
4. Contrary to Charles’ assertion that “suddenly rich oral traditions are being forsaken for the ability to spell in languages other than the mother tongue”, the reverse is true. The fact is, oral traditions are being preserved as a result of people being able to spell in whatever languages. For example, most of what we know of some of our traditions were written down by anthropologists, some of whom could not spell the languages whose traditions they wrote down. Let me take myself for example: I might not be able to write my mother tongue but my ability to spell in English makes it possible for me to write, at least the history of my family, as was told to me by my great-grandmother, for posterity. And coming to the situation on the ground, most of our societies are on the verge of losing their rich oral traditions when the old generation dies off. It is therefore imperative that we make as many of such people literate to ensure that these traditions are written down.
5. A closer look at some of the literacy projects shows that most of the students (once they acquire the basic skills of literacy) are encouraged to write their folk stories etc. to be used as post literacy materials. On the basis of such a practice, most of the hitherto unwritten Ghanaian languages like Chokosi, Adele, Mo-Deg, Ntrubo, Bimoba, Mampruli, Lelemi, Konkomba, Frafra, Akyode, and many others have their folk stories documented. In recognition of this both the Institute of Adult Education and GILLBT were recipients of UNESCO’s 1990-91 “Nessim Habib award for distinction in the promotion of literacy and the production of post-literacy materials in African languages”. (I can send a list of the languages and the titles of literature to netters who might be interested.)
6. I want to emphasise here again that no adult educationist, including the Government of Ghana, has talked of a causal relationship between literacy and development. What they say is: in a society where illiterates are marginalised and exploited, one cannot talk of development. And here let me say I agree absolutely with

UNESCO's boss Federico Mayor that "we cannot talk of development when ...people cannot read and write." It is in this respect that I will advocate mass literacy for Ghana irrespective of the Tanzanian failure. But even here, what must be noted is that the project was an experiment (a sort of pilot project). It was called the "Experimental World Literacy Program?) and it was its "failure" that led to the emphasis on functional literacy.

7. The fact that this experiment failed does not mean we should abandon the "struggle". So many development projects have failed in Africa and elsewhere and the call is not for their abandoning but instead their revision to make them more effective.
8. Yes, I agree absolutely with Charles that there are too many people who can't read and write in Ghana and the most effective way of correcting this imbalance is by FREE AND ACCESSIBLE PRIMARY EDUCATION FOR ALL. However in most of the areas where there is a low primary school enrolment (and most of these places enjoy free primary education) the evidence shows that most parents are illiterate. Studies have also shown that parental education has a positive impact on child education (see Cochrane, 1989; Shultz, 1989) and so if we can introduce adult literacy into these communities and hence make the parents see its functionality, chances are that we will have a higher enrolment rate for the primary schools and hence reduce our illiteracy rate.
9. And finally, as an advocate of adult literacy, I agree that having a literate population is not the ultimate requirement in a nation's development but it is definitely better to have a literate populace than an illiterate one.

13.17 Literacy, by *Paul Agbedor*

Hi Netters, Paul Opoku-Mensah's last posting has thrown more light on the issue of literacy, especially adult literacy. The advantages of literacy cannot be overemphasised. A lot has already been said concerning that. I only wish to add that an in-depth interview with new Tanzanian literates (Kassam, 1979. "Illiterates No More: The Voices of New Literates from Tanzania" Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House), suggest that new literates feel they have become new persons. Maybe adults who are over 60 years would not see any need for literacy, since they would soon pass out of this world, but there are many young people between 15 and 50 who cannot read and write. I am sure every single one of these people would like to read and write. From a survey I did in 1992 in certain parts of Ghana, many of the adults I interviewed wished they could read and write. The reasons for their desire to be literate ranged from being able to read the Bible, to write their own letters to being able to keep some records. I am sure there are benefits to be derived from these seemingly simplistic reasons for wanting to be literate. Economic development cannot take place without the moral, emotional, psychological, and spiritual development of the people. If by being able to read the Bible, people can develop their spiritual capabilities and change their morals for the better, then the foundation is being laid for a sound human factor development, which is necessary for a sound economic development. Governments talk about eradication of illiteracy. I wonder if that is an achievable goal, with the present situation in most African countries, where the drop out rate is high. These drop-outs join the existing illiterates and every year new ones come in to swell the existing number. So we have a situation where new literates are turned out only to be replaced by another batch of illiterate school drop-outs (a vicious cycle). Maybe the only solution is a preventive measure, whereby we make sure all children who enter school are able to read and write at least in their mother tongue (if that is possible) or in one major Ghanaian language, before they drop out of school. By stage six, all children should be able to read and write in one Ghanaian language, if the teaching of these languages is taken more seriously.

PS/ By the way, may I suggest that since we are trying to learn and have access to more information (the use of literacy), it would be good if netters who cite the works of other people make the references complete so that other netters can easily trace them. Thanks.

13.18 GHANAIAN DIALECTS, by *Sowah Simmonds*

<simmonds@engr.dnet.ge.com>

Okyeame, my message is to Christian Akuamoah any Ghanaian who cares to count the number of dialects. Please don't, you might get a headache. And never claim to be an expert, you will embarrass yourself. Paul has tried let me give him his due. But start from Accra and go in any direction for about 25 miles, you have a different dialect. Not to mention places like Ahutu (Afutu to the Ga people) on the Accra - Cape Coast road, where because of indigenous

beliefs, people speak a different dialect during the day, and switch to another after sundown. Hence our use of our colonial masters' languages. Welcome to "lack of African unity"

13.19 GHANAIAN LANGUAGES, by *Paul Opoku-Mensah*

Amanfuor,

I want to try to give a list of Ghanaian languages with recognised orthographies as requested by Charles Akuamoah.

I am going to leave out any discussion on what makes any one of them a dialect etc. All I know is that a dialect is supposed to be a variant of a language. I think Paul Agbedor and Adams Bodomo are more qualified to delve into this aspect.

LANGUAGES:

A: GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED LANGUAGES

1. AKAN (Asante, Fante, Akuapem, Akyem, Kwahu)
2. DAGAARE.....Spoken in UWR
3. DANGBE.....Spoken in G/A.
4. DAGBANE.....Spoken in NR
5. EWE..... " VR
6. GA..... " G/A
7. GONJA..... " NR
8. KASEM..... " UER
9. NZEMA " WR

B: NON-GOVERNMENT SPONSORED LANGUAGES

LANGUAGE	LOCATION
1. ADELE.....	Spoken in VR (Tutukpene & Nkwanta)
2. ANUFO/CHOKOSI.....	Spoken in NR (Chereponi)
3. BULI.....	Spoken in UER (Sandema)
4. BIMOBA.....	Spoken in NR (Bunkpurugu)
5. BIRIFOR.....	Spoken in UWR & NR (Bilema & Danvar)
6. BASSARI.....	Spoken in NR...
7. CHUMBURUNG.....	Spoken in NR & VR (Ekumdipe)
8. FRAFRA.....	Spoken in UER (Bolgatanga)
9. GIKYODE/AKYODE.....	Spoken in VR (Shiare)
11. HANGA.....	Spoken in NR (
12. KONKOMBA.....	Spoken in NR (Saboba)
13. KUSAAL.....	Spoken in UER (Bawku)
14. KASEM.....	Spoken in UER (Navrongo)
15. KOMA.....	Spoken in UER (Yipabongo)
16. BUEM/ LELEMI.....	Spoken in VR (Jasikan & Bodada)
17. MAMPRULI.....	Spoken in NR (Gbeduuri)
18. MO/ DEG.....	Spoken in B/A (New Longoro)
19. NAFAANRA.....	Spoken in B/A (Banda Ahenkro)
20. NKONYA.....	Spoken in VR (Akloba & Wurupong)
21. NTRUBO / DELO.....	Spoken in VR (Pusupu)
22. NAWURI.....	Spoken in NR (Kitare)
23. SISAALI.....	Spoken in UWR (Tumu)
24. TAMPULMA.....	Spoken in NR
25. VAGLA.....	Spoken in NR

PS.

1. Most of these languages are not strictly delimited to the regions mentioned. They extend to other Regions.
2. The languages mentioned here are those I know have (or will soon have) some technical publications (in addition to non-technical publications like folk stories etc.) at the University in them. There is a standardised alphabet system for the country now so some of these languages which are not mentioned here (e.g.. Waale) have literacy primers in them.
3. The towns/ villages mentioned are locations where the languages concerned are spoken and where the linguists who worked on them had (and in some cases still have) their base.
4. Those interested in getting some of these publications can contact the Institute of African Studies, Language Centre, and/or the Linguistics Department, all of the University of Ghana. The Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation (GILLBT) whose linguists are doing the field work can also be contacted directly on Box 7271, Accra-North.
5. I know Adams Bodomo sent a detailed list of Ghanaian languages on the net sometime ago so those interested can refer to it. I must admit that my knowledge on these languages has not been too technical. (Editor's note: The relevant article being referred to is article 12. 05.)

14 RELIGION

Compiled and Edited by *Samuel E. Aggrey*

14.00 Introduction by *Samuel Aggrey*

Religion is one of the most sensitive topics that has been discussed on Okyeame. Though Okyeame has no religious affiliation, its members do. The religious backgrounds of netters range from Christianity, Islam, Ancestral worship, etc to atheism. Overall, it was the concept of christianity which came frequently under the microscope. Religious statistics from different sources were presented. The Holy Bible came under discussion which spilled into the concepts of being born again and creation. This became a sequel to the discussion on the concept of divine creativity and the theory of evolution. During the religion debate, emotions were sometimes high and the legitimacy of discussing matters dealing with faith was questioned. Even though some netters feel that Religion should not be discussed on the net, it never goes away but reappears at frequent intervals. Can religion be discussed without compromising one's faith in a particular religion?

14.01 Religion, by *Ato Ogundipe*

Aow Agya Yaw Afranie and all who hate the act of libation pouring, The Libation was poured at the Africa Nite by me amidst much funfare. For your records, this was the prayer:

“Otumfo Katakylie, Creator of all things, we are gathered here in your name. May you bless our audience tonight. God of our ancestors, ruler of all riches, free us from the neck breaking GOODS AND SERVICES TAX and THE PROVINCIAL SALES TAX (ONLY IN CANADA). FREE US FROM THE TENTACLES OF THIS WICKED GLOBAL RECESSION. We need food, peace on earth, a baby boom and unity. Twedeampong Kwame, Okokroko, bless our enemies but strike them down with lightning should they become super unruly. Bless our Chief, Nana Osaagyefo Kukutako. Give us long life!”

By the way we presented a typical durbar with a full West African Chief and that would not have been complete without the libation. I introduced the issue of libation on the network in order to see what people think of their own indigenous practices in their homeland. The responses so far have in a way opened our eyes to how myopic some of us could be just because we are Christians. In the first place if Yaw will take time to read my libation, he will agree with me that his pastor will not disallow such a prayer during a normal sunday service. There is nothing paganistic about the prayer. It is the same old way of communicating with God except that instead of sprinkling holy water around, it was a different liquid. Before any foreign religion came to us our ancestors had their own concept of God. They revered him so much that many appellations were coined to describe his greatness. If you read some of the myths that we have, the concept of God appears to have been fully understood by our ancestors before Christianity was “brought” to us. Make no mistake about it but traditional religion is no different from Christianity or any other religion. Traditional religion has its version of the ‘GOOD’ and the ‘BAD’ which is parallel to the christian belief of ‘the righteous’ and ‘the unbelievers’. I think it is naive for anyone to ask me whether I pour libation to the good ancestors or to the bad ones. Our belief in the Creator of all things is not something to joke around with. I think it is enough blasphemy to pose such a question. How on earth will anyone dare to think that I will ask a bad ancestor to carry my prayer to God? He will not even be allowed to be within A MILLION KILOMETERS of God’s presence. Will Yaw be kind enough to explain why DRUMS are allowed in churches these days? Did he know that the drum which is sacred in our traditional religion was seen as a tool of paganism? But the whiteman is very fast when it comes to adapting what good elements he finds from Africa. When they realized how boring their church services were, they no longer found the drum a supporting tool for paganistic rituals.

To me there is nothing wrong with libation. It depends on who is pouring it. If the person is a servant of satan and decides to pour him a drink, that is his method of worship. If the libation is directed to God, I don’t have any quarrels with him. One argument against libation is that the source is ancestral worship which is paganistic. Let us ponder over the following:

How come christians celebrate christmas the way pagan Rome celebrated a form of christmas (in fact it was in honour of a Roman god). Please someone should research into the origins of christmas for us and he will come with a verdict which makes nonsense opponents of libation’s arguments. How come we christians are using the names given to the days God created by pagan Rome? Does Yaw find any relationship between naming the days after the Moon god(Monday), Thor (Thursday) and the Sun god(Sunday) and christian belief? Did he know why God’s sacred and blessed sabbath was changed from the seventh day (Saturday) to Sunday? The change in the day was effected to suit the Roman Sun god?

Yet we christians worship on Sundays without any complaints whatsoever. We only find problems with very genuine ways of worship by our Ancestors but keep silent when we consciously participate in real paganistic activities because the whiteman brought it. There is no other God than the creator of heaven and earth. By dedicating God’s day to the Moon god and calling it as such is wrong. It flouts God’s commandment not to worship any other god except him. I don’t think God, as I know him will condemn anyone who genuinely prays to him via the libation process and embrace those who have bowed to satan’s wishes by worshipping on a day set aside for the Sun Worshipers. Yes, the christians here saw the wisdom in allowing me to pour the libation. To them it was part of portraying what happens at our durbars. Their participation was likened to movie actors like Arnold SCHWARZNIGGER who abhors crimes but commits same in his movies. But, as part of a religious ritual, THERE SHOULD BE NO PROTEST FROM TWEDEAMPONG KWAME.

I would like the discussion to end on this note. I strongly believe that all the pros and cons have been exhausted. Thanks to all those who shared their views with me on the issue. Let us think of how freeing ourselves from mental slavery will enhance the development of mother Ghana!

14. 02 Libation-Revisit! by *Charles Awasu*

Wed, 10 Feb 93 12:12:08 LCL, <CAWASU%SUV.M.BITNET@mitvma.mit.edu>

I will like to revisit the libation issue. Earlier on I did not want to contribute because I’m a Jesus Fan and will obviously be biased. However, I feel the discussion lacked depth. The following are points to consider:

1. Why is African Traditional Religion called such? Is it the only traditional religion in the world. Is the so-called "African Traditional Religion" the same throughout Africa? Has the religion got any other name? What is the local name? African Traditional religion is more godly than most religions in the world. Why call it African tradition? (I don't like the term).
2. The bash on Christianity. People confuse missionary colonization with Christianity. Whose Christ is it anyway? Is Christianity for the Whites?
3. According to Bible historians Adam, the first man in the Bible was black. The Garden of Eden was located to between Mesopotamia and Canaan. Which is no white man country.
4. In the Bible, Songs of Songs (Solomon) chapter one, verse 5-6 proves Solomon saying "I am dark and lovely". If Solomon was black, then David his father was black. If David was black, Jesus who was supposed to be a descendant of David is Black and no blue-eyed guy.
5. The Old Testament is full of Egyptian Culture and maps show that Egyptian influence covered what is present day Israel and whatever.
6. The Canaanite and Egyptian cultures were very similar. The roots of Christianity obviously have more Africaness than anything European.
7. Who are the real Jews? The Ethiopian Jews or the Europeanized Jews?
8. Archeological and other studies prove that Africa is the oldest continent. The rocks in central Africa test to that. That also proves that the human race started from African soil.
9. On Herodotus, he did agree that civilization started from Egypt and that the Greeks copied from the Egyptians.
10. So then whose christianity is it? I will say its more african than White. So in rejecting christianity are we rejecting something African only because the whites presented the distorted version to us through colonization?
11. So then we don't need no Pope to tell us what we can do. As for libation I've poured it several times and gotten results and whatever, but now I prefer to get answers by prayer through Jesus Christ.
12. Whilst we are at it can anyone tell where the name Africa came from? Is it an euro-construct? Are we living under an euro-construction? What was the land mass referred to before the Berlin Conference, before the partition of Africa? If "Linus" should change his name, should "Africa" do the same?

DISCLAIMER: This is not intended to bash. I raised the points so we as intellectuals will try to look beyond the LABELS before we leap.

14.03 The Holy Bible!, by *Charles Awasu*

Date: Fri, 26 Feb 93 13:49:39 LCL

From: Charles Awasu <CAWASU%SUV.M.BITNET@mitvma.mit.edu>

There is no gag rule in effect on the net but for Gallows to come out as he did on the Holy Word of God is just simply pedestrian stuff.

What he should remember is that some of us do believe it in. I'm a fanatic of Jesus and wholeheartedly believes every word of the Bible. If Gallows does not believe the Bible as truth, he should simply refuse to read. The Bible says "whosoever wills may come".

If Gallows is interested in discussing the Bible he does not believe, he should put his doubts into perspective, i.e impact on Ghana's population, education or developmental goals. On a net such as this, just discussing the merits of the Bible serve no purpose other than to polarize the believers and non-believers.

So not to sound as a preacher, if Gallows has questions in his mind about the Bible he could walk to the nearest church and have a conversation with a Pastor.

14.04 The Holy Bible!, by *Charles Awasu*

Date: Mon, 01 Mar 93 14:03:05 LCL

From: Charles Awasu

<CAWASU%SUV.M.BITNET@mitvma.mit.edu>

I did refer to the posting by Gallows as pedestrian stuff. If Gallows wanted an intellectual or historical collaboration for his thesis, the way he put in the request was biased. I can't quote him, but I remember the phrase "I doubt the authenticity of the Bible".

How did Gallows expect an unemotional viewpoint if his premise was so rude?

Moreover, what on earth prevented Gallows from stating his academic interests on the subject from the onset? Also, if as he claims, he needed some insight into the authenticity of the Bible, he could have asked specific questions and directed respondents to his personal mail instead of the net-wide discussion. There are several sources in the U.S. that engaged in such.

I hope the discussion so far has benefited Gallows in his quest for answers. But I still stand by my first statement, that Gallows' initial request on the subject was more towards provocation than an academic interest.

On the issue of sexism, is it the Bible that accords the National House of Chiefs so much visibility at the expense of a non-existent national or regional house of QUEENS or the Ghanaian culture as we know it is male bias?

The comment by one netter about wrongdoers in the Bible is interesting. My question for him/her: Do Ghanaians run away from their traditions because some chiefs have been arrested for stealing or murder?

Personally, I believe the Christian type of living as prescribed in the Bible is the best form of living for mankind based on the greatest law of "LOVE THY NEIGHBOR AS THY SELF". No other religion on earth measures to this great principle for organized society or social control. Those who want to debate the Bible can do so, apparently they will find very few answers, if not delusions.

14.05 THE LAST OF OUR SYMBOLS, by *Alex Dadson*

Date: Mon, 8 Feb 93 10:56:18 PST

From: abdadson@sj.ate.slb.com (Alex Dadson)

A few days ago, the pope addressed a crowd in Benin saying that Africans could practice their own tradition and culture after they converted to Christianity. This move did not surprise me because whenever the pope bows down to the Blackest Madonna of all time somewhere in the back rooms of the Vatican, he does so in reverence and respect of the African roots of Judeo-Christianity.

The bottom-line is that Christianity in its purest form is African. Most significant biblical "facts" were "borrowed" from African religions. The "immaculate" conception, holy visitation and all the 10 yards were chilling on the walls of several pyramids even before the Jewish Sanhedrin learnt to write; and by the way they portray several BLACK personalities of the Bible. I will refer interested netters to the following authentic and authorized sources:

Budge, E.A. Wallis, *From Fetish to God in Ancient Egypt* Budge, E.A. Wallis, *Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection* Graves, Kersey, *The World's Sixteen Crucified Saviors* Jackson, John G., *The Pagan Origins of the Christ Myth* Massey, Gerald, *Gnostic and Historic Christianity* Williams, Chancellor, *The Destruction of Black Civilization* (must read)

So if the Christians have a problem with pouring libation, may I ask how they distinguish between the SIXTEEN crucified saviors? We Africans thrive on symbols and libation could well be one of them. It might not even have any religious significance, but just the mere fact that we CHOOSE to honor our dead in this manner is ENOUGH; even the "political" pope can do nothing about that. Christians CONTINUE to BAPTIZE the dead to date (see Doctrine and Covenants of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints) why can't we do as we please with our dead ancestors? WHY??

Africans, beware of the outsiders that seek to turn you against your own. Part of our decline is due to the fact that we have disrespected our customs and adopted “new” ways that are alien to us. In fact, they suppress the spiritual part of us that helped us to formulate what Pythagoras the thief later claimed. It is only by being spiritual in the African sense, that we understood that energy and matter were one (see Metu Neter by Ra Un Nefer Amen). So what if Einstein wrote it all down? Towards the end of his days he admitted that “all science is a refined form of everyday thinking”. He knew that his general and special theories of relativity were no big deal; the concept was actually old, it was African, and it was formulated in times when our spirituality was untempered with.

Now look at how far back we have slid, even to the point where we debate the very last vestiges of the institutions that made us a great people. It is actually really sad, meriting Maase type mourning.

I would like to conclude by bringing your minds to the fact that a “mere” symbol in the form of the golden stool ensured and secured Ashanti unity for 200 years (see African in History by Basil Davidson). Today we propound all sort of textbook democratic theories as if they will save us; let’s go back to the symbols. Symbols have worked elsewhere in Africa over and over again. If we believe in the power of our ancestors, let us honor them by pouring the strongest libation even at the doorsteps of the church house. The original religion in its purest form is ours anyway.

Three sips for Odomankoma, Odapagyan and Oson!!!

14.06 Subject: Religion (Stats), by *Enock Delaporte*

Date: Thu, 27 May 1993 11:24:21 -0300

From: ENOCK DELAPORTE <NOCKY@ac.dal.ca>

1. It troubles my mind to realize that the word christian is applied to the group of people who were either baptized or go to church. My question is who is a christian? Is christianity contracted through baptism? or is it obtained through going to church or just a profession? Can we earnestly say that groups which “burn incense, candles, sprinkle holy water, practise polygamy, make blood sacrifices, and adhere to all manner of ceremonies” are part of the christian heritage?
2. I want to say that I didn’t post those figures out of hatred for christia- or malice, somehow, it appears my good intentions were misconstrued and I could sense some netters trying to pick up a fight with me. As we are allal seeking knowledge, let’s learn to be tolerant to differing view points. In that way we can set out to prove or disprove facts without a degree of bias.
3. Although I haven’t checked the validity of the claims made by the CIA World Fact Book, I want to pose a few questions which I hope netters will think through and address. What makes a christian? who is a christian? are there cults and religious sects in Ghana? where do such belong in the enumeration of christian? is every church - goer a christian?

14.07 Religion Statistics

Date: Thu, 27 May 1993 17:30 EST

From: OHENEBA%snypotvx.bitnet@CUNYVM.CUNY.EDU

The disparities in the religion statistics about Ghana as reported by external sources tell us how much we ourselves need to study our own society and know what’s going on inside our borders. Different organizations compile statistics for their own agenda (whatever that agenda is).

In the case of the religion statistics on Ghana there are serious conceptual problems (as some netters have pointed out) with regard to membership records, baptismal records, daily/weekly worshippers, religious holiday worshippers, social worshippers, and the highly committed believers.

Well, whose figures do we have faith in?

Let me post some figures that come from self-reports in two nationally representative samples of Ghanaian women.

1. Ghana Fertility Survey (Conducted between Feb. 1979 and March 1980)

The sample design was a stratified cluster sample by region and sector (rural, urban, and large urban) of 6,125 women aged 15-49. This survey was conducted jointly by the Ghana Central Bureau of Statistics and the Ghana Family Planning Secretariat.

The question asked of the respondents was: What is your religion?

Results:

- >Christian (65.2%)
- >Moslem (10.8%)
- >Traditional (15.9%)
- >No Religion (8.0%)
- >Other (0.1%)

2. Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (Feb. 1988 - June 1988)

The sample is self-weighting survey of 4,488 women aged 15-49 also stratified by region and sector. This survey was carried out by the Ghana Statistical Service (formally the Ghana Central Bureau of Statistics) in collaboration with the Institute for Resource Development/Macro Systems, Inc, Columbia, Maryland.

The question asked of the respondents was: What is your religion?

Results:

- >Christian (70.2%)
- >Moslem (9.9%)
- >Traditional (7.8%)
- >No Religion (11.8%)
- >Other (0.3%)

Although these statistics are only representative of women, I have more confidence in them because they are self-reports and the surveys were also coordinated by the Government Agency responsible for statistics in the country.

I hope this piece of information helps in clarifying the "Religion Stas" confusion.

Something that might be of interest to netters:

I myself have been working on both data sets (GFS & GDHS) for quite some time now, and have found them very useful in studying various aspects of the Ghanaian society. Please, send me a note if you are interested in using these data for your class projects, Masters Thesis, Ph.D. Dissertation, or other published/unpublished papers. The GDHS, for instance, has current information on fertility levels and trends, reproductive intentions of women and men, knowledge and use of contraception, infant/child mortality, immunization coverage, nutritional status of children, and maternal health.

14.08 Re: Oburionism/Christianity, by Alex Aboagye

Date: Fri, 28 May 1993 09:31:12 +0200

From: "Alex Aboagye . Kjemiteknikk" <alexab@kjemi.unit.no>

I have been following the discussions on Oburionism. I remember the discussions which brought in the Oburionism topic was the Moxon chieftancy case. At some point several of us tried to steer the discussion in the direction which will bring out the root causes of the Ghanaian's propensity to treat fair colored peoples better than s/he treat his fellow Ghanaian. I cited examples of my own unpleasant experiences of such bias treatments in Ghana. Some contributors

blamed this on several things including colonialism => inferiority complex => etc. It was at this point that Africanus introduced this Oburoniism topic as what he considered to be one of the causes. When he called on us to examine some of the things Kwasi Buroni has imposed on us, it was suggested that we examine christianity and christian/english names, our preference for foreign instead of local goods, among other things.

Given the premise and the trend of discussions which brought in the call to undo and deconstruct our minds of all negative things Oburoni imposed on us and coupled with the timing, I think that Gallows and et al. have implicitly concluded that christianity is one of the reasons for the negative attitudes even before we had the chance to examine it. I have not joined the discussion mainly for this reason. He didn't say it in so many words but I think anyone can safely make that inference.

To be fair to Gallows, I should mention that he tried in his later postings to point out that by asking us to examine christianity he is not condemning it but that we can possibly, even see that it has contributed some positive things to our society. But if his intentions are genuinely unbiased as I can infer from this claim, then I think that he chose a rather awkward moment to introduce this topic since he, inadvertently or otherwise, implicitly linked christianity with the negative attitudes we are trying to undo. Apparently I am not the only one who has noticed this. Steve Acheampong and probably many others have too.

What has caused me to send this posting in spite of my resolve is a reaction to Aveh's latest posting in which he explicitly stated that the reason why light-colored people were treated better than me at Kotoka can be attributed to christianity. It is interesting how elastic our imaginations can be when we are bent on finding linkages. I have tried to stretch my imagination but I cannot see how the way I was treated could be connected to christianity. A friend was telling me yesterday that when he went to write his GCE O'level biology, he had studied pollination very well and had not studied pollution at all. When he read the questions pollution was there but for a while he thought he saw pollination. Sometimes in our obsession to see what we want, we see them even when they don't exist.

I think that many christians will discuss their beliefs with others regardless of what beliefs they hold. But when those people condemn the religion even before the adherents have had a chance to say anything, then it ceases to be an examination - in fact, to be a little bit melodramatic here, it borders on persecution.

If Gallows or any of the others have come with specific things in christianity which they consider negative it would have been more interesting to discuss. It would have interested me to know from Aveh what teachings in christianity which says or encourages us to treat light colored people better than we treat blacks.

If they are saying that christianity was imposed on us and that is the reason why we need to undo it, then I think it is fair to say that many other things were imposed on us as others have tried to point out, eg. formal education, dressing, english language, system of govt, etc. Do we say we have to undo all of these simply because they were imposed on us. We are certainly not claiming that everything Oburoni brought to us was negative. That is why we need to be specific when we start pointing accusing fingers. Maybe we need to redefine this undo and deconstruct words better. And talking about traditional religions, we should not think that it did us only good. It does us hardly any good when we hastily throw broad topics on the net and say lets discuss/examine them. We need to come with specifics.

On the other hand, I don't think that christians claim that the history of christianity has been without fault. Since ordinary imperfect human beings are trying to portray ideal and perfect things, their imperfection sometimes mar the beauty of the picture. The story becomes even more complicated when people with different motives use christianity as a cover to achieve their selfish ends. It is not easy to dissociate the history of the christian church on one hand from christianity as a faith or concept on the other hand. So one cannot just pooh-pooh a genuine questioning of the churches performance and dismiss it as being different from christianity as a faith. Any well meaning christian may be able to accept this and will be ready to discuss the failures as well as the transforming power of christianity with others. But it becomes difficult to discuss anything with people who, for whatever reason have set themselves to condemn something - religious or secular even before they hear about it.

In trying to better our lot as a people we must rid ourselves of our personal dislikes and be as objective and concrete as possible. Above all we must be self critical as a nation. Who was it who said that if a man deems it fit to blame all his failures on others then it is fair to ascribe his successes too to others? We need to do some self-examination as a people.

Maybe we are not taught to be self-critical as a nation at school and that is why examining our curriculum maybe a pertinent issue.

A journalist once asked an european working in Sierra Leone what he considers to the cause of the country's woes. He replied, "the people - because the people get the leaders they deserve". This was in a context whereby Sierre Leone has given most of it bauxite deposits to foreign companies to prospect them, ship the ore to Europe, extract the metal and come back to tell the Sierra Leonean govt how much they got. As long as we keep pointing fingers to Europe and the west, as long as we continue to blame all others but ourselves for our woes, not until each of us start a serious self examination and try to better him/herself and those s/he can help, we will continue to have the leaders that we deserve. We shall talk about all the things except those that are important. We will mess things up for ourselves and our children but will never know why.

14. 09 WHO IS A CHRISTIAN???????

Date: Thu, 27 May 1993 15:41 AST

From: GRD4031@HUSKY1.STMARYS.CA

I personally do not think that we should go into the intricacies of "Who is a christian" because there are many types of christians. A recent survey here is Canada and published in a Macleans magazine indicated that although most church pews are empty accross the country over 80% of Canadians consider themselves to be Christians.

Another survey which results were announced in Toronto by the Television Evangelist John Hagee indicated that 2% of the Canadian population (which is by the way about 26 million) are Born-again christians.

Finally, I do not think that a debate on who is a christian would be helpful. Sufice it to say that, as the "tag" implies a christian is one who professes to be a follower of Jesus Christ. I'll soon post some more statistics which I got from Ghana's High Commission in Washington suggesting that Christians constitute the majority of the population followed by those who have traditional beliefs, followed by muslims and then others.

14.10 Re: Oburonism / Christianity, by *Michael Aveh*

Date: Thu, 3 Jun 1993 20:19:33 +0200

From: MICHAEL AVEH <aveh@avh.unit.no>

I am compelled to touch this topic of Oburonism in response to the recent posting by Mr. Alex Aboagye. Let me quote some paragraphs from the said posting.

Alex wrote:

**** What has caused me to send this posting in spite of my resolve is a reaction to Aveh's latest posting in which he explicitly stated that the reason why light-colored people were treated better than me at Kotoka can be attributed to christianity. It is interesting how elastic our imaginations can be when we are bent on finding linkages. I have tried to stretch my imagination but I cannot see how the way I was treated could be connected to christianity.****

**** If Gallows or any of the others have come with specific things in christianity which they consider negative it would have been more interesting to discuss. It would have interested me to know from Aveh what teachings in christianity which says or encourages us to treat light colored people better than we treat blacks.****

**** In trying to better our lot as apeople we must rid ourselves of our personal dislikes and be as objective and concrete as possible.****

----- end of quoted material -----

Africanus Aveh responds:

Never in all the five postings I contributed on the topic OBURONISM did I EXPLICITLY state that the reason why light-colored people were treated better than blacks or Ghanaians at Kotoka is because of christianity. I have all the postings and I can re-post them word for word for verification. And especially in my last posting Oburoni V which seemed to have dwelt on religion because of the rejoinders on the issue then, there is no portion that I attributed christianity or any religion as being the cause of discrimination against the black race even among blacks.

Many issues were raised as falling under Oburoni and I made the call at beginning to the examination of what Kwesi Buroni brought to us and do away with those we feel have bad taste and we shall be free to discover our true identity. Someone, (I believe it was Charles Awasu) made a contribution in which he called for deconstructing of the mind, mentioning among others colonial attitudes of Ghanaians and especially the preference for foreign goods as against local ones.

I remember Oheneba also called for a review of the curriculum in our schools to reflect the needs of the nation and also to give better knowledge of our own people and culture, he suggested an exchange of students at all levels on the local front where students from say the cities could live in the remote parts during holidays.

I remember Gallows stating that in the tackling of all that Kwesi Buroni brought to us, we could start with christianity and that brought christianity into the debate as some people attacked him on the grounds that he seems to link every issue on the net with christianity. I came out to state that I do not condemn any religion (christianity included) and that I am not calling for the abolishing of christianity in our search of oburoni things that taste bad. The call I made was to correct some misinterpretations that were handed to us by the white missionaries when they began propagating the christian doctrine and which still exist today. I asked that it is time that the younger ones be told the truth that Jesus Christ when he did come to earth was not born an European nor was the mother an European as the paintings, pictures, Scriptures depict. I asked that in teaching our children religion be it Islam or christianity, we must try to let the children know how the various religions including traditional ones conceive God and why one chooses one and reject the others. We must not practise what was done in the colonial days when the colonisers and their agents told us that OUR ways were evil and un-Godly. I also asked that churches should accept ALL names during baptism and not force people to take on Christian or English names and mentioned a case I was witness to, during the time I was preparing for baptism and confirmation in the Catholic church. With this and rejoinders that arose, I stated that some parents (myself included) have decided not to give English/Christian names to our children born and growing abroad to make them start off with a sense of identity.

These issues I stated do make the white race seem GOD RACE. I desisted from joining the debate on christianity/Bible when it appeared on the net and in my postings on Oburoni, Vandalism, I have desisted from opposing christianity and I shall continue to do so because I am not anti-Christ! All along I had the notion that issues could be discussed in academic and intellectual way putting aside our prejudices as a result of beliefs and ideals. My hope was a discussion of matters that directly and indirectly relate to the attitude of Ghanaians towards whites.

I remember Alex mentioning tribalism or the disrespect of some tribes by some tribes in Ghana as contributing to this issue of Oburoni. If my memory serves me right, I remember also the mention of people with higher degrees looking down upon those "who did not go some". Issues that we discussed under KUNTANISM also came into Oburoni.

What other specifics is Alex asking for?

Do we give a thought to the fact that even within christianity we discriminate and look down upon other christians? Don't non-Catholics regard some practices of catholics as wrong? Don't some christians have attitude towards other christians who go to churches like Apostolic, Musama Disco Christo, Aladura, Twelve Apostles, Amen-Amen, Seventh Day Adventist, Jehovah Witness, Africana Mission, Church of the Later Day Saints (Momons), Jesus of Dzorwulu, Evangelical Presby, etc, etc.?

Many a time some christians are so attached to the faith that they will not engage in any debate which seeks to question some aspects of their beliefs. I knew Prof. K. A. Dickson through his books that are used for O level B.K. and A Level R.S. before I met him in person. I did not even know that he is a Reverend until I came to Legon. I remember some SU members during my secondary school days condemned the man as blasphemous because in his books, "History and Religion of Israel", he tried to give possible explanations to some issues and events that are said to have occurred miraculously. He used Theology, Sociology, Geography, Science etc, in his explanations. I remember one particular

hot argument in our class which led to one SU guy dropping BK was the possible explanation given by Prof. Dickson concerning the turning of the Nile into “blood” during the time of Moses. He explained that, that part of the Nile River was on lower grounds and the surrounding mountains carry mud to the river during heavy rain and the muddy river appear bloody. But he added that if this was what occurred then the timing is significant. Do we label him anti-Christ? I remember he used to be a patron of the Univ. of Ghana Christian Fellowship when I was there and a popular preacher too.

My point is that when people contribute to debates on govt policies and acts and state their opposing views, we don’t label them unpatriotic or sell-outs so should we desist from seeing people who question some aspects of christianity as anti-christian. I DO NOT DISLIKE CHRISTIANITY!!!! I only questioned some aspects in our attempts to locate the root of white supremacy!

After all, we could compare the worship and reverence of saints to the worship and reverence of ancestors. They were all once on this earth, did good things, died and live now in the spirit world where they are nearer to the Almighty. We believe we could appeal to them to intervene on our behalf and to guard us against all forms of evil.

We could compare the wearing of the crucifix to the wearing of talismans. Some believe in the power of the Bible to heal by just touching it and others also believe in the power of the amulet to heal and ward off evil by touching. We receive communion at church service, we receive ground herbs when we consult shrines. The christian priest wears a robe or cassock, the traditional priest wears a raffia skirt or a piece of white cloth. During prayer sessions especially ALL NIGHT, I see christians fall into fits and “speak in tongues”, weeping sometimes and rolling on the floor. Believers of traditional religion, even bystanders fall into trance, shaking and “speaking in tongues”, sometimes weeping and rolling on the floor during invocations and prayers. The usual christian prayer is acknowledging the providence of the Almighty and calling on Him to guard and protect us and ask things through His son, the saints etc. The usual libation acknowledges the power of God and His care and guidance and the request for something, made through the ancestors, the lesser gods in our vicinity etc.

Why does one believe in one and not the other? Why does one practise christianity and not traditonal religion? This is where the individual response come into play. But do we condemn one because we prefer the other?

When will christians ever accept that there are negative sides to the concept? Do christians accept that the church helped in the Jewish holocaust? Hasn’t christianity done any harm to us as Ghanaians? Haven’t some of us denied our heritage, culture, social values and norms because they conflicted with our religious beliefs? Thus when we call for a change in attitude towards the white man some of our beliefs come into question and make us very uncomfortable and we turn to attack those who raise those issues.

Oheneba called on netters to examine their knowledge base, and help create a balance in favour of our motherland. Our religious beliefs should be the priority since that is where we fail to look when we look for “linkages” for our woes. I have never said that all that Kwesi Buroni brought to us are bad and we need to do away with them. What I said and continue to say is that some are not suitable and the time has come for us to study those questionable ones and do away with them if they cannot be modified to suit us. Western education, food, clothes, technology etc are always sighted as benefits from oburoni but the question is: DO WE TAKE EVERYTHING AND SWALLOW IN WHOLE?

I accept that I have come abroad for further study thanks to the generosity of Kwesi Buroni. I shall continue to express my gratitude for that but at the same time, I shall guard against losing my heritage, my identity as a Ghanaian, as an African as a Blackman. I shall not copy in whole the ways of the white man; and where it turns out very uncomfortable, I will try to modify to suit me or do away with it. I don’t think I shall behave like that lecturer at Legon (no names) who returned after 10 years sojourn abroad and wears jacket and tie around even when temperatures reached 40 celcius, and carried with him a flask of hot coffee and drinks as he lectures!

14.11 Of God, Good, and Evil, *Isaac Thompson*

Date: Wed, 8 Dec 1993 13:12:54 -0500 (EST)

From: Isaac Thompson <ixtst+@pitt.edu>

I have to say that I am what my Christian friends (and foes!) often refer to self-righteously as a “heathen.” They of course ignore the Biblical injunction, “Judge not”! I say always simply, “Lord forgive them for they know not what they do.”

I have no dislike for religion per se. I believe only that any religion must have social relevance, in addition to providing spiritual guidance to its adherents; it must deal with the here and now as much as (if not more than) it deals with a future which NO one knows for certain, except by faith. Put differently, any talk of “apple in the sky” must necessarily be accompanied with, if not preceded by, talk of “apple in the KITCHEN”: It’s only after you’ve had your kitchen apple that you would have the energy to dream of the one in the sky.

Such banal injunctions as “God’s time is the best” or “I leave it to God” do nothing but hinder initiative, leaving too many of their adherents (mostly the poor) in conditions of undeserved privation. My oft-stated position is simply that there’s a reason God (or the Gods, depending on your beliefs) gave us land, water, air, etc. and then put us in the midst of all that: So we can exploit them.

He, therefore, must be very angry every time he hears us shirk our responsibilities and seek cheap refuge in such expressions as “God will provide” (if not here at least in the hereafter). Provide what, I say? After all He (or She, again, depending on your beliefs) has endowed us with all of nature, out of which WE must provide for ourselves.!

This is synonymous to the (earthly) father who provides the best opportunities to his child to make him “somebody” in the future, only to have him grow up, lazy and completely bereft of initiative, spending his days waiting for dad to provide. If I were that father, I’d be, well, very pissed off with that son! Sometimes I think God feels the same about us--or SOME of us--too, when he hears us waiting for Him to provide.

In sum, these views make me more of an “applied religionist” than the heathen my friends mistakenly think I am.

Let me now turn to your post and its conclusion. You state, based on a set of quotes from the Koran (a copy of which I keep, along with a Bible!), that”

“...none of God’s actions is evil. He is one and only one; with His Angels ever ready to do whatever He wants them to do.”

This conclusion leads me to believe that whether or not God is capable of evil (and as such is evil) depends on where you look. Refer to Isaiah 45:5, 7, for example:

“I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me....I form light, and create darkness; I MAKE PEACE AND CREATE EVIL. I the Lord do all these things.” (King James Version)

Or consider the following, which is perhaps the most flagrant display of sass by a mortal toward God in the Bible. Exodus, 32:

9-12: “And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make thee a great nation.

And Moses besought the Lord his God, and said, Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand. Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountain, and to consume them from the face of the earth? TURN FROM THY FIERCE WRATH, AND REPENT OF THIS EVIL against thy people.”

^^^^

Verse 14: “And the Lord repented of the EVIL which he thought to do unto his people.”

I can provide a laundry list of other such incidents in the Bible associating God with evil, but suffice it so say that given the above quotes, God becomes a manifestation of the fundamental laws that define nature: That everything exists in pairs.

It is simply impossible to have good without evil, just as it is impossible to speak of day without night, or up without down, or right without left, or blind without sight, or life without death, and so forth. One MUST exist for the other to exist as well. Hence the dual attributes of good and evil in God and man, whom as we all know He made in his own image. We do God a great disservice by depriving him of an attribute which he himself admits of possessing.

14.12 Re: I am God, by *Adjo Akpene Amekudzi*

Date: Fri, 17 Dec 1993 02:48:54 -0800 (PST)

From: Adjo Akpene Amekudzi <adjo@leland.Stanford.EDU>

Isaac Thompson:

"I must disagree with Kofi, though, when he says I was "created." Kofi, I was BORN, the product of organic reaction, not CREATED. When I hear the word create, I think of art or something, not flesh and blood!

Are creation and birth necessarily mutually exclusive?

I mean you could say that the Ford was created by Henry Ford in the sense that he was the creator of the original concept. However it was made -(born in a way, if you like) by a bunch of factory workers who were probably ignorant of how the original concept came about, but could follow the general rules of fitting the parts together.

So the FORD was both created and born. It probably wouldn't have been born if it wasn't created in the first place - there is very little intelligent action behind a random blob of steel and a mesh of useless electrical wires until they are formed into a useful entity based on a creative and intelligent concept.

Perhaps the FORD "thinks" it was born by a bunch of factory workers - because it is a product of a mechanical reaction.

14.13 Subject: Re: I am God!, by *Daniel Appiah*

Date: Fri, 17 Dec 93 17:51:38 EST

From: Daniel Appiah <dappiah@ccs.carleton.ca>

The discussions on the topic of religion and creation have been very provocative. I have been trying to reserve my comments on the highly polemical issues involved in the discussions. But the more I try, the less comfortable I become. So I have decided to come out of the closet. And these are my confessions...

First, the major questions that the discussions so far have sought to answer are 1) where did mankind come from? 2) why is mankind here on earth? 3) will mankind have somewhere to go after death? if yes, where? and how can one go there? These are age-old questions which have challenged the thoughts and deeds of mankind of any generation in recorded history. No easy and simple answers have been found to the questions.

With regards to question (1) two theories have been put forward. These are a) the creation theory and b) the evolutionary theory. But so far the discussions have centered on the creation theory to the neglect of the evolution one. The reason for this neglect, perhaps, lies in the fact that the evolutionary theory has a number of significant weaknesses and lacks any divine clout. Another reason may be that a number of netters have not read much about it. I have also not read much about it. The focus, therefore will be to add to the lists of some of the apparent logical flaws inherent in the creation theory.

The thrust of the creation theory is that mankind was created by God(s). That God created mankind in his own image. And that God is one.

I will argue that it is mankind who created God(s). Is this a heresy? No. The reason being that throughout history and in all cultures, mankind has attributed the things that s/he could not understand to God(s). For example in ancient Europe(Greece), they had Gods and Goddesses representing any natural phenomena that they could not explain and understand. Thus, they have Gods and Goddesses of Love, Fertility, Twins, Rains, Thunder, Waves, Harvest, Famine, Birth etc. And even it is reported that they had a shrine with the words to the UNKNOWN GOD.

The interesting thing is that the acquisition of knowledge in science, medicine, and technology, enabled them to find answers and explanations to most of the natural phenomena. And what do we see now. There are no such Gods and Goddesses in Europe and elsewhere. In fact those Gods have been de-created by mankind. So mankind has the power to create and decreate God(s). Perhaps the UNKNOWN GOD is who we refer to as the one God. And who knows, as science and technology continue to unravel some of the hitherto hidden mysteries of earth, space, and sea, this UNKNOWN GOD, which man created centuries ago may be decreated, because S/HE may become irrelevant.

This might explain why in societies and cultures where science and technology are less developed, they still have Gods and Goddesses representing unexplained natural phenomena. Thus, in many parts of Africa people still worship and sacrifice for variety of Gods and Goddesses, including rain, twins, harvest, famine etc.

I would like to end my first confession here. The others will be made later.

14.14 Re: I am God!, by N.D.K. Asante

Date: Mon, 20 Dec 1993 15:50:11 GMT

From: "N.D.K Asante" <ASANTE@fs2.ce.umist.ac.uk>

To: Isaac Thompson <ixtst+@pitt.edu>

Your previous message 'clarifying your position' was quite revealing. To my mind it appears that you might (Like you I have used the word "might"!) suffer from the common delusion that Christianity is essentially "European". The funny thing is that many Europeans suffer from the same delusion!!

Anyone who cares to investigate the issue cannot but come to the conclusion that Christianity is Jewish in origin, and therefore Europeans have no further claim to Christianity than Africans have a claim to Islam!!

There is no doubt that European civilisation (or its lack thereof) has greatly affected the practice of Christianity as is known today, and in many cases the effect has been negative! Let me however assure you that European paganism is nothing more than European paganism; it may be dressed in Christian clothes, but its essence is unchanged. Christianity draws its truth not from the practices of Europeans (no matter how well intentioned) but from the teachings of the Bible (written predominantly by Jews).

I have never heard of such an early Euro-pagan practice, but to even describe something like this as Christian can only imply that you are unable to discern what is Christian and what is not. Just because "Europeans" may have done such a thing and called themselves Christians does not mean that you should be deceived as they were! As for Christmas you are not the first and will not be the last to comment on its clearly pagan origins. Christmas is not a Christian festival, it is therefore almost on the same level as Homowo (The Ga Festival)! It is a matter for each individual Christian to decide whether or not to celebrate it, and how exactly to celebrate it. It may also interest you to know that Christianity does not require observance of the Sabbath, and the use of the first day of the week for Christian meetings was started by the JEWS who still went to the synagogue on the Sabbath. (Please note that there are differences between Judaism and Christianity, and hence it is absolutely false to claim as you did that the Bible stipulates that God must be worshiped on the Sabbath).

I would have been more in agreement with your conclusion if you had retained the use of the first person singular throughout. Perhaps you feel brainwashed, I certainly do not, and in addition, I find that I have a lot to teach "pagan Europeans" who are still under the illusion that "what they do is Christian", and that they can even remotely claim to be Christian.

I suggest that if you truly seek to find “the real God”, (and I speak from the basis that I believe I have found Him) you use what you described as your power of reasoning (bestowed upon you by God) to examine the Bible yourself, and stop relying on the opinions of deluded “Euro-pagan scholars”. Even if you don’t come to believe as I do you will at least be able to make better judgement as to what is essentially Christian and what is not.

I myself would be more than willing to continue this debate on a personal level, which I believe would be a more effective means of getting to a conclusion on specific issues.

14.15 Religion, by *M. Agbeti*

Date: Sat, 18 Dec 93 09:32:28 MST

From: “M. Agbeti Post Doc” <MAGBETI@VM.UCS.UALBERTA.CA>

Two points have been raised by netter on the issue of religion.

1. Mr Appiah stated that netters have, so far, been concentrating on the CREATION aspect of humans, and neglecting the EVOLUTION theory. His reason is that evolution has a number of significant clout because it does not evoke a divine clout. In my opinion, CREATION also has a number of weaknesses as well. there are many aspects of the Creation theory which has to be accepted by faith, and netters see no point in debating on something that has to be accepted by faith. Can’t we call this “weakness”? The reason with the weaknesses in the evolution theory is that there are many aspects of it which scientists have not yet found convincing explanations. In the same way, there are many aspects of creation which people have to accept on faith.
2. Rashid asked why people debating on the two HOLY BOOKS, which have similar origination, should differ on some aspects e.g. Crucifixion etc. The point is that people have different ways of explaining the same thing (which leads to many churches these days; all these were offshoots of the traditional X’tianity whicg disagree on particular issues. People these days are questioning a lot of things in the holy books, hence these disagreements. Gone are the days when people accept things without questioning?. Although both books has the same origin practitioners have different approaches to explaining some aspects, and the way of practise. Alfred (I think) asked questions about such issues on “What happens after death?. Why we are here? etc. The most important thing is to know about the purpose of life. Once you some idea about that, the others follow automatically. Some of us are still slow at typing (using one finger). So I cant go any further.

14.16 Re: I am God!, by *Samuel Aggrey*

Date: Sat, 18 Dec 1993 13:34:15 -0800 (PST)

From: Samuel Aggrey <egyir@unixg.ubc.ca>

First, the major questions that the discussions so far have sought to answer are 1) where did mankind come from? 2) why is mankind here on earth? 3) will mankind have somewhere to go after death? if yes, where? and how can one go there? These are age-old questions which have challenged the thoughts and deeds of mankind of any generation in recorded history. No easy and simple answers have been found to the questions. Two of such questions are a) the creation theory and b) the evolutionary theory.

I would like to contribute my quota on creation viz: “the concept of divine creativity” and “the theory of organic evolution”.

1. Evolution biologist (EB) hypothesize that out of vacuum evolved matter and there was a vital force puting the inorganic elements together, hence the beginging of life. Paleo -biologist, botanist, geneticists, anthropologists etc (Paleo-specialists (PS)) through fossil records have tried to reconstruct life from the single celled amoeba to complex entities like man. Up till now, its still a theory because, the majority are not proven yet coupled with too many inconsistencies and continuity. Yet because most of these scientists will not consider the alternative view of creativity choose to “die” with this theory. However, they are always embarrassed when asked on “missing links”. For example, the theory says birds evolved from reptiles. They have fossil records of reptiles and birds but not inbetween. Explanation: Organic evolution is dependent on time (millions of years). Theory: there was a gradual change from reptiles to birds. That we have creatures inbetween reptiles and birds till that creature finally became the ancestor of the

ancient bird. However, till now, there is no single record of the inbetween creatures (links). All the links are missing. PS argue against the Bible by saying that, they have fossil records which dates back millions of years beyond the book of Genesis (Bible). These are some of the popular questions to PS. If they claim to know the conditions under which organic life started, why don't they simulate the situation in the lab (repeatability). At the same time some bible scholars argue that there is a big gap of time between Genesis 1:1 and Gen 1:2. In the beginning God created heaven and earth and life (plants and animals on earth) and everything was perfect. When Lucifer was cast down onto the earth (Isaiah 14) with a third of the angels, the force with which they landed on the earth got everything disorganized and some destroyed. The argue that, the fall of Lucifer occurred before God started reorganizing the earth i.e. Gen 1:2...The present world's demography can only be dated back to 6000 years (Fact) which strongly support divine creativity (We only know from Adam). PS have not been able to tell us who was before Adam. Gen 1 to 10 give a vivid account of how the earth was inhabited, how families and tribes migrated and how and why we have some country names e.g. Egypt was originally called Mizraim. Mizraim was Noah grandson who chose to migrate to that area. It goes on and on.

14. 17 Subject: Evolution vs. Creation

Date: Mon, 20 Dec 93 17:23:46 EST
From: laing@blaze.cs.jhu.edu

PS means Paleo-Specialists in the following quote from Sammy (Vancouver) PS argue against the Bible by saying that, they have fossil records which dates back millions of years beyond the book of Genesis (Bible).

I've done a very small bit of reading on this matter, from the perspective of creationists. The book is: The Evidence for Creation: Examining the Origin of Planet Earth, by McLean, Oakland and McLean. ISBN: 0-88368-211-7. This is an extensive paraphrase. Statements in square brackets are mine.

Kofi Laing.

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[Apparently there are many different scientific methods for measuring how old the earth is. This is the science of geochronology. Here is a discussion of a few. Two numbers to remember as you read the following. Evolutionists estimate the age of the earth to be 4.5 - 5 *billion* years old. Creationists arguing from the Bible, estimate Adam to have lived about 6000 years ago. Some creationists believe that the six days of God's creation were 24 hour periods, and not ages. That puts the earth itself at 6000 years. There is no way Evolution could be true and also Adam could have lived 6000 years ago because then all the men before Adam should still be alive. No curse. So either the Creationists are right, or the Evolutionists are right. We can not mix both (and there are many other reasons why, but that is not my focus in this posting). Memo: 4.5 - 5 BILLION vs. about 6000 years. Don't forget these numbers! Now read on and enjoy.]

Cosmic dust settles on the earth through the atmosphere. Assuming the rates have been constant at the current rates, and an age of 4.5+ billion years, it is estimated that the earth should be covered in 50 feet of dust. But it rains on our planet, and erosion has prevented this accumulation. But the moon is not subject to such erosion, as created by wind and water. So before the first moon landing, scientists expected the moon to be covered in about 50 feet of dust. The landing module had legs with large pads to prevent sinking into the dust on touchdown. The astronauts [thank God they went] found only a few inches of dust. This translates to about 10,000 years of age (of the moon). Guess what, creation-scientist Dr. Werner Von Braun had predicted this all along!

The earth's magnetic field grows measurably weaker each year. Assuming this rate of weakening has been constant and extrapolating backwards in time, the earth must have been a magnetic star 10,000 years ago, and 30,000 years ago, temperatures were about 5000 degrees Celcius. How does this sound for the prospects of any life forms?

The sun is shrinking [very slowly, no cause for alarm -- you should have seen how terrified I was when I heard this the first time as a kid.] Hard facts: loss of 0.1% per century, which is five feet per hour. If these rates have been constant, the sun would have been twice its current size only 100,000 years ago. Extrapolating backwards 1 million years, the radiation from the sun would have made life impossible on the earth. 20 million years ago, the sun would be touching

the earth [I don't know whether those who did these calculations based it on volume decrease or radius decrease, and whether it makes a difference].

Comets are little bodies that run in circles through space. They are estimated to be the age of the solar system. Each time they circle the sun, the sun's "solar winds" tear little pieces off. If they had started circling millions of years ago, they would have been finished by now. To still be around (as indeed they are), they must be less than about 10,000 years old.

At current rates of erosion, the continents should have eroded to sea-level if they were so much as only 14 million years old. They haven't! 14 million is much more than 6000, and less than 0.5 % of the age proposed by the evolutionists. [:-] Are you enjoying this?]

Natural Oil and gas occurs in deposits that are under extremely high pressure. They are surrounded, very often by porous material. It is estimated that at such pressures, the pressure would be gone if these deposits were more than 100,000 years old.

[SO WHAT ABOUT THE FOSSILS THAT ARE SO OLD ???

Here is the evidence that is often presented as evidence for an old earth. And critique, of course.]

Radiometric Dating

These methods of estimating the age of fossils are said to give large ages for fossils. In these methods, there are two elements: an old and a new element, and the old element is unstable, so it decays gradually into the new element. Scientists can measure the ratio of the [masses of the] two elements at different times. The decay rate is then used to calculate the age of a fossil, by measuring the ratio of these elements in the rock surrounding a fossil.

Three such methods are:

- 1) Uranium-Lead
- 2) Rubidium-Strontium
- 3) Potassium-Argon

These methods are usually based on the following assumptions:

- 1) The matter being tested must have been 100% old -element originally.
- 2) The rate of decay must be constant through time.
- 3) The system must be closed: nothing must be added or taken away.

Creationists say that none of the these methods can be tested or proved! Assumption 1 is just a guess. Extreme temperature change is known to affect the rate of decay [that slights Assumption 2]. The third argument is that there is no such thing as a closed system in nature. Hence one can not unquestionably claim that nothing was added or removed.

[Now here are some tidbits from journals that perhaps betray the method.]

Science, vol 167, Jan 30, 1970

Soil brought back from the moon (Apollo 11) was dated by the following methods:

Pb207-Pb206	4.6 billion years
Pb206-U238	5.41 "
Pb207-U235	4.89 "
Pb208-Th232	8.2 "

Lunar rocks from the same place, dated by Potassium-Argon method, was estimated at 2.3 billion. Which of the above is correct ???

Science, vol 182, Jan 30, 1973 Apollo 16 brought back a rock that was estimated to be 7 to 18 billion years old by three different methods. This figure was corrected to 3.8 billion years, on finding and taking care of an experimental error. [Observe the wide margin.]

Since we are not very certain about the ages of things dated by these methods, the natural thing to do is to test the method on material of known ages. If the method tells you the age that is known to be true, then you're in business!

Journal of Geophysical Research, vol 73, July 15, 1968:

Lava rocks that were known to have been formed in 1800/1801 in Hawaii were dated by Potassium-Argon at 160 million to 3 billion years. [The question that comes to my mind is whether the lava was already old before it erupted. If so, how justified is it to date enclosed fossils this way?]

Science, vol 162, Oct 11, 1968:

Volcanic Rocks known to be less than 200 years old were dated at 12 to 21 million years.

Radio-Carbon Dating

Carbon-14 dating methods are used to estimate how old organic tissues are. They are based on the rate of decay when Carbon-14 is the old element. It is applied directly to the dead tissue instead of the surrounding rock.

Here are some environmental factors which strongly suggest that the rate of Carbon-14 formation has not been constant in the past. [Remember Assumption 2?].

The decreasing magnetic field of the earth (14% over the past 130 years) causes radiation belts (Van Allen belts) surrounding the earth to also decrease. These radiation belts affect how much cosmic radiation reaches the earth's surface. Cosmic radiation in turn affects how much nitrogen is converted into radioactive carbon.

Volcanic activity releases Carbon dioxide and alters the balance of Carbon-14. Solar flares cause an increased rate of Carbon-14 formation.

Nuclear tests in the past few decades.

Collisions of asteroids or meteorites are known to increase the rate of Carbon-14 formation drastically. eg. The response of tree-rings all over the world to the Tunguska, Siberia explosion of 1908 (an asteroid or meteorite exploded in the atmosphere).

Now let us consider some paradoxes of Carbon-14 dating.

Science, vol 130, Dec 11, 1959:

Living mollusks were dated at 2300 years old. [!!!!]

Nature, vol 225, Mar 7, 1970:

Bits of food from the mortar of a 787-year-old English Castle, was dated at 7370 years old.

Antartic Journal of the United States, vol 6, 1971:

Freshly killed seals were dated at 1300 years old. Mummified seals that had been dead only 30 years were dated at 4600 years.

[Scientists on the net, do any of you have the time to duplicate the dating tests on freshly killed animals ? -- that shouldn't be too hard if you're in the field. A little meat from the nearby grocery and you're set.]

Some other stuff:

Sample	Carbon-14 Date	Geological Date
sabre tooth tiger	28000	100,000-1,000,000
mammoth	11,000	20,000-35,000
natural gas	14,000	50,000,000
coal	1,680	100,000,000

[Why these non-linear anomalies?]

14.18 CREATION VS. EVOLUTION, by *M. Agbeti*

Date: Tue, 21 Dec 93 13:16:31 MST

From: "M. Agbeti Post Doc" <MAGBETI@VM.UCS.UALBERTA.CA>

The discussion of the above topic by Kofi Laing was educative and enjoyable. I am someone who do not always read those long stuff to the end, but for this one I did. Congratulations on this long essay. A few points to note. Evolutionists estimate the age of earth to between 4.5 and 5.0 billion yrs, whereas creationists estimate it to be 6000 yrs. Both may be true depending on the angle from which each is tackled. Creationists believe life started when Adam and Eve were created (and this may have been 6000 yrs ago). Evolutionists may be telling us that before Adam & Eve were created, there was something, Some "life " already there, and that was what they are referring to. Therefore, creationist may be short-sighted (see things in the short term), whereas Evolutionists appears to be long-sighted (seeing things from longer perspective). In the past I have been involved with paleolimnological studies (study of lake sediments in order to determine changes which took place in the lake's watershed in the past, i.e. lake history). We usually date our sediments using lead 210 analysis, and the dates we obtained often match with such things as documented history of the lake and other techniques we use to evaluate our dates. Of course, we are not always exact, due to those assumptions, but overall, the dates us usually match. Our work usually involved 2000 years and sometimes beyond. I dont know what would happen when you run into billions, but I think you could be close to the real dates (allowing for errors etc). Soil brought from Apollo dated by the different techniques (elements) all give billion yrs, and not thousands, so it is possible the age of the earth may be in billion of years (and not thousands). The fact that a freshly killed seal was estimated be 1300 yrs old is probably becuase the materials from which they were built were old. Interesting article by Kofi Laing.

14.19 I am God, by *Samuel Aggrey*

Date: Wed, 29 Dec 1993 10:34:26 -0800 (PST)

From: Samuel Aggrey <egyir@unixg.ubc.ca>

I would like to clarify some few things on this subject and contribute my own. Agbeti wrote that from the creationist point of view, the earth is 6000 years. This is not correct. Creationists claim, mankind is 6000 years on earth. In Genesis, God created heaven and earth and everything therein before creating man. Gallows pointed out that the sun does not move. True, but out of context. We normally say the sun rises from the East and set at the West. Literally this means during the day the sun travels from the East to the West; which is not true. The truth is that the earth rotate such that it appears to those of us in the rotation that the sun is rather moving. I hope you can understand literally why it is documented that Joshua stopped the sun. Scientifically, I would put it this way. Joshua stopped the earth from rotating, as a result they had more than expected daylength.

14.20 Religion, Ghana and Abroad, by *Ivy Drafor*

Date: Wed, 29 Dec 1993 15:40:22 -0400 (EDT)

From: Ivy Drafor <idrafor@uoguelph.ca>

I'm made very important findings on the net which I'd like to bring to your notice. Reading some of the postings on religion, I'm so happy to find that Ghanaians are just as confused as the people abroad. See it is so easy for most Ghanaians to judge them and say they do not even believe in God. Every country has its own evil capabilities. In one country it might be witchcraft, in another it might be drugs, or sexual immorality, or suicide, or corruption etc. There is no one place with no evils. Judgemental statements like "they" don't even believe in God are racist statements in the first place. We discriminate against others just as well as they may against us.

I know that most of you were christians (or maybe "church goers") from Ghana and some, of other religious persuasions. Please do not display your confusions. I've been very silent about the whole topic but only need to draw your attention to this fact. I hope you'll not spend hours attempting to discuss my point. Religious arguments are futile – you either choose to believe or you don't. The consequences are 100% yours.

14.21 Religion, Ghana and Abroad, by Samuel Aggrey

Date: Wed, 29 Dec 1993 14:44:00 -0800 (PST)

From: Samuel Aggrey <egyir@unixg.ubc.ca>

I personally don't think people are confused. Others do not know and are seeking and I also do not think those of us in the religious postings are arguing. We are having a healthy discussion. My personally question to you is: how do you extend the gospel to someone who does not believe in God and at the same time believe strongly in evolution ? Revisiting "I am God - Creation vs Evolution": Evolution: out of vacuum, the moon and earth came into existence about 4.5 billion years ago. Ever since this theory came into being, NOT A SINGLE PARTICLE HAS BEEN FORMED FROM VACUUM despite our enormous knowledge and high tech. Between 4.4 and 3.8 billion years ago inorganic elements became organic and life began. From here one lower form of life evolved into an advanced form till 2 to 3 million years ago when man finally arrived on earth. Darwin in his book "The Descent of Man and Selection in relation to sex 1871" argue that because man have organs like liver, heart etc which lower forms like apes, down to fishes also have so man probable came from lower forms.

My contribution: As soon as man got "civilized" and proposed such theories, not a single theory of evolution has been PROVEN and the process stopped. I will concentrate my discussion on organic evolution. Evolution is supposed to be a dynamic process yet from about 0.5 billion years ago till now we have no evidence of one single form changing into the other. In the process, the chimps near man should be in existence now. We only have what we have now. Monkeys, apes, chimps, humans etc. No inbetweens. Where did they vanish to. Nowhere, because they never existed and we are yet to see what form man will evolved into.

Creation:

Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning, God created heaven and earth". In Genesis, you read, at day 1, God did...day 2 etc. Is one day, the 24 hours we are used to ? Psalm 90:4 and 2 Peter 3:8 "Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day". God is omnipotent (all powerful), omniscience, (all knowing), and omnipresence (all place at the same time). So time as we calculate it may be possibly different in God's perspective. Genesis goes on to say that, God created man from the earth and gave man life and named him Adam. And LIFE BEGET LIFE. The question is whether you believe in God or not ? I cannot answer, where God came from, but before I sign off, I will give you a simple test to check for yourself whether God exist or not. We know the structure of DNA and can map genes, yet mankind has NOT been able to create one single unicellular cell. It impossible, yet, in this current age, annointed servants of God do great miracles that science cannot explain. The blind can see, cripples do walk etc. Don't argue back on con men and deceivers, I am aware of them. Science only explain the biological persona of man, but we are more than biological entities (any disagreement?). For simplicity, I will say, the emotions of man are beyond brain (dys)/function. Man is also spiritual. God created man in his own image. God is a spirit. Its our spiritual being which communicates with God. Science cannot quantify such things, so deny its existence such that most scientist do not want to consider alternatives. On one side of the scale is life from vacuum for which there is no proof. One another side is life begetting life with God as the giver of life. When God get back His spirit, you are dead. Science still cannot explain death. How does the heart, brain lose their vitality ?

Simple test for the existence of God:

The sweetness of the pudding is in the eating. Invite God into your spirit by believing in Him. It's a simple test. If He exists, you know. If he does not exist, you will know as well.

14.22 Re-Religion, Ghana and Abroad, by *Francis Achana*

Date: Sun, 2 Jan 94 20:53:41 PST

From: Francis Achana <RRTECO@IDUI1.CSRV.UIDAHO.EDU>

Hi Everybody, and particularly Samuel Aggrey.

Sam's (I hope he permits the familiarity) posting on religion makes interesting reading. I however have a "few" comments to make. He says that the theory of evolution has been proposed in a vacuum, and that ever since it came into being, not a single particle has been formed from vacuum. But Sam, what are particles? Are they not one form of energy (Matter), which may be transformed from/to other forms that are less tangible like heat, light, electrical charges and so forth? The scientists tell us that in the stars, simpler forms of matter are converted to more complex forms in the process of fusion, and when the stars finally consume all their fuel, they explode in super nova, releasing these more complex substances which then become the raw materials for the formation of new stars and planets. So even if our solar system is a relative adolescent of 5 billion years, the universe may well be an old man of 20 billion. So now consider the following scenario. Stars have formed and exploded in the past in other areas of our milky way or in other galaxies and have accumulated complex materials in the process, including carbon and more complex life-forming substances. These keep swirling in inter-galactic space and landing on different planets and stars. But then it turns out that the particles that land on a certain blue planet fall into the "right soup" and so complex chemical reactions occur gradually and eventually produce Sam. This is a very realistic possibility and it would make us the sons and daughters of the stars. Sam makes a big issue of the fact that evolution has not been conclusively proven as a fact, but there is more evidence to support it than the religious explanations. Even religion implicitly supports it, because Adam could not have been a caucasian with blonde/chestnut/black hair and still be yellow with straight black hair and slit dark eyes, and at the same time be dark-skinned with "viciously" curled jet black hair. If we all descend from him and Eve, some evolution must have taken place during the era of human existence.

There is also scientific evidence that humans have evolved (I hope the medical people will add to this, but I heard this in a Public Broadcasting Documentary): It has been found that among the Navajo Indians of the South-West U.S., and the Aborigines of Australia, and some other groups in South-East Asia there is a surprisingly high incidence of Diabetes among those of them that have changed from a more traditional diet to a western-influenced one. It was then discovered that, since in the past, they had to do strenuous work while depending on a meagre amount of calories, these people developed a gene that was super-efficient in "sucking out" every calorie from their food. Now suddenly, they do not have to do such strenuous work, and they have a glut of calories in their new diet. But of course the good old super gene is still at work doing its own thing. The result is excessive sugar in their blood and thus diabetes. Now if this analysis is true, it would be clear evidence that even in the short span of existence of the human race, evolution has not stopped as you said. You also said that there are missing links between man and his earlier forms. How about all the talk about Neanderthal man, Java man, Zinjanthropus, Australopithecus (excuse the typographic massacres). If these evolved into modern man, then you do not expect them to be here in those earlier forms. Besides, it has been said that different forms became competitors and the fittest eliminated the others.

Now coming into the religious arena, you admitted that you cannot answer where God came from. In this, I solidarize with you in the dilemma. I have always felt that, once you cross the Rubicon and accept the possibility that something or someone has always existed without having to be created, then it becomes a matter of hair-splitting details whether that someone or something is God or Nature in one form or another. Once something can exist without being created, it is actually easier to conceive it as what is visible out there than what is not. Yet there is the case of miracles that you speak of, and also for me at least, there are all those great spiritual leaders through history: Jesus Christ, the Buddha, Mohammed, Confucius and so on. That makes me accept your idea that man is spiritual as well. But the problem is the definition of that term. To me, the spiritual and the religious do not necessarily mean the same thing, and I aspire toward being spiritual and yet I turn away from (organized) religion. I think that when you say that man is spiritual, you mean that he seeks a meaning to his life that goes beyond swallowing and expelling stuff, seeing, hearing, touching, SQUEEZING AND RUBBING, and waiting for death.

For some, that extra meaning may be achieved trying to help their fellow man here on earth to lead lives at a more acceptable level in the material sense. When I see some of those volunteers from abroad helping out in Somalia without financial gain as a motive (and certainly not the paid killers), I envy their selflessness-read, their spirituality. Others find an outlet to their spiritual side in the religious area, trying to save people after they die, again in a selfless manner, and that too is very admirable, but if someone does not believe in life after life, then he/she may not appreciate the good work being done in this area. I think that while we are here, the most important mission is here, and we will be saved if we live our lives here in accordance to obvious natural laws. If we needed any others, it would not be revealed to just a few and then the vast majority are left in the dark. So my idols of spirituality in the world today are Mother Theresa (Who has chosen the religious route to spirituality but has combined it with the humanistic version), the Dalai Lama and Shai Baba of India, all of whom have chosen the same type of spirituality as Mother Theresa. I think that others like the Pope believe in preaching in the desert (I am supposed to be a Catholic), and so have chosen only the spiritual route, just like lots of the other preachers of this world, and they are of little interest to me. Finally, Sam speaks of miracles as proof of creation theory, but we only know about ten percent of the capabilities of our brain and it is difficult to determine what is and what isn't a miracle. Why is it that in the middle ages, people were "sighting" the Virgin Mary so often and today we don't. Why is that instead, we are sighting Unidentified Flying Objects so often and they did not.

I think that the important thing is that no possible alternative explanation of our existence should be prematurely fore-closed just because we don't know, or because we don't understand. The problem is that many scientists and many religious people try to do just that. It might well be sad if it turns out that we are only here to use our tropics of cancers and tropics of carpricons to please our north poles, but if eventually that becomes the undeniable truth, so be it. If on the other hand, we turn out to have been created, and so have yet another opportunity to enjoy forever, then we only need to play by the rules that we know, (not exotic rules that may run counter to our created nature) to earn that second opportunity.

14.23 Subject: Religion & Creation, by Arimiyawo

Date: Tue, 04 Jan 94 09:15:18 SLT

From: Arimiyawo <F45K013%SAKSU00.BITNET@mitvma.mit.edu>

The current discussion on the above subject is very interesting and people have delved deeply into the science of evolution of the universe. Those who are religiously inclined will put it as the creation of the universe. Whatever one may call it science is supposed to strenthen religious beliefs that can be proven. In the Quran, the basic processes of the creation of the universe are mentioned as a means of calling on the readers to reflect on the signs of God. The following can be read in the Quran.

1. The existence of six periods in the creation of the universe(Chapter 7 v.54 and Chapter 70 v.4) It is clear that long periods of time were involved in the creation of the universe but modern sciencehas not permitted man to establish that the complicated stages of creation consisted of six periods.
2. The universe was created from a gaseous mass. (Chapter 21 v.30 and Chapter 41 v. 11). The Quran goes on to say that this smokelike gaseous mass with suspension of fine particles, underwent a breaking action to give peripheral fragments. The new fragments as well as the main underwent condensation where the action of binding together of elements resulted in a homogeneous whole for each fragment. Modern science has shown that earth originated from a separation process starting from a nebulla. The sun condensed inside the main nebula and the planets condensed inside the main nebular disc.
3. The plurality of the Heavens and Earths(Chapter 65 v. 12). Specialists in astrophysics have conclusively observed vast number of galactic systems other than ours.However the existence of a planet similar to earth have not yet been scientifically proven and none have been shown to exist in our solar system.
4. The existence of intermediaries between Heaven and Earth(Chapter 20 v. 6). Scientist have recently discovered these to be 'interstellar galactic material'. This in summary is the description of the creation of the universe as given in the Quran and supported by modern science. However netters should remember that the primary or original nebula did not come out of nothing. This will have been incompatible with the basic law of consrvation of mass/energy. It is God who created the primary nebula and set off the evolutionary motion for us to study as a sign of His existence.

14.24 Re: Religion, Ghana and Abroad, by *Samuel Aggrey*

Date: Mon, 3 Jan 1994 23:02:44 -0800 (PST)

From: Samuel Aggrey <egyir@unixg.ubc.ca>

On Sun, 2 Jan 1994 RRTECO@IDUI1.CSRV.UIDAHO.EDU wrote:

"Hi Everybody, and particularly Samuel Aggrey. Sam's (I hope he permits the familiarity) posting on religion makes interesting reading. I however have a "few" comments to make. He says that the theory of evolution has been proposed in a vacuum, and that ever since it came into being, not a single particle has been formed from vacuum. But Sam, what are particles? Are they not one form of energy (Matter), which may be transformed from/to other forms that are less tangible like heat, light, electrical charges and so forth? The scientists tell us that in the stars, simpler forms of matter are converted to more complex forms in the process of fusion, and when the stars finally consume all their fuel, they explode in super nova, releasing these more complex substances which then become the raw materials for the formation of new stars and planets."

Sammy's response: I did not say the theory of evolution has been proposed in vacuum. This is what I said: First there was a vacuum, then there was a BIG BANG the result of which matter came into existence. ("...even more complex atoms are being formed in stars all over the universe, and were formed in the 'big bang' which, according to the prevailing theory, initiated the universe. This is originally where the elements on our world came from." The selfish gene. by Richard Dawkins pg 14, 1978). I couldn't agree with you more that you can transform energy from one form to another. The question I posed was that: HOW CAN YOU FORM MATTER FROM VACUUM ? You need one form of energy to transform to another, don't you? Was there not a vacuum before the supposed big bang ? We can pump out all matter/ air from a chamber in the lab to create a vacuum in a container. do you know a method or can you cite a paper where a single particle has been formed from such a vacuum ? OUT OF NOTHING COMES NOTHING.

"But then it turns out that the particles that land on a certain blue planet fall into the "right soup" and so complex chemical reactions occur gradually and eventually produce Sam. This is a very realistic possibility and it would make us the sons and daughters of the stars."

Sammy's response:

This is not true. Believe it or not I am created in God's image. Scientists cannot revive a dead cell, and with all our knowledge in gene mapping we cannot create a single unicellular cell. We can only introduce DNA into a live cell. The theory of evolution contains the SEED OF ITS OWN DESTRUCTION. I will quote again from the same book. pg 15. "It is no good taking the right number of atoms and shaking them together with some external energy till they happen to fall into the right pattern, and out drops Adam! You may make a molecule consisting of a few dozen atoms like that, but a man consists of over a thousand million million million million atoms. To try to make a man, you would have to work at your biochemical cocktail-shaker for a period so long that the entire age of the universe would seem like an eye-blink, AND EVEN THEN YOU WILL NOT SUCCEED".

"Sam makes a big issue of the fact that evolution has not been conclusively proven as a fact, but there is more evidence to support it than the religious explanations. Even religion implicitly supports it, because Adam could not have been a caucasian with blonde/chestnut/black hair and still be yellow with straight black hair and slit dark eyes, and at the same time be dark-skinned with "viciously" curled jet black hair. If we all descend from him and Eve, some evolution must have taken place during the era of human existence."

Sammy's response:

I want to make a clarification here. "Evolution" as a word is a confused and corrupted word. What I have been trying to deal with is the "Genesis of life". After everything has come into being, we have factors that can cause changes. Skin color or hair type are controlled by genes. Under certain conditions, genes can mutate. All the scientific data we have up till now prove that when there is mutation, you have different types of the same thing. E.g. in the "evolution" (development) of birds, there was an ANCIENT BIRD. Some individuals mutated. The mutated individuals bred among themselves and multiplied. Over time breeding between the ancient and mutated birds could not produce a

viable progeny, so the mutated bird is classified as a new species of birds. Evolutionists claim the ancient bird evolved from reptiles which up till now there is no single proof either from fossil of inbetweens or otherwise.

There is also scientific evidence that humans have evolved (I hope the medical people will add to this, but I heard this in a Public Broadcasting Documentary): It has been found that among the Navajo Indians of the South-West U.S., and the Aborigines of Australia, and some other groups in South-East Asia there is a surprisingly high incidence of Diabetes among those of them that have changed from a more traditional diet to a western-influenced one. It was then discovered that, since in the past, they had to do strenuous work while depending on a meagre amount of calories, these people developed a gene that was super-efficient in “sucking out” every calorie from their food. Now suddenly, they do not have to do such strenuous work, and they have a glut of calories in their new diet. But of course the good old super gene is still at work doing its own thing. The result is excessive sugar in their blood and thus diabetes. Now if this analysis is true, it would be clear evidence that even in the short span of existence of the human race, evolution has not stopped as you said.

Sammy's response:

Beside the paleobiologist who are still trying to solve the puzzle of the genesis which they can't, evolution biologists do not talk about how we got there. The talk about what has happened to us when we got here. I will quote an article from Sewall Wright 1955, From the Cold Spring Harbor Symposium on Quantitative Biology: Check the proceeding, vol 20, pg 16-24D, ..the factors which caused evolution are, mutation, selection, migration and accidents of sampling. The example you gave above falls under environment. When your eating environment changes, there can be changes, but that does not create a super man (like from reptiles to birds for example). We have now identified all kinds of agents that can cause changes in the human body. If you subject humans to excessive U.V. light, some of their cells will mutate, if its not a deleterious mutation, they will live normal as humans not super human. A local example. All sickle cell patients have about the same genome, but are still humans. All the factors can cause changes, no doubt about that, but they cannot transform into a higher form.

You also said that there are missing links between man and his earlier forms. How about all the talk about Neanderthal man, Java man, Zinjanthropus, Australopithecus (excuse the typographic massacres). If these evolved into modern man, then you do not expect them to be here in those earlier forms. Besides, it has been said that different forms became competitors and the fittest eliminated the others.

Sammy's response:

First on the Java man. This is also referred to as the snow man. This is a myth. Current evidence including DNA synchronization has proven that neither of what you have cited was the common ancestor of man. Point of correction: the fittest did not eliminate the others. The theory goes like this...The environment changed and the lower form could not adapt to the changing environment, so they gradually got extinct. The surviving individuals developed adaptive features which made them survive bla bla bla.

You cited the Pope, Mohammed etc. It is not my intention to discuss different religious or spiritual views, so I will not comment on that. I will still refer you back to my simple test to see whether God exists or not. "...evolution is blind to the future" In: Selfish Gene, pg 9. Note: Richard Dawkins and Sewall Wright are gurus in evolution theory.

God is not blind to the future but evolution is. The Bible gives a vivid account of what would happen in the future. I will not refer you what was predicted in the Old Testament and was fulfilled in the New Testament. The diaspora of Israel was prophesied and so is her gathering and reformation. The years they will spend in diaspora were all prophesied. The modern Israel is a proof. There is a lot more.

Karl Marx consulted Sir Darwin through letters. Darwin convinced Karl that God does not exist, for that matter human evolved. Karl Marx was greatly influenced by Darwin's idea and.... religion is the opium of the masses. Communist Soviet Union tried to “kill” religion, but religion will not die.

“I WANT TO KNOW THE THOUGHTS OF GOD, THE REST ARE DETAILS” by Albert Einstein.

15 ECONOMIC RATIONALITY AND DEVELOPMENT

compiled and edited by *Adams Bodo and Daniel Appiah*

15. 00 Introduction by Section Editors, *Adams Bodo and Daniel Appiah*

The collection of postings which makes up the topic “Economic Rationality and Development” is discussed within a 2-component framework. The two components are 1) identification of the causes and effects of Ghana’s post-independence economic problems, and 2) finding cures to the causes.

The debates were sparked off by Charles Awasu. To Awasu, the economic problems were caused by wrong policies and unsuitable socio-political structures. To him the political structures bequeathed to us by the colonial administration, inherently, encourage dictatorial governance. The solutions to the problems, therefore, lie in the decentralization of political and administrative powers to the local level. Also, policies and plans should be carefully designed. But such plans will need funds to finance their implementation.

One way of getting funds is suggested by Alfred Opoku in his posting “Resource Mobilization”. Opoku suggests that students studying abroad who have benefited in one way or the other from the Students Loan Scheme and have not yet paid back those loans, should find ways and means of paying them back. To him such payments, in foreign currency, may help fill some of the foreign exchange requirement gaps of the government, or at least the education ministry.

This lack of funds according to Ebenezer Annan is what is bedevilling the successful implementation of the government’s privatization policy. In his posting “SOS Privatization” Annan charges that the inefficient functioning of the capital markets, lack of requisite information and publicity, and the opaqueness of the way the implementation is being done, do not augur well for the success of the privatization policies. He therefore calls for more information about, and transparency of, the process of privatization.

The subsequent postings shifted slightly from the proper policy design and funding thrusts to the issues of economic rationality, economic complex and inferiority complex. The issues sharply divide the contributors into two opposing sides. On one side is Charles Awasu, Alfred Opoku etc. They argue for economic nationalism. They invoke the age-old

“infant industry” argument to suggest that our present economic conditions require active government policies to encourage Ghanaians to consume “Made in Ghana” goods. And they ask whether it is because of some complex that makes Ghanaians to prefer foreign goods to the locally produced ones.

This complex question becomes the central theme of the opponents of the economic nationalism school. The opponents include Kwabia Boateng and Mahamudu Bawumia. They argue that there is no complex involved in the economic decision of what to consume. Consumption is purely dictated by economic rationality. And that any attempt to link Ghanaians consumption behaviour and choices to inferiority complex is unfounded. They argue that “policing” Ghanaians to consume cheap quality, and often, more expensive locally produced goods is likely to reduce their welfare.

Emerging out of the heated debates is the question of whether Ghana has an industrial policy. The Industrial Policy question generated some generalizations and theorising. These generalizations do not solve problems, says Kwabia Boteng. He, accordingly, calls for more specifics in any suggested industrial policies. This call was heeded. Consequently, Awasu and Bawumia proposed specific industrial policies which may be adapted in Ghana.

Any industrialization policy should have to address the question of energy. It is this question of energy which prompted the Volta dam Hydro-electric project into the debate. The postings on the dam address the economic, social, and commercial viability and rationality of the project.

15.01 Ghana’s Development by *Charles Awasu*

(Sun, 31 Jan 93)

Quite a lot has been said about Ghana’s development on this net. In these postings I draw on earlier views on development by Eben Annan, Isaac Sarfo and others to provide some sort of perspective regarding the development experience of Ghana. What went wrong?

1. That the earliest efforts made at development in Ghana were based on the idea of “modernisation” and industrialization. Such attempts have created debt burdens rather than productivity or as catalysts for growth.
2. That large loans were borrowed to undertake such infrastructure with the per capita cost higher than the per capita benefits. i.e. the interest paid on such loans is higher than any economic benefits we might derive. e.g. job 600
3. The only success from that development was in education and health care. These have exacerbated political instability whereby expectant growing populations now struggle for a declining national product.
4. That those who designed the development policies did not consider our social infrastructure as a useful base to build a modern democratic political economy. the designers were both local and foreign experts.
5. By destroying our indigenous institutional infrastructure, they replaced it with other foreign institutions. e.g. destroyed the influence of traditional chiefs etc.
6. 6. The replacement was a highly centralized national government, which was primarily a legacy of the colonial government.
7. the centralized government was so useful to them (both foreign and local accomplices) that every effort was made to enhance the capacity and authority at the expense of local institutions.
8. Major policy reforms including “structural adjustment” were used to reinforce the national governments. (small teams of world bank/IMF and ministry of finance experts devise such policies) with no input from the populace.
9. In contrast, reconstruction efforts in Europe and Japan rather sought to increase accountability of national governments and reduce their authoritarian tendencies.
10. The local accomplices went along such a route because they hoped to suppress any organizational activity outside their control in order to prevent the emergence of viable political competitors.
11. In effect, this kind of centralized authority has promoted perverse incentives for the development process. In the end they succeeded in reinforcing social inequality, ethnic hostility and nepotism which they, in all their wisdom wanted to destroy. SUGGESTION: Before embarking on any real economic development process, we need to re-examine our national government structure and think of ways that its authoritarian tendencies can be reduced. One way is by decentralization, but the present structure of the central government will not allow for any dramatic devolution of powers. NOTE: That the structure of the national government is designed in such a way that anyone in that position becomes dictatorial. So in effect it is the position, like that of the colonial governor which is

dictatorial, not necessarily the occupants. Therefore changing the occupants does not solve the problem, the nature and the structure will have to be changed.

Part II

To continue with my point on the centralization of government power and how it has led to perverse developmental incentives I will say that Nkrumah was part of the problem. His use of the unitary form of government concentrated power at the center. In other words he used the same form of structure as left by the British. viz. the civil service, the police service, the marketing board etc. The same structure remains in place until today and every past regime has used it to suppress rather than promote unity. He did dismantle the chieftaincy, in a way to destroy the power base of the opposition party, which had a lot support from the Asante chiefs etc. What I want to convey is that the coercive arm of the government is too strong in Ghana. Some of it will have to be broken. e.g. let local governments control the police. If the people in Tafo want a police force let them pay taxes and pay the police. They can also raise a volunteer force if they so wish. They can pay 3 people very well to do the job instead of a whole barracks which rather suppresses them. If those 3 people are paid by local people they'll be very careful how to collect bribes etc. because the people of Tafo will make sure they do their job or get laid off. In effect, the local people will have some form of control and this will reduce the budgetary constraints of the central government etc. This idea of using people taxes (some don't even benefit from the police) to pay a police force which is corrupt and accountable only to a coercive central government rather than the taxpayers is one of the perverse incentives in development. There are a host of other public goods that can be provided locally instead of waiting on the central government. Isaac Sarfo is right in questioning the Ghanaian way of seeing the government, but the absolutist way of thinking about government and POWER is a product of the structure I mentioned in the earlier posting. Using the police force as one example justifies why people often times see the government as an enemy to fear, to dodge (taxes) and to cheat etc. a government that is not for the people, a government whose property need not be maintained, a government which is the sole provider, a government all powerful etc. leading to the disastrous "government work" (literary translated) syndrome or the "country broke, i no broke, we dey inside" attitude. Charles

Part III

When I wrote the two earlier pieces, I did state that I was trying to put the development experience of Ghana into perspective. In that wise I was looking at the period 1955-1993. To me all the numerous heads of state we had from Nkrumah to Rawlings all used the coercive arm to suppress the people. I was not out to single any of them. I perceive some on the net tend to see only the present i.e. Rawlings. My argument is that if you pick my blacksmith friend from the village and make him the head of state, he will become dictatorial, because of the nature and structure of the government. For example why can't the people of Kumasi operate their own radio station, if they so wish, to discuss their farming practices or religion or whatever. Who will lose or gain by this? The fact is the government will not allow it because of the fear of losing control. But to control who? Why do Ghanaians have to pay tax cedis and have to listen to Ghana Muntie propaganda all day. About the police force, one can actually convert those police barriers into toll booths and raise money to repair the roads, instead of lining the tax-paid uniforms of the police with bribes. I'm raising some of these issues, so people can think beyond personalities and take a hard look at our institutions. The reason why George Bush did not hold onto power (even though he tried) is not because he is more democratic than anyone else but that the institutional structure will not allow him. (this is just an illustration, not a comparison to Ghana).

15.02 Resource Mobilization, by *Alfred Oponku*

(19 Mar 93)

Amanfuor, The discussion on ways to mobilise local resources for development has given me an idea which I think we should all consider. It may only be a drop in the bucket, but nevertheless, it is a drop! Most of us have had the privilege of going through the school system on government scholarships and loans. The loans particularly were very instrumental in our ability to complete the third cycle of education. Yet, most of us have left the shores of Ghana without any commitment to paying back the loans. If we need to mobilise resources, we also need to plug some loopholes that allow monies to be used in areas without hope of getting back the investment. My little idea is that we try to find out how best we can arrange (with our local embassies etc.) to make monthly contributions towards the payment of the SSNIT and SSB loans. For example, being in Canada and owing upwards of 120,000 cedis I know that

by contributing 20 dollars a month (say at the exchange rate of 400 cedis to the Canadian dollar) I can pay 8000 cedis. This would enable me complete the payment in 15 months. Also, considering a conservative figure of 2000 students world-wide, we should be paying 40,000 dollars a month to the two institutions which comes to 480,000 dollars annually. It is not enough to pay our debts, but nonetheless, it could help immensely in providing a foreign exchange component for the education ministry. This is just a suggestion and I invite netters to give their views on the proposal! Modifications are welcome, no “man” is an island, you know!

15.03 SOS and privatization, by *Kofi A. Kwakwa, Harvard, USA*

(9 Feb 1993)

The ongoing discussion regarding public/private sector interaction in Ghana is crucial because I think the results of the privatization program are a key to our success - at least in the short term. I agree with most people about the possible solutions and about the fact that the program is not doing as well as expected. One of the biggest problems the government is having to deal with right now is that it requires a huge investment in any SOE before they can even put it up “for sale” - investments they can’t fund. Most of these investments would go towards end-of-service benefits for the workers who would inevitably be laid off, and towards bringing the SOE up to some standard of operation that would make a potential investor even blink....some of these SOS didn’t even have accounts information for up to 10 years leading to the time of proposed privatization! Now, who would want to buy such an SOE? Another problem is private capital and foreign involvement. There are a lot of capable people in Ghana who could (and would like to) acquire the SOS and do something “positive” but given the underdeveloped nature of our capital markets, where can they raise money from? That leaves us vulnerable to some form of foreign domination and raises questions we could discuss for years on this net. Some of these problems obviously relate to our economic and capital structure and couldn’t have been pre-empted in the process. Unfortunately the process has been hampered by other problems that could have been eliminated with careful planning and the institution of measures to prevent “kuluulu” (corruption and favoritism). For example, it used to take the average Ghanaian months to find out that an SOE was up for grabs! There was virtually no publicity... if you had a relative at the Divestiture Implementation Committee you might just find out but otherwise....good luck! The scarcity of information about the whole deal made it look very suspicious and I personally know a number of potential investors who were turned off because of the “mystery” surrounding the whole thing. I don’t have any solutions for these problems but it is essential that we distinguish between the macroeconomic problems that might arise from selling off SOS and the problems relating to availability of information, access to relevant documents, etc. - problems we can much more easily lay hands on and solve.

15.04 Economic Inferiority Complex, by *Alfred Opoku*

(17 May 93)

Amanfuor,

The Moxon issue has helped raise other relevant topics which should be considered, even as we rethink a lot of ideas. One such topic concerns that of inferiority complex. No, I am not talking about the colour “complex” of blacks in relation to whites (maybe it may be an indirect result of it), I am referring to the case of “made in there” versus “made in here” as was referred to by James Essegbey. He touched on a lot of interesting examples of how some of our local products are oftentimes of inferior quality (e.g. the pepsodent and shoes examples). He seems to say (I hope I got him right) that so long as our products are not of the right quality we cannot impress upon anyone to buy them, and that when they become better they may be bought. It sounds rather logical that a person would demand his or her money’s worth in these hard times, so no one can malign another person for preferring the “made in there goods”. However, two issues must be taken into consideration. First of all, there are those who would ALWAYS prefer foreign to local goods. The idea is that they are always better. Therefore you may not be able to convince such a person that a made in Ghana commodity is equally good. This is related to the issue of “colour complex” which we have talked about for a while. The second and, for me, the most important issue to consider is the world of unfair competition under which these local firms are made to operate, which obviously hinders their ability to produce good quality goods at cheaper prices. For example, in the famine of 1983, when hard currency was hard to come by for the govt., Lever Brothers cut production to a minimum and most Ghanaians were “forced” to use “don’t touch me” soap. Initially this soap was a disaster and was not fit for human use; however, as the makers became more and more experienced, we began to see some of them

with the near quality of guardian soap -hard, perfumed, and even packaged. As these firms began to expand production and we seemed to be finally moving towards some form of a local soap making industry, SAP happened and Lever Brothers got forex to import chemicals to expand production. No one needs any reminder of the results - the collapse of all these local firms. Examples of other industries can be cited, including shoes! I guess the argument I am making is that the Inferiority of our products is a natural phenomenon - the result of an inexperience in these areas. Instead of us to promote these firms by encouraging them with loans to form co-operatives and educating them, we rather want to open our doors wide for MNCs to come and produce our favourite soaps. When that is not done by the government, other interest groups give all sorts of names to discourage the use of local products (e.g. Adwoa Yankey). The inferiority complex which we have in terms of industrial production can only be eliminated if we can change our consumption patterns and encourage our own firms to produce.

15.05 Re: Inferiority Complex!, by *Kwabia Boateng*

<BOATENG@ac.dal.ca> (17 May 1993)

It is a bit strange to me that some netters are connecting a pure case of consumer choice - buying imported goods rather than the local substitute- with a psychological disease- inferiority complex. All human beings irrespective of cultural, racial or ethnic background, generally choose between goods with the aim of maximising their satisfaction from given income and prices. There is no inferiority complex involved when some Americans rush for Japanese cars- they are simply looking for something that would make the satisfaction from any given expenditure Last. GM, Ford, etc. may be inferior in their mind, but that is not the same as "the complex" Charles Awasu was talking about in his original posting (point no. 7- that it is inferiority complex which makes us buy foreign goods (paraphrased))-they are looking for quality. The Linguistic scholars should help us here. "The complex" is a psychological disease. When a people install as chief somebody who in their judgement has contributed towards the public good, they are acting as rational beings- and that cannot be placed under the "complex case". If A (Ghanaian) does the same as B (European), but B gets the honour, we might say this is a case of "the complex". The Moxon installation is not a good example of "the complex" nor is the decision of my grandmother to buy "Dutch wax" instead of "Akosombo" or "Tema"- she is also looking for quality and class. I think sometimes we as a people are just too hard on ourselves. Perhaps, we really have "the complex".

15.06 Economic Complex?, by *Charles Awasu*

<CAWASU%SUVM.BITNET@mitvma.mit.edu>
(18 May 93)

When I did state in my last posting about Ghanaian consumer preference for foreign goods, I wasn't making an economic judgement. The point made by Prof. Boateng about individuals maximizing for their best benefit is very correct. It makes sense for an individual to buy the highest quality good at the lowest possible price. That is pure economic sense. This is not an effort on my part to dissect individual consumption patterns. I try to look at issues from a national development point of view. In that wise some generalizations might not necessarily reflect individual tastes or non-tastes. 1. From a welfare point of view individuals who buy high quality and low-priced goods are better off, those who lose are the Ghanaian producers of low quality and high priced goods. 2. If that's the case then Ghana is a consumption society. That is people buy without producing. Then the usual "buy and sell" syndrome continues. 3. From a national development point of view, "buy and sell" will not develop a country, because few jobs if any will be created. Most of the "buy and sell" jobs are transient in nature and are mostly located in the non-tax paying informal sector. 4. If that's the picture then so be it, individuals buy foreign cheap goods and the welfare gains accrue to the society. I'm not against buying cheap quality goods. But that is not to say that all foreign goods are of good quality. Even in the so-called highly industrial societies, we still junk in cars, T.V. sets, breast implants, and what-have-you. 5. Recent accounts indicate that there are a lot of cheap low priced, low quality foreign goods in Ghana. If the standards board is non-effective, the such foreign goods become a cost to the nation. People consumed contaminated meat, century-old goods are sold to un-suspecting public, the health hazards enviromental wastes, foreign producers reap the profits and the tax-payer pays. 6. The issue is the economic complexity in Ghana. In country where there is no industrial policy everything goes. Trade liberalization can be good because it can make local producers compete by

global standards. 7. But that means local producers will compete with firms who are enjoying economies of scale. That is not perfect competition. That is where economic vision comes in. If there was an industrial policy, the government will have to find out what can make local producers compete. One way is by making finance cheap. Foreign firms enjoying economies of scale are just like monopolies, you just can't compete with them. That is one failure of false free trade. 8. the argument for economic nationalism is that it helps if a country is on the path of development. The large scale acceptance of trade liberalization is a failed policy. There is nothing like a perfect market, just like there is no perfect government. 9. If buying cheap foreign goods was all that there is: Japan, S. Korea and the other mini-dragons would have sat down and called it a day. If that were the case, the "buy American" ploy will have been a hoax. America will not be bugging Japan to open their markets. The EC would not have all the barriers. 10. If buying cheap foreign goods were all there is, Bill Clinton will not have made it to the White house, America and other European countries will not be subsidizing their farmers. The GATT will have been free. 11. I'm not advocating for import substitution, nor trade liberalization. The fact is as a country, we need to move beyond set models. That's why we have the examples of the Asian countries. There is nothing like Free trade, otherwise why should NAFTA become dead suddenly. Its very hard for a nation to develop only on raw materials. There has to be some value-added production. That's why we need an industrial policy. That's why we need to encourage local producers, that's why we need to encourage buying Ghanaian. 12. If we want to develop the country, if we want infrastructure to move beyond the city into the rural areas, then buying "Ajoa Yankee" is better than wearing cheap T-Station clothes. 13. If my argument holds true, then there is something to be said for economic nationalism, then Ghanaians can be persuaded to buy local, because more jobs can be created, then the government will have to design policies to help local producers to compete. 14. The inferiority complex turned into economic complex is a very complex or complicated issue. It moves from the psychological to economic colonialism to appointing Ministers of state who have no idea about trade than just listening to western doctrines through the World Bank/IMF. From customs and excise staff who are interested in kick backs rather than doing their job to the Ghana Standards Board who allow all the junk into the country under the guise of liberalization to consumers who rarely can tell the difference between GTP wax prints and the HOLLANDER and to whatever....

15.07 Re: Economic Complex? by Kwabia Boateng

<BOATENG@ac.dal.ca> (18 May 1993)

It is very clear that my understanding of inferiority complex is different from that of Charles Awasu, who in his most recent posting appears to think that it is our inferiority complex that leads us to buy foreign goods. I can never hold , or take such a view because I believe that most human beings are rational-economically, socially, politically etc. The principles of economic maximisation, whether from individual or national perspective, are not "western" principles; they are universal. The idea that "buying and selling" would not lead to "economic development" is not incontestable. Many ancient empires flourished simply through trading. In an information age development may not require having the entire labour force in cement or steel factories or on the farms. And the economic structure "appropriate" for sustained development would depend on our idea of "development". I think sometimes we make blanket statements and theoretical generalisations about our country that seem to be unfair to the country's administrators, past and perhaps present. Charles Awasu's statement that Ghana does not have an industrial policy is not very correct. Perhaps, he meant an industrial development plan. The current privatisation program can be placed under industrial policy, since it aims at generating efficiency in the business sector and encouraging participation of private individuals in industry; and so could the investment code. What we lack may be mutually enforcing industrial and commercial policies. The recent history of Eastern Europe tells me that the best thing is not always trying to depend on local sources. Padigo would bear me out that though you may have all the talent in the world you still need a trainer, a coach to hit championship form. You need to learn, share in others' experiences. That is, inward-looking policies may serve our pride but it is doubtful if they could our long-term prosperity. We often cite Japan and South Korea as nations that "conquered", but forget that they at one time or the other "stooped". I don't enjoy writing theses on this net; therefore, I'd stop here by saying that we need to move beyond theory and generalisations- what books tell us-and consider the reality in Ghana. Some have been talking about the "system"- may be it is time we considered that system- in plain econ-soci-polit-relig-what-have-you terms.

15.08 Economic Rationality, by *Alfred Opoku*

<aopoku@ccs.carleton.ca> (18 May 93)

Amanfuor,

Here we go again! I have read the current debate between Kwabia Boateng (Prof.) and Charles Awasu and I need to make a few remarks on issues raised. Having written something on the issue myself, I find it hard to ignore some of the statements in Mr. Boateng's last posting. First he states that one can contest the statement that buying and selling cannot lead to economic development. Given that examples can be cited in the 15th and perhaps 19th centuries, that may be correct, but I defy anyone to name a single nation that has seen prosperity just by that economic activity, in this century. No one is calling for "inward-looking" policies by stressing the need to change our consumption patterns to reflect our production! What Charles has said, and I have stressed as well, is that instead of allowing "rational economics" to rule our development life, we need to encourage our local firms to produce more efficiently what they can produce, by giving financial incentives and job training to local entrepreneurs. I gave the example of soap in my posting yesterday. It is by so doing that they can compete with foreign firms. So far, governments, both past and present, have woefully failed to give such encouragement. Mr. Kwabia says it is incorrect to say that Ghana has no industrial policy. I beg to differ; stressing efficiency, publishing an investment code, or undertaking privatization, by themselves, do not form an industrial policy. A policy must have a sense of direction, clearly defined policy objectives, a timeframe within which objectives would be met, and must target certain industries which have the potential to achieve those objectives. Having browsed through Ghana's investment code and other govt documents related to development policy, I have to agree with Charles that we have no defined industrial policy. The Claim that Japan and Korea, at one time in their histories, "stooped" before they were able to conquer makes interesting reading. What Mr. Boateng failed to add was that while stooping to the West, Japan and Korea had plans of their own, fashioned according to their means and capability, to reach some goals. The first Japanese cars were the laughing stock of the automobile industry, same applies to the Koreans, but today they are the masters of all they survey. They had definite plans! This brings me to the issue of economic rationality. All humans are rational and given the opportunity, each person would choose goods and services to fulfil the highest utility, granted! However, economic rationality, in today's world, ends where the survival of a nation begins. Economics bases most of its theories on the assumption of "all things being equal", but you and I are aware that no two entities are the same in the world. Some are "more equal than others". Thus, in spite of their belief in conventional economic theories, Western countries are known to have the most restrictive forms of trade today. The European Community would not spend so many millions of dollars on its agricultural policy if they believed in rational economic decisions. Rather, instead of rational economics, they chose to rely on "strategic trade policy". Anyone who has read the reasons behind strategic trade policy would notice how akin they are to the "infant industry arguments" of the import substitution model of development. When I drew a professor's (Manfred Bienefeld) notice to this reality, he nodded and said he couldn't agree with me more. If the rich industrialized nations can cite "national security" as reason to protect certain industries (e.g. the aircraft industry in the US) and give them every encouragement they need, why cant we, as poor as we are, just encourage some industries to expand by encouraging consumption of local products instead of insisting on economic rationality? Well, maybe time will tell if we are more rational by encouraging foreign competition or by encouraging domestic investors!

15.09 re: Economic Complex?, by *Charles Awasu*

<CAWASU%SUV.M.BITNET@mitvma.mit.edu>

(18 May 93)

This in reaction to Prof. Boateng's last posting. In my previous posting I tried to convey the idea that buying foreign goods can be an economic decision but at the same time costly to the nation. Such a buying pattern can or cannot fit an economic colonization. I still stand by my earlier point that a consumption economy is not sustainable.

1. It is true that because of the globalization of markets, countries don't necessarily need to produce all their needs. But the theory of comparative advantage has been in effect before Ghana got independence, so its not being propelled by information age. That is the theory that made Ghana stuck to cocoa production.
2. About a month ago I did cite examples of goods imposed upon us like beer, milk, cereals etc. which even though are produced in Ghana have foreign inputs and therefore detrimental to economic development. I don't intend to expound on that here. But the example of Milk and Yoghurt can suffice.

3. Talking about industrial policy. Government's pronouncements about privatization is like a joke. The private sector in Ghana is still narrow, because the government is interested in promoting foreign investment rather than local investment. That is an economic policy not an industrial policy.
4. Industrial policy to me is when government is actively pursuing industrial development in areas Ghana has an advantage. That is not the same as government engaging in producing those goods. But that economic policies will have to be geared towards the promotion of those industries. e.g. low interest loans to specific industries; seeking markets for such products, etc.
5. Anyone can term this book economics or whatever. But in an economy where the only viable activity is buy and sell what happens? Granting that all those goods are imported. Who provides the foreign exchange? What is happening in Ghana now is the imports frenzy have driven up the foreign exchange to the point that workers salary cannot compete with the cost of foreign goods. In such an event those goods are no longer cheap if the wages are stagnant. Those who gain are foreign producers and importers.
6. Maybe it is uneconomic to ask what is the cause of the pressure on the cedi? That is the price we pay for importing all the junk that we sometimes don't need. I wonder what kind of economy that can sustain such a weakness on its currency.
7. Economic efficiency can only be achieved if we export enough to consume imports. There is no gain in using borrowed money to pay for imports. It is like spending money you never have.
8. Added to that most of the imports are just feeding the tastes of urbanites. Okay, so we need all those imports. But how do we pay for it? So its good we spend all our money on imports and whilst our stomachs are full the foreign producers laugh all the way to their banks.
9. As for being unfair to policy elites, ask the Ghanaian on the streets whose wages have to compete with a foreign exchange that keeps on rising like the eveready battery, boing...boing...boing...
10. I know that for countries like Ghana, the choices are very slim. But there are several areas we can strike out. That to me is what an industrial policy should be about. What we can produce and sell that will generate enough money to buy all our junk imports and at the same time save some for the next generation.
11. Government privatization actions are still not transparent. The government is still dragging its feet selling assets on the stock exchange. The financial system is still geared towards public sector financing. The banking system is still crowding out private enterprise. The government is interested in spending the money it has gotten through loans and otherwise and therefore pursues a contradictory monetary policy. Only the government has money to spend, nobody else spends. The govt. therefore has a credit squeeze still in place. So how can the private enterprise get access to finance. Is this privatization? Such policies won't promote a private sector.
12. My analysis might not meet the expectation of some. But that is what development economics is about. Theorizing!

15.10 re: Economic Complex?, by Mahamudu Bawumia

<mbawumia@sfu.ca>

(18 May 93)

Hello netters, I would like to strongly disagree with Charles Awasu's comment that development economics is all about theorizing! This is very far from the truth. Development economics is about PEOPLE and changing peoples lives for the better. This is why I will continue to insist that theorize as we might, we cannot change anything if we don't come out with concrete policy implications from our theories. Charles presents a very useful analysis on why the free trade model does not serve our particular purpose(striving for development). It is in fact true that none of the preachers of the free trade doctrine today are actual practitioners of the subject. I would just say that for most countries, the question is how much free trade and when. So what should Ghana do? Here, I am afraid Charles is short on specifics. Nevertheless, he raises the very important issue regarding the absence of an industrial policy or an industrial development plan as Prof. Boateng refers to it(I hope I am not misrepresenting him). Whilst the formulation of such a plan would inevitably involve having to pick winners, I think we should put our heads together and come out with the framework of such a policy in the context of the economic and political realities of Ghana today. I will therefore throw the ball back into Charles' court to present to us in terms of specific policies what such an industrial policy should entail. Over to you!

15.11 Re: Economic Rationality!, by *Alfred Opoku*

<aopoku@ccs.carleton.ca> (19 May 93)

Amanfuor,

This is in response to a reaction prompted by my piece yesterday. Kwabia Boateng writes:

I wonder whether Alfred Opoku is not stressing “economic rationality” when he said in his last posting that “...encourage some industries to expand by encouraging [local] consumption”. thus, my point is made that economic rationalising is universal.

My response: Economic rationality, as defined by neo-classical economists, does not allow for the kind of “encouragement” that I am talking about. It depends entirely on the market mechanism for the allocation of resources, and the production and distribution of goods. Thus, any encouragement, not based on the dictates of the market, is seen as undue interference in the workings of the market. What Kwabia Boateng seems to be saying is that the “common agricultural policy” of the European community is economic rationalising. If that is his definition, then I guess his arguments are not based on conventional economic theories, in which case, perhaps, he agrees with Charles and I that we need to combine matters of economic efficiency with social optimality. Again he writes: by the way, whose definition of “industrial policy” was Alfred using? My response: I cannot tell if there are different versions of this definition. Suffice it to say that every policy, whether economic, industrial, trade, you name it, should have certain components: a clearly defined objective, means of achieving those objectives, targeted areas (areas of focus), etc. You can call it a “common sense” definition. If you apply this simple criteria to what passes for Ghana’s industrial policy (as listed by Dr. Boateng), you’ll realize the immense confusion we are in. In simple terms, there is no sense of direction! Maybe it’s just me, but the sense of doom looming in the African clouds is real indeed and unless we shake off our dogmatic adherence to neoliberal paradigms, and take control of our destiny, we’ll be left out in the cold. As we have stated several times on this net, it is no single conventional strategy that can lift us out of the mess. If we need to adhere to a single approach, then it should be a “common sense” approach.

15.12 re: Economic Complex?, by *Charles Awasu*

<CAWASU%SUVM.BITNET@mitvma.mit.edu> (19 May 93)

The strength with which Mahamudu disagreed with me is interesting. My stating that economic development is all about theorizing was supposed to be a loaded one. What it means is that development economics as a discipline has never been right. All the theories propounded since time immemorial have never work. The development in south Asia is actually in insult to development economics because they never used any conventional models. In effect, all I’m saying is we should not be afraid of challenging western theories and ideas of development. They will never work in Ghana. On that note, I strongly agree with Mahamudu that we need to design specific policies. By the way why is coca cola a preferred drink to coconut drink?

15.13 A Common Sense Approach, by *Kwabia Boateng*

<BOATENG@ac.dal.ca> (19 May 1993)

Alfred Opoku in his last posting made mention of a “common sense” approach to economic development in Ghana. In answer to my previous query to him-on his definition of “industrial policy” he mentioned “a common-sense” definition. I cannot tell whether by his answer he meant that anything akin to what he calls “neoliberal paradigm” is not part of the “common sense”. I hope he does not mean that. When our good friend Charles Awasu tried to link inferiority complex to our desire not to buy Ghana-made goods, I deemed it proper to “caution” him of the fact that at least some people-e.g. my grandmother- buy “Holland” because of good “economic rationality”. I went on to say that “economic rationality” is not a western preserve, and I would say now that it is not unique to the “neoliberal paradigm”. In fact I am personally not a believer in “neo-classical” economics. I was only trying to say that there is economic reasoning behind the consumption behaviour of all people, Ghanaians included. It would be fatal to adopt any kind of development strategy without acknowledging this universal fact. Therefore, when we come to designing “industrial policy” for Ghana we need to address, apart from the nationalistic factor- which Charles Awasu appears to be focusing on at the moment- the economic determinants of consumption, savings and investment behaviour in Ghana- from

whatever “common sense” paradigm. It is not sufficient for me to just talk about the theories some of us already know and have written about, but as Bawumia asked this morning we need concrete, practical suggestions. It might be good to remind ourselves that we might as a nation choose a market-oriented, non-directive or directive approach to “industrial policy” or adopt a “command-type” approach. Ghana has done all those before. In the late fifties Dr. Nkrumah established the IDC (industrial development corporation) with the main objective of assisting indigenous Ghanaians to move into the industrial sector; millions of pounds (I once worked on the IDC file). Nkrumah abandoned the liberal, market-oriented approach and turned to the “command-type”. numerous state-owned companies were established; some did really well in spite of the corruption and nepotism. Today we are trying to “sell-off” these same companies because they have become a burden on public budget. NIC, Busia, Kutu-Akuffo pursued policies similar to the IDC idea, some went further with restrictive commercial policy. Part of the adverse results—shortages, high prices, and the rise of the nouveau-riche who rode in golf cars while the bulk of the people queued for milk and sugar. So “a common sense” approach is easier said than done. If we want “development” it is not only the consumption pattern of Ghanaians we have to address but also the investment pattern, savings pattern, education, social institutions, the institution of government and the sharing of political power etc. So I am not in favour of some liberal ideas— I am in favour of an approach that would not rely on the erroneous perception that “economic rationality” is a neo-liberal idea that should or could be ignored. Again, I must say I hate to write my thesis on the net. Many don’t have the time to read pages from the screen— and I am one. But let us go on talking and reflecting on our own history. That’s one way theory and theorising could be useful.

15.14 Re: Economic Rationality!, by *Mahamudu Bawumia*

<mbawumia@sfu.ca> (19 May 93)

Following the debate between and Prof. Boateng on the subject of Economic Rationality, I must say that is quite wrong in his definition of the concept. Rationality in economics does not depend on market forces to allocate resources. It is in fact very rational for an individual or society to opt for a non-market solution to a problem. The literature on Transactions Costs Economics shows this very clearly.

15.15 Re: A Common Sense Approach, by *Alfred Oponku*

<aopoku@ccs.carleton.ca> (19 May 93)

Amanfuor, I am “forced” to come back to this issue of economic rationality. Partly because, I believe Mr. Boateng has an erroneous impression of what I have been saying all along. To be more specific, I would answer some of the issues he raised this afternoon.

Kwabia Boateng writes:

I cannot tell whether by his answer he meant that anything akin to what he calls “neoliberal paradigm” is not part of the “common sense”. I hope he does not mean that. When I used the term “common sense”, it was because I did not want to be confined within the boundaries of any one development approach. If you follow my arguments carefully, you would realize that my argument has been that we should not be restricted by theories, in our quest for development. For instance, adhering to liberal theories would mean an insistence on economic efficiency, which in our particular case would mean that we stick to primary production (for the rest of our lives!). I don’t need to draw all the linkages here. On the other hand, selecting an inward strategy would bring all the evils Mr. Boateng associated with the Nkrumah era. What I call “common sense” therefore would mean a careful evaluation of our resources, in relation to our needs, within the international political economy. It is “common sense” that has made Europe defy conventional theory of free trade to forge a “common agricultural policy” which is fundamental to the economic stability of that continent. It is “common sense”, and not neoliberal theories, which made Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and now Brazil, assess their vital national security and decide to overlook conventional wisdom, to protect certain industries. Need I go on? Again he writes: I went on to say that “economic rationality” is not a western preserve, and I would say now that it is not unique to the “neoliberal paradigm” I was only trying to say that there is economic reasoning behind the consumption behaviour of all people, Ghanaians included. it would be fatal to adopt any kind of development strategy without acknowledging this universal fact. I don’t believe anyone has said rational economic decision is the prerogative of

Western peoples. Neither is it unique to only one theory. The difference is that neoliberal theories stress economic rationality, whereas it is only one component of rationality itself. If you happen to read Jozsef Bognar (1963), you will realize that in assessing rational decisions one does not only look at it in terms of the individual but also the society as a whole. There are times when individual rationality does not augur well for the society. That is why I stated yesterday that individual economic rationality must end where the survival of a society begins. When the Japanese encouraged their firms to produce cars and encouraged domestic consumption, individual rationality (in this case, measured in utiles) was sacrificed for social optimality. Today, there are the rulers of the free world. Sure, there is economic reasoning behind the consumption behaviour of all people, but we need to realize that there are times when other reasons are more influential in shaping production and consumption patterns. He writes: it might be good to remind ourselves that we might as a nation choose a market-oriented, non-directive or directive approach to “industrial policy” or adopt a “command-type” approach. Again, let me state that it is suicidal to trap ourselves in dogmatic approaches. It must not be a matter of “either or”; we should be able to design development approaches that take the best of either world. Nkrumah’s “command economy” did not work, and Rawlings’ “market-oriented economy” is not the “be all and the end all” to Ghana’s problems; yet no one can condemn outright either approaches. It is a “common sense” approach that combines the best of either worlds and adapts it to our particular socio-political economy that we need. He ends: but let us go on talking AND reflecting on our own history. that’s one way theory and theorising could be useful. I am glad we realize that one cannot just get up and design solutions if we don’t first identify the problem and theorize about possible solutions. It is not fair to burden Charles with the problem of coming up with solutions, instead of theorizing, when most of us don’t even understand what the real problems are.

15.16 Re-Common Sense Approach, by *Ebenezer Annan*

<GRD4031@HUSKY1.STMARYS.CA> (19 May 1993)

I have been reading with interest the debate on “Common Sense” approach to development and I think that the arguments put forward by Opoku make a lot of sense. What I am not sure though is the argument that increased production in primary products would make us forever poor. I think that the experiences of some countries like South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan and perhaps Brazil (the so called NICs) are relevant and are characterised by enormous lessons but let us be careful not to take those experiences out of context.

Certainly, we are not comparing Ghana to any of those countries and we are not saying that their development experiences should necessarily be “adopted” in Ghana (and I use the word “adopt” mildly). Just for the sake of the records, though, Brazil’s economy up until the about 1980 was dependent on primary exports including steel, coffee, cocoa, paper and petroleum products. Even after 1980 when over 60% of the countries exports were manufactured goods, the export of primary products continued to grow at a declining rate between 1960 and 1980. Almost all the other countries mentioned above were at one time agricultural producers and even though the nature of exports have changed significantly, the production of primary goods e.g. food, fruits, wood, cotton, leather etc. etc. still remain important components of their economies. Finally, the unique global circumstances prevailing coupled with the role of the USA at the time of ‘take off’ was crucial in the economic development of all the countries mentioned. indeed is right that our development strategies must be based on ‘common sense’ and not limited to ‘theories’. This, I guess, brings us to the question “DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS - WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT “ ?

15.17 Rationality!, by *Opoku*

<aopoku@ccs.carleton.ca> (20 May 93)

Hi Mahamudu, I hope that by now you are aware that I do not question rational economic decisions. Every individual has the right to assess a commodity by his/her own criteria of rationality. The debate started because Charles and I advocated for an encouragement of domestic production and consumption, to which Mr. Boateng replied that people would buy goods not because of where they were made but the satisfaction they will derive from it. That is a logical argument which we agree with. However, it should not stop us from promoting those industries in which we have a certain potential to succeed; that is where an industrial policy comes in. I have argued that such a decision may not seem economically rational, but there are more sides to rationality than just economics. Rationality encompasses a

social component, a political component, etc.; as such, in talking about development of a society, we need not just dwell on economic rationality, as neo-classical economics does. We need to put everything in the perspective of socially rational behaviour. Building Akosombo dam was said to be economically irrational, yet the idea of social optimality made the project a feasible one. That is the basis of my arguments and I don't believe anyone can say outright that I am wrong! The problem with development economics today is that so much attention is paid to economic issues, and none is given the other essential aspects of development. I do not condemn those who argue on the side of economics, we all know the vitality of the subject; what we are saying is that we need to look beyond the walls of economic theory, like everyone else, and take control of our destiny.

15.18 Re: Common sense approach, by *Opoku*

<aopoku@ccs.carleton.ca> (20 May 93)

I am glad that, at least, Ebenezer does see some merits in what I am saying. I must say, however, that I do not think we have any good prospects with primary production. Unlike Brazil, and other numerous examples, our primary production activities are quite limited; the major one being cocoa, whose prices keep on tumbling. Maybe if we can find some oil, or if we stop talking and develop the Oppon-Manso iron and steel project, we could have much better prospect, especially now that gold mining is on the rise. But these are not the issues now. I agree with you that we cannot "copy" the development experience of any of the Asian countries, or even Brazil, because I do believe that each country is a whole entity unto itself, replete with its own socio-political circumstances. Thus, the experience of one country would be different from another, even if they all used the same strategy. Nonetheless, there are useful lessons to be learnt from their cases; for me, one important lesson is that comparative advantage is not always based on natural endowments, it can be created as well. On the whole, the experience of these countries defy conventional economic wisdom, and that is what we have been saying all along, what I referred to as "common sense" approach. If they had relied on only economic rationality and assessed programs by a simple criteria of economic efficiency, I wonder if they would have achieved the success they have now. I like your example of Brazil; it goes to show that while having some advantage with primary production, they foresaw a future in which that advantage would be lost and so they eased the economy gradually into industrial production. Until last year, I did not know that they had made so much progress in the computer industry. When they started, they were labelled as irrational. Maybe they have not as gained control on the export market, but at least, they have a vibrant home market for their produce which competes favourably with IBM etc. in Brazil. We don't have to duplicate Brazil, or Taiwan, or Korea! We must look at our own situation and assess our development plans according to our means and our objectives. So long as we continue to receive instructions from the Washington boardrooms, we will continue to ignore our small scale industries, because supporting them would not be economically rational or efficient, and we will continue to bemoan our fate as cocoa prices tumble and rumble in the world markets!

15.19 Some Specifics..., by *Charles Awasu*

<CAWASU%SUV.M.BITNET> (20 May 93)

Sometimes it becomes disappointing when netters disagree with one point in presentation of five or more points and thereby steer the argument away from the key issue. 1. I say some specifics because unless one is in a policy making capacity, it is difficult to know what all the variables are on the ground. In other words it is quite difficult for me to have a total framework to put forth specific ideas. It will be more easier if one is an insider maybe in the Ministry of finance or at a stage where one can have a pretty good picture. 2. At the stage of my reasoning, an industrial policy, if ever one exists, will have to be the HEART of economic development. In other words all other economic policies will revolve or go to facilitate the promotion of that industrial policy. 3. Given that background, my specifics will still be on the abstract level. In other words they might never be implemented, or that they are already being implemented, or that someone else has same or similar ideas. At best my specifics still remain theoretical. 4. With that in mind, I'll start with the known and progress towards the unknown. I know that the Ghana government is pursuing privatization and that there is a shift from public sector to private sector development. That shift is not an industrial policy but an economic policy. 5. It is fair to state that privatization is different from private sector development. I know that government is pursuing privatization without promoting private sector development. To me that is like sowing seeds without

ploughing. 6. For the privatization to be successful, the private sector will have to flourish. Since industrialization will progress through the private sector, I will first give specifics on private sector development. The key ingredient in developing the private sector is easy access to FINANCE. SPECIFICS FOR PRIVATE SECTOR DEV. 1. The stock exchange has to be taken seriously. Every thing possible should be made to improve the technical capacity of the stock exchange to meet international standards. (Despite the recent achievements of the stock exchange government support remains in words). 2. The government will have to sell the SOEs on the stock exchange. Majority of the shares to be sold to Ghanaians. This will promote popular capitalism and it will reinforce the idea of buying Ghanaian. It makes economic sense to buy from a company that you have shares in so your dividends might increase. The government can however court certain

overseas firms for markets, and technology transfer by selling a portion of shares to them. 3. The government will have to shepherd all the big firms to seek finance on the stock market. This will free up the banking sector for the small firms to get access to loans. (The idea here is that cheap finance will make local firms compete internationally). Like I stated earlier the banking sector is presently being crowded by big firms and public sector borrowing. 4. Some specific firms, which have potential and which are in line with an industrial policy (granting there is one) should be targeted for cheap finance. That is the government can guarantee those loans. (here corruption has to be nil or it will flop). 5. The Ministry of Finance will have to split from economic planning. The MOF will have to take on a regulatory role. Tough regulations will have to be made against insider trading on the stock market, firms with cheap finance will have to be closely monitored etc. For the financial markets to become sophisticated, tough laws will have to be in place to guarantee agreements. 6. A private national credit rating system will have to be established. This must also be regulated for secrecy and confidentiality. 7 The Bank of Ghana should become an independent institution. 8. If foreign businesses enjoy tax-free holidays, local firms should also be given tax breaks. Especially export-oriented firms. 9. People who save certain amounts over a certain period should also be given tax incentives. The government will have to consider a deposit insurance scheme. There is need to increase financial savings. 10. All the above depends on the level of confidence and trust people have in the government and the economy. 11. Operating from the known, I'll progress to the unknown in the next posting and give some specifics for an industrial policy. In the meantime others have the freedom to critique or put forth better specifics with the firm belief that collective action can be socially productive. DISCLAIMER: we must recognize that ideas are economic goods which are unlike conventional private goods. In that markets are inherently less successful in producing and transmitting ideas than they are with private goods. As a result, producing ideas and using ideas are on different wavelengths towards economic development.

15.20 Re: Rationality!, by *Opoku*

<aopoku@ccs.carleton.ca> (21 May 93)

Amanfuor,

Just when I thought all is quiet on the issue, I get a query to provide references for a statement I made. At the moment, I am sitting by a computer and cannot get up to fetch the reference but let me provide a few tit bits. First of all, when Mr. Boateng says "the project was supposed to be the main engine for industrialization under the CPP regime", he is right. What he failed to do was to put it in a context. That reason was provided by the government which was undertaking the project, so quite naturally, it could justify it. However, some economists who were closing following Ghana's development effort, and even some members of the opposition including Dr. Busia opposed the project using economic arguments. Recently, there have been documentaries (e.g. in Britain) on the project, which labelled the project as an essential tool of Nkrumah's political ambition. Sorry, I cannot provide the references Mr. Boateng is seeking but I would be glad to know of any that clearly provides an economic justification of the project (not a Ghana government document please!).

15.21 On Industrial Policy, by *mbawumia@sfu.ca*

(21 May 93)

I would like to add to Charles Awasu's contribution on the specifics of such a policy.

1. An industrial policy, by its very nature must be pursued over the long-term, i.e. beyond the four year political cycle. This is why it is absolutely imperative that political consensus be obtained for such a policy. This is why the current state of politics in Ghana is so disheartening. I am sure the government and the opposition parties could

reach a lot of common ground on such a policy. Such political consensus underlies the success of the industrial policies in Japan and Malaysia for example.

2. Charles was absolutely right when he mentioned that the government was privatizing without promoting private sector development. The private sector will not be efficient if the majority of the country has limited access to the “basic” infrastructure of roads, electricity, power, and telecommunications. This for me is where the role of the state is paramount, given the externalities associated with these facilities. Some progress has already been made on these fronts but a lot more needs to be done. Why does it take someone in Accra a year to wait for a telephone? This really boggles the mind. There is simply no hope for someone in Sandema. I will like to see a PLAN put in place where we can definitely say (barring unforeseen circumstances of course) that every village will have access to telephones for example by a certain time.
3. As part of this drive for basic infrastructural development, I would like to see the role of the army redefined as a National Development Army. This I think should be the primary focus of the army at this stage of our development.
4. I think the National Service scheme should be overhauled. It is a hot-bed of disguised unemployment. I would propose that all people enrolled for service should be brought directly under the control of the National Development Army so that tasks are performed with military precision. We also end up with a well disciplined work force and a bridging of the gap between the military and the civilian populace.
5. What has all this got to do with industrial policy? My point is that Industrial Policy unless carried out in the context of a development strategy is doomed to failure.
6. Picking Winners. This unfortunately will be the unpalatable task facing policy makers. They will have to invoke the infant industry argument, i.e. protect our infant industries until they are ready to compete with the big guys. Such protection has to be temporary. Looking at the performance of the industrial sector in Ghana, the manufacturing base, continues to be concentrated within a few industries. The top five industries are basic metal products, petroleum, food processing, beverages and timber products. These together account for around two-thirds of industrial output and value added. Fish products also appear very promising and may require our particular attention. I would like the opinions of netters on which industries are possible winners. We should however make sure that competition at the domestic level is encouraged during this phase. Our leading partners in merchandise trade are currently Germany, U. K., U. S., Japan and the Netherlands. We definitely want to bear prospective customers in mind when we pick our winners.
7. Charles argued that we make the availability of cheap credit a primary focus of such a policy. whilst it is true that Japan and South Korea pursued policies of financial repression at the onset of their industrialisation policies, I will just want to caution that their interest rates were still high by international standards.
8. I do not think that the idea of an independent central bank is feasible at the moment but I surely will support it. Lets keep the debate going.

15.22 Re: Rationality!, by Kwabia Boateng

<BOATENG@ac.dal.ca> (21 May 1993)

I don't understand why Alfred does not want Ghana govt document saying that the Akosombo project was economically sound, but he appears to give credibility to BBC documentaries on the project. There is no project anywhere in the world which has been accepted as perfectly sound by all. There is always some opposition, and also some good counter-arguments. The fact is that economists may mean a whole lot of different things when they talk of the viability of a project; for example, financial viability, economic viability etc. there are many ways any particular type of “viability” could be measured e.g. using shadow or real prices, and what to include e.g. environmental concerns, human resettlements etc. Therefore, depending on one's own perception of national economic priorities one could say whether a project is “rational” or “viable” or not. I think many Ghanaians, on hindsight, agree that economically the project was good for Ghana- reflecting on the three oil crises and what could have happened in Ghana without the Akosombo. I inclined to believe that when the BBC, ABC, NBC, CNN etc. produce their documentaries they are not always unmindful of their respective national interests - e.g. to show that all African leaders and their “achievements” are actual failures thereby vindicating themselves of their role in Africa. Therefore, if we want to be cautious about what we read, let us be cautious on all sides.

15.23 Industrial policy - some more specifics, by *Kwabia Boateng*

<BOATENG@ac.dal.ca> (23 May 1993)

I should first say well done to Charles Awasu for always prompting us to think more deeply about Ghana and, in particular, the development of Ghana's economy. Charles has, within a short time, made at least two proposals for the economic development of Ghana on this net. Some of us really enjoyed reading those proposals/suggestions, and pointed out strengths and weaknesses as appropriate. I hope that in the long term Charles would appreciate that criticisms submitted by some of us are not personal or meant to destroy his effort, but to encourage him to keep a better focus and streamline his thoughts about what needs to be done for the economic development of Ghana. In his latest proposal for industrial growth, the positive impact of some of our criticisms showed in that he stated clearly where he is (not) coming from (not the ministry of finance) and where is going (the abstract level).

The main logic behind these proposals is that

- 1) businesses should earn their way and not be given "soft money" - it is a better way to efficiency.
- 2) It would take a long time for the stock exchange to make an impact on industrial capital formation due to economic uncertainty and instability, inflation, and lack of financial education among the Ghanaian public.
- 3) if the main problem facing Ghanaian industry is lack of demand, create the market. First, conduct industrial survey, and classify problems according to e.g. finance, employment, technology, marketing etc. we might for e.g. find that nature of financial problem differs among industries - there are variety of problems: equity, loans (short or long); local currency or foreign exchange etc. Second adopt measures that would attack all problems simultaneously. e.g. tying contracts, profit taxes to the value of local resources used in production. By giving contracts on the basis of how much local input is generally used by a firm, market for local inputs would be created and employment generated. If taxes on the profits of UTC is higher the greater the proportion of imported goods in its total sales it would begin to seek sources of local goods. This approach may be better than imposing indirect taxes on imported items because indirect taxes can more easily be shifted to the poor consumer while profit taxes are not easily shifted. In this simple way industries producing Ghana-made goods would be earning their way. Next select vital industries e.g. food preservation and processing and provide development research grants - research money should go to private research organisations and the universities. Research organisations concentrating on Ghanaian economy should have more of such grants. Encourage Ghana embassies abroad to "steal" technological and marketing information for the benefit of Ghanaian industries. Third, remove direct govt involvement in sectors where Ghanaian-owned enterprises exist e.g. if state insurance is to remain govt-owned shift its operations to "uncharted waters" e.g. life, agriculture, from motor vehicles. The stock exchange may not be the appropriate place to sell state-owned enterprises. A private auctioneer may be better. Many of them do not have the necessary financial background to have a quotation on the stock exchange, and the stock exchange may contaminate itself by dealing on them. So much for now.

15.24. The Rationality of the Volta Dam, by *Ebenezer Annan*

GRD4031@HUSKY1.STMARYS.CA (23 May 1993)

Hi Netters, I have read the piece on the Volta Dam and the request for references and I think I would want to help out here. Certainly, we do not claim to know it all but I think there is enough evidence even from World Bank sources that the Volta Dam Project was economically in the disinterest of the people of Ghana before it began in 1962. I shall try to provide succinct references to that effect. I know this because my thesis is on "Technology Transfer and Rural Development", using the case of the Volta Basin Project and therefore I have been dealing with a lot of the material relating to the project.

I am not sure whether these references solve the puzzle but I hope they provide some basis for Alfred's assertion concerning the Volta Dam. My purpose is not to take sides but as practitioners in academia we must endeavour to keep the facts as straight as our training demands. Below are the references as requested by a netter:

Mahoney R.D., JFK: Ordeal in Africa, (Oxford Univ. Press), 1983. p168.

Graham R., *The Aluminium Industry and the Third World* (Zed Press, London) 1982. Check pages 16-173.

Adams R. G., *US and World Energy Outlook: Implications for the Aluminium Industry*, Chicago, 1981. Check p12 for specifics.

Graham R., "Ghana's Volta Resettlement Scheme", in *The Social and Environmental Effects of Large Dams Vol. 2*, edited by Goldsmith E. and Hildyard N., 1984. Pages 131-139.

Fui Tsikata S., (ed.) *Essays from the Volta Renegotiations 1982 -1985*, (Ghana Publishing Press) 1986.

This book has lots of statistics and comparative data to bring its point home. The article in Chapter 2 of the book written by Caseley-Hayford Louis and Rod Simms is astonishing.

Cheryl Payer, *The World Bank: A Critical Analysis*, New York, 1982.

Pages 250 -259. Finally, here is a quote by the World Bank official on the project at the time of construction: " The World Bank initially hesitated to back such a clearly exploitative agreement but faced with growing Soviet influence in Ghana and the possibility of working in the interest of USA foreign policy, finally relaxed and agreed to underwrite the scheme. The rationale offered for this decision was that contrary to all previous conceptions, the success of the scheme now depends not on the smelter load and its payments for power but on the non-smelter demand.....".

This quotation is from *West Africa Magazine*, "Imperialism and the Volta Dam", 24th March, 1980, p523. It must be noted that the world bank's decision was made one year after the bank had declared that at a power price of 2.5 mills kw/h to be paid by Kaiser and Reynolds, revenues would never be large enough to cover debt service. The agreement being referred to is the one which was signed by the CPP and Kaiser. Netters will recall that the price of power to Valco and other circumstances led to the renegotiations of the initial agreement between 1982 - 1985, although the provisions of that agreement were still legally binding.

15.25 Re- Rationality, by *Kwabia Boateng*

Ebenezer's recent postings on the Akosombo dam has cleared a little bit of dust of the confusion about whether the dam was "economically irrational" or not. From Ebenezer's two pieces it is clear that what commentators are talking about is the "commercial viability" of the project and not its broader "economic returns". Development economists and project analysts usually distinguish between a project's "ability to pay itself", which may be referred to as commercial or financial viability and its "ability to contribute in net terms (employment, foreign-exchange savings etc. plus all externalities) to the overall economy" which we may refer to as economic returns. Economic returns may be looked at in the short term or in the long term. Therefore it is not sufficient just to say the project was not viable. I think we need to think in far broader terms over an extended time horizon to be able to judge a mega project like the Akosombo. By the way have we read reports on the Tennessee valley project? On what basis was such a project approved, and continues to attract public funding? Because it is commercially viable? We should remember that when analysts did their appraisal of the Volta dam in the fifties they did not include the oil price hikes - there was no way they could foresee that - of the seventies in their cost-benefit calculations. The economic spin-offs in rural Ghana which has so far benefited from electrification were certainly not included in their estimates. The point I am making is that you cannot just get up and say that a project of the size of the dam was not worth the money spent. You need to bring to us a bigger picture than the statement "it could not pay for itself". True "public projects" cannot and are not made to pay for themselves - this is one of the basic principles in public finance.

15.26 Re- Rationality, by *Francis Dodoo, TULANE, US*

I have been following this debate on viability versus rationality of the dam project. I have a genuine question; if we use a rationality that encompasses potential unforeseen returns then doesn't every proposal, even white elephants, become rational, feasible, viable? What should our criterion for selection be; measurable or anticipated benefits or ...? y'all please remember...this comes from an unknowing soul... a demographer. waiting.

15.27 The Role of Ideas! by *Charles Awasu*

In this piece, I would argue that a key factor in understanding economic development is by thinking carefully about ideas. As Mahamadu did point out, it will be useless on my part to use “cosmic concepts” to develop an industrial policy for Ghana. From what we have discussed so far on the subject, viz.; Mahamadu/Boateng/Annan/Opoku etc., it is clear that conventional trade liberalization has limits for Ghana to be able to capture the static comparative advantage that we have in primary products. If that is true, then we all might agree that Ghana needs to move towards high value added production with more sophisticated technologies.

1. Economic growth is made possible by discoveries of ideas e.g. how to make high temperature superconductors or better ways of making a shoe.
2. Ideas are controlled by private individuals who may respond to market incentives. People might often not want to incur costs in order to share their ideas unless there is a monetary incentive to do so. Ideas however, can be used by many people at the same time.
3. As such the economy of ideas can flourish in an arena of policy openness and fewer repression and distortions. This can happen if the government encourages the production and dissemination of ideas by patent rights, copyright laws, laws to protect trade secrets, subsidies for education, peer-reviewed research, grants, and agric. extension services.
4. The use of patents as strong property rights promote monopoly profits and therefore create the incentive to discover new ideas.
5. The question: How can Ghana make the move? (a) by producing ideas (b) by using ideas.
6. Using ideas: by using ideas, Ghana can just adopt a development strategy that will be made up of ideas already in existence in industrial countries by allowing foreign direct investment. (Mauritius used this strategy)
7. Producing ideas: the government will have to intervene in market exchange as a way to encourage the domestic production and exploitation of ideas that can earn a return on the world market. (Taiwan is an example).
8. These two approaches can only work with a government that can withstand political pressures associated with rent-seeking in addition to a competent and relatively honest bureaucracy. As yet I’m not sure which of the above two or combinations that are being employed in Ghana, but having lived in Ghana I know private ideas get little support.
9. Note: the value of ideas increases as the size of the market increases. Both approaches will have to emphasize human capital and research subsidies. The key here is to make sure the domestic market and productivity meet world market standards.
10. In a country where there are enough ideas, there is a high tendency for the economy to move from monodiscovery to one in which many new products and processes can be discovered.
11. If all the above holds true, then I wish to make the case that there is a need to strengthen or build new kinds of institutions that can make viable the production and use of commercially relevant ideas. Here we need the most competent and effective mechanisms for supporting collective interests.
12. If that is the case, then the country’s economic prospects depends on all Ghanaians including our scientists, engineers, farmers, laboratories, theorists industrialists, markets, etc. In that regard an industrial policy will take hold in an economy of ideas which will be propelled by the potential for discovery.

15.28 Re: Rational, by *Alfred Opoku*

Amanfuor, I understand Mr. Boateng’s frustration with my statement that I do not want a reference to a Ghana government document. Of course, I have an explanation for that. Here it goes: Being the proponents and initiators of the project, they definitely had their reasons for it. I agree with Nkrumah and all those who supported the project. The objection to it was raised outside government circles. In other words, there were few economists outside of the CPP regime who justified the economic value of the project. I know some historians would refer me to the fact that even the colonial government had such a project in mind, but before anyone does so, I want to draw their attention to the fact that even though it was an electricity project on the Volta River, it was at a different location. In other words, the economic feasibility of was determined by the size, and therefore the potential efficiency, of the project. It was on this basis that some economists labelled it as “irrational”. I do not value the BBC source more than a Ghana government document; in fact, I have my reservations about the BBC, I was only drawing attention to the fact that, even after

almost 20 years of the project, its economic rationality is still questioned. My argument is that we don't need to pay attention to such rigid definitions of rationality because the concept is not entirely an economic domain.

16 PERSONAL COMPUTERS/ INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

compiled and edited by *Stephen Agyepong*

16.00 Editorial Comments by *Stephen Agyepong*

To quote from the petition sent by members of the Okyeame family to various institutions in Ghana, “The computer has been touted by some as the single most important invention of all time, a vaunt which has yet to be debunked. It is often referred to as “The Machine that Changed the World”. We in Ghana wish to be included in that “World”. The role of the computer in the development of our beloved country cannot be overemphasized. If we in Ghana and other Third World countries aspire to catch up, and successfully compete, with the developed societies, we must, among other things, learn to use and encourage the use of the computer in all facets of our daily lives. It is in the realization of the importance of the computer in our society that compelled people to speak up when it was brought to the attention of members of the Okyeame net that exorbitant taxes were being levied on personal computers and peripherals brought to Ghana. These exorbitant fees, it was argued, discourage the use of computers in Ghana, therefore reducing the competitiveness of Ghanaian industries abroad.

This section presents some of the discussions that took place and which resulted in the petition mentioned above. Thanks to Michael Aveh, who led the effort, Jonathan Bossman, who wrote the petition, Professor Kwesi Yankah, alias citizen Kwatriot, who made sure the petition was published in a Ghanaian newspaper and all netters whose excellent suggestions led to the final petition. Many more of such joint efforts!

It also includes discussions on the state of electronic mails to and from Ghana and Ghana’s attempt to connect to the internet. Internet is a network of computers, initially started by the United States government to link educational institutions and researchers of the defense industry, and which now includes computer networks all over the world, that allow users connected to it to share information.

The following acronyms are used throughout this section:

AAAS - American Association for the Advancement of Science

CSIR - Center for Scientific and Industrial Research email Electronic mail
GHASTINET - Ghana National Scientific and Technical Information Network
IDRC - International Development Research Center
PADIS - Pan African Development Information System
PC - Personal Computer
NGO - Non Governmental Organization
NUGS - National Union of Ghanaian Students

16.01 A Digital Fix for the Third World?, by *Steve Acheampong, Reno Nevada, USA*

(Wednesday, November 24, 1993)

This is a piece of news in which Ghana is featured to some extent and I believe netters will find it interesting. Our PC petition may have a greater chance of succeeding if what Rawlings is alleged to be saying on information technology is true.

A Digital Fix for the Third World?
By Gary Six and Paul Wallich

Scientific America, October 93

Luis Pierrend
Director Centro de Computo - (ESAN/DATA)
ESAN
E-mail : lpie@esan.pe

Information technology may bring limited benefits to the work force of developing nations.

The notion that technology can fix the economic problems of the development world dates back to the early years of the post-colonial era. The "green revolution" of the 1960s held out the hope that the labors of Western plant geneticists could eliminate food shortages by raising crop yields.

The information age has begun to raise similar expectations. African heads of state, such as Flight Lieutenant Jerry J. Rawlings, who staged the overthrow of a civilian government in Ghana more than a decade ago and last year was elected as president, sound a little like executives from Silicon Valley. Rawlings now talks about an "enabling environment" for efficient telecommunications in a country where many employees spend about half their time going from one place to another because of the unreliability of the telephones.

Rawling's neighbor, Felix Houphouet-Boigny, longtime leader of Ivory Coast, voices a similar hopeful refrain : "Thanks to informatics, technological shortcuts to development exist today and are within the reach of everyone. We are not therefore doomed to remain undeveloped forever".

For all its promise, the allure of skipping over several generations of technology has fallen into disfavor in some circles. Economists often adhere to the "product cycle" approach to diffusion of technology. This trickle-down theory holds that developing nations absorb new technology only after it has become widely established in industrialized countries. Costa Rica assembles baseballs for the major leagues; Du Pont turns out aerospace composites. Other economists also point to the billions of dollars wasted on aid that recipients have been unable to integrate into their economics, from tractors without gas stations to steel mills without transport for ore or finished products.

Many preach an enlightened cousin of the trickle-down approach known as appropriate technology. And the information advocates argue that high-tech electronic tools are appropriate - \$1,000 microcomputers can do the work that required \$1-million mainframes in the industrialized world only a decade ago, and cellular telephones can fend off the lengthy process of laying land lines.

Telecommunications linkages in Ghana, for example, might tie cocoa producers more closely to customers in world markets, allowing them to wheel and deal more rapidly and to increase profits that could eventually flow back to farmers. Service jobs that require manual processing of data are being moved from back offices in high-priced countries to provide jobs for city dwellers in the developing world.

Moreover, networks could keep academics in developing nations in touch with colleagues in the North. The National Science Foundation is contemplating the funding of U.S. University programs to set up data banks that would let both U.S. and Latin America engineers and scientists share information over the Internet data network.

Dogging all these new-age ideas is the fact that the green revolution and other technological salvation were not exactly unmitigated successes. Agricultural aid definitely improved crop yields for larger farmers with the know-how and capital to buy and use hybrid seed, fertilizer and the other accouterments of a midwestern U.S. farm. But in India and Pakistan, the poorest subsistence farmers and unlanded laborers were still left on the margins.

Similarly, the benefits of PCs and pocket phones have been confined to a narrow segment of society in developing countries. In India, a more than \$200-million software industry has emerged, centered around Bombay and the southern city of Bangalore. Software houses there have crafted, among other applications, programs that let U.S. consumers buy gasoline automatically with a credit card, according to Pyramid Research, a consulting firm in Cambridge, Mass. Yet less than 1 percent of Indians have phones, compared with 96 percent of Americans. Most branches of the country's largest bank, the State Bank of India, still record transactions by hand.

"In these places, what you may see are enclaves of high-expertise engineers and high-skilled technicians with telecommunications links to wherever they're getting their orders-and a barbed-wire fence between them and the rest of the economy", says W. Brian Arthur, a professor of economics at Stanford University. "The proceeds of what they do may go to some Swiss bank, so they may as well be on the moon".

Africa also has measured some gains from information technology and telecommunications, but a huge gap remains in the ability to meet most countries' needs. The cocoa board in Ghana uses Morse code to communicate with offices all over the country.

The government in Ghana now allows private companies to compete with its own Posts and Telecommunications Corporation, which provides 48,000 telephone lines, according to an article in a journal called African Technology Forum. Ghana could accommodate at least 200,000 telephone lines, observers estimate. But at \$1,000 to install a handset -more than the nation's average per capita income- demand for privately supplied telephones will remain limited.

Instead, where information technology has become a boon is in the newly industrialized nations, those with the organizational and planning skills to make full use of the technology. Singapore saw a dramatic increase in revenues from software and services during the 1980s. The small nation's advances resulted from an aggressive government policy of building telecommunications networks and promoting a domestic software industry. Other nations -Venezuela and Mexico - have witnessed a rise in supply of telecommunications services after privatization of government telephone monopolies.

Indeed, some economists worry that information technology may actually draw jobs away from the developing world, further exacerbating the gap between rich and poor. Just-in-time inventory control methods and computerized manufacturing have become a form of intellectual and organizational capital that outstrips the importance of low labor costs. In short, Ashoka Mody, a World Bank economist, warns, "the low wages in the developing countries can get lost in the noise of cost accounting".

16.02 Ghana E-mail, by *John Diwu, Guelph, Canada*

(Thursday, September 2, 1993)

GHASTINET is a national network for sharing scientific and technical information among some governmental and non-governmental organizations in Ghana.

Whilst the headquarters is at CSIR library there is at least a node at each of the three universities and any other organization where some form of research or information gathering is carried out (e.g. each of the CSIR institutes, the Environmental Protection Council, Center for Research into Herbal Medicine, etc.).

At the moment the e-mail in Ghana is a pilot project being jointly funded by a number of NGO's, but the participating local organizations are expected to provide their own hardware and this has always been a problem since the project took off over a year ago. If there is any assistance that can be provided in this direction (e.g. computers, modems, printers, satellite dish etc.) I am sure it would be highly appreciated by the CSIR and the other participating organizations.

For more information or to offer any assistance you may contact:

The Librarian
GHASTINET (CSIR Library)
P.O. Box M.32
Accra.

16.03 E-mail in Ghana, by *Yaw Amoateng-Adjepong, Birmingham Alabama, USA*

(Thursday, September 2, 1993)

The Ghana National Scientific and Technical Information Network (GHASTINET) is developing e-mail in Ghana. An enhanced version of FrontDoor Communication Software has been installed. An IBM P/S 2 model 286 is used for the e-mail service. Gnfnido Greenet gateway in London polls GHASTINET's system on Wednesdays and Fridays between 3:00pm and 5:00pm to deliver and receive mail. The e-mail service is subscribed by the Universities and a number of non-governmental organizations including Friends of the Earth. For normal messages, Wednesdays and Fridays are the delivery days. The charges are on "per page" basis at a rate of 57 US cents per page. On demand messages attract the prevailing cost of international phone call to London plus US \$1.14 service charge per message. The system faces numerous problems including the use of the single computer for other services by various units, the absolute reliance on a single systems operator at GHASTINET and the difficulty of connecting to other African networks like PADIS in Addis Ababa and ELCI in Nairobi. GHASTINET is in its initial stages and will benefit from any assistance you folks on this network can offer, if we care enough to help. For more information on electronic networking in Africa, contact the American Academy for the Advancement of Sciences (AAAS) Sub-Saharan Africa Program at: AFRAAAS@GWUVM.GWU.EDU

16.04 More on Ghana E-mail, by *Agyaba Yaw Amoateng-Adjepong, Birmingham Alabama, USA*

(Thursday, September 2, 1993)

GHASTINET, the center responsible for developing e-mail in Ghana, is presented as an institute of the Center for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Accra, Ghana. The central node for GHASTINET is based at the premises of CSIR in Accra. GHASTINET is actually being developed as a project of the Pan African Development Information System (PADIS), the International Development Center (IDRC) and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). It has received some government grant but I do not know the extent of governmental control. My feeling, based solely on presentations on the subject at AAAS conferences is that the program is being developed as an independent communications network to facilitate communications between African universities and the academic world. Of course, its uses will extent beyond the universities. The goal is to develop a self-sustaining system. Some of the latest needs of GHASTINET include a computer with a fax interface card, high speed modems and, perhaps, manuals on technical know-how. I do not know how to contact them directly by e-mail, as at now. However, I do know the following persons in Ghana are closely involved in its development: Matilda Amissah-Arthur, University of

Ghana, Accra, Ghana; and John Villars at the Council on Scientific and Industrial Research, Accra, Ghana. Perhaps, representatives of the Ghanaian universities, either in London or the US can provide additional information on how to get AID directly to them. I do know AID can be gotten to them through the AAAS but I will hate to see us use that route. I feel it as an insult to my Ghanaian pride that help from Ghanaians to Ghana has to be channeled through an American institution. But hey, if that is the best way to send help let's do it!

The Consumers Association of Ghana, the ISIS and the Ghana Standards Board were among the first to utilize the services of GHASTINET. A subscription agreement for users has been developed. Article 2.4 of the agreement reads "GHASTINET will not transmit or receive seditious information on behalf of the subscriber." Who determines what is seditious? How will that determination be made? I don't know the answers.

16.05 Ghana E-mail, by Adams Bodo, Trondheim, Norway

(Friday, September 3, 1993)

It is interesting and indeed a positive sign that something concrete is being done by way of the development of e-mail in "Ogyakrom". This strongly suggest we do all we can to support since it would go a long way to help the socio-economic development of the country. Its impact in academic circles, especially our universities cannot be overemphasized. However reading Agyaba's piece (actually the postscript of his piece), I do smell a rat in the form of governmental control. I strongly feel that that clause on seditious materials is not needed, especially at this early period when what we (and of course that includes the government) should be doing is encouraging the idea.

Like Agyaba said who determines what is seditious? And does this mean the government's security men would have to screen every message and give their "stamp of approval" before it can be transmitted on the net? This and many other questions on this "seditious" thing has set me thinking on whether the government would allow the newly developed (or is it developing) system to work?

16.06 Telecommunications in Ghana: Hardware Needs & (Some) Software Costs, by Jonathan Bossman, Columbus Ohio, USA

(Monday, September 6, 1993)

Editorial Note: This mail was in response to a help request by a fellow netter. The help request is in quotes.

"I recently saw a map showing all the countries connected to the Internet and other nets that is Bitnet etc. ; Ghana was shown to have some kind of connectivity, but, in accordance with Murphy's Law, the shading Ghana had wasn't listed on the key to the map :) ... it wasn't Internet, however.. Anyway, does anybody know what kind of connectivity, if any, Ghana has? Another rather interesting question is how difficult it would be to give at least a couple of sites in Ghana Internet access - does anybody know the software/hardware needed for that, and the cost associated with it ? Well, any ideas, comments, suggestions ?"

The following focuses more on the needs of an individual or business entity than on what the national agenda on data communications should be.

Hardware & Organizations:

As you all know to get connected you need:

1. A dumb terminal or PC
2. equipped with a modem (transmission rate of 1200 baud is becoming standard)
3. RS-232C cable to connect the modem to your serial port.
4. The telephone line. I shall omit a discussion on T1's, T3's, repeaters, multiplexes, leased or dedicated lines, fiber optics, etc. since this is meant to give an overview of the basics

5. PDN - "PDN" means a provider accessible through a public data network Note that many PDNs offer access outside North America as well. Local institutions such as GHASTINET and the Universities, P&T fall under this category. (These are the PDNs we would connect through)
6. PDIAL - lists only providers directly connected to the Internet.
7. WAN - a wide area network (For Ghana, no big deal; Nkrumah laid the groundwork before being rudely interrupted)
8. Architects and the Construction industry must begin recognizing the need to take wiring of buildings for data transfer into consideration.

Software & Other Costs:

Software comes in different levels of sophistication from the terminal emulation packages to full-fledged integrated packages that have the capability to store addresses and auto dial for you, etc.

1. Your operating system

UNIX comes with emailing functionality

Windows 3.x also includes a communications package (the "Terminal" icon).

I understand, Macintosh also has communication facilities. So without going out shopping for more sophisticated packages your capability to send and access information from other networks is provided.

2. Inexpensive alternatives

Applications that contain limited telecommunications functionality include PCTools, Kermit (among hundreds of others) For as little as \$50.00 you can get yourself a fairly decent package.

3. The Real McCoy (The Telecomm Giants)

Lantastic	by Artisoft	\$1299.00 for 12-user license
Netware (Lite)	by Novel	\$99.00 per node
Windows for Work Groups	by Microsoft	\$99.00 to 849.95 depending on configuration
The Complete Communicator		\$499.00

4. All the above are just the setup costs. The costs of being linked to the various worldwide networks vary from service to service. Phone charges can dominate the cost of your access to the Internet. A typical business should Check first for providers with metro or regional dialins that are a local call for you (no per-minute phone charges). If there aren't any, move on to comparing prices for PDN, 800, and direct-dial long distance charges. Make sure to compare all your options. I couldn't begin to list all the charging schemes. Sorry.

Source: Software Review on File Vol. 9, Jan. '93 ff.

Other good journals/publications or sources for more up-to-date information include:

- CompuServe bulletin boards
- Communications of the ACM
- Datamation
- PCWorld
- Compute!
- Data Communications
- Byte
- Internet Access

I would be happy to fax interested Management Information System Professionals and other concerned Ghanabis articles that may interest them as they fall into my hands.

Some good news. The Digital Ghana LTD Internet Project has I am told reached a successful conclusion. They are now doing clean up and administrative stuff. I will broadcast the news as soon as I receive my first email from Ghana.

6.07 Computers to Ghana, by *Michael Africanus Aveh, Trondheim, Norway*

(Friday, September 3, 1993)

There is this information of possible connection of Ghana to the worldwide computer network and the need to assist. That is not bad and I rejoice with everyone.

I just wish to bring to the notice of netters the nightmare associated with carrying with you a personal computer to Ghana. As students most of us have bought our own computers to help us with our academic work in our own convenience and will be carrying them with us when we eventually decide to return home. I know of a friend who has two: a Macintosh and an IBM because they perform different tasks for him.

However, a colleague here in Trondheim, Norway just returned from Ghana on data collection for his thesis and he related the experience he had with the guys at the Customs and Excise in Ghana. PERSONAL COMPUTERS ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THE DUTY-FREE PERSONAL EFFECTS!!! Not even when you prove to be a student returning for research! The duty for PCs is exorbitant and killing! If you are able to grease some palms, you get a reduction but still it is a huge amount.

If cars are considered personal effects and duty-free if one has been away for over a year, why shouldn't students returning from long term studies overseas be allowed to bring into the country a personal computer, duty-free?

Is there a way we could get the Parliament to include PCs in the duty-free items for returning Ghanaians? Perhaps the bodies currently trying to get the network linkage could be made aware of this situation and bring it to the notice of the authorities.

16.08 Computers in Ghana, by *Adams Bodomo, Trondheim, Norway*

(Friday, September 3, 1993)

I absolutely agree with Africanus on the issue of the PC's and students. In this day and age it is rather unfortunate that Ghanaian officials still consider personal computers as luxuries.

I am of the opinion (and I think most netters would agree with me) that computers today are not required but absolutely needed if we are to make some serious attempts at redressing some of the fundamental problems that face Ghana today. The importance of computers today and indeed the future cannot be overemphasized. Researchers (and this includes students) need computers for meaningful and problem-highlighting and solving work.

I do not know how best it can be done but I strongly recommend that some form of pressure should be brought to bear on the government to correct that anomaly and to allow researchers, especially students returning to Ghana to take their PCs duty-free. But of course one would have to show sufficient proof of ownership as in all other categories of goods that can be cleared without duty by students.

More on this later. In the meantime let's hear what netters have to say on this.

16.09 Computers to Ghana, by *Sitsofe Anku, Canada*

(Friday, September 3, 1993)

It's unfortunate PCs are taxed so heavily (refer to info from Africanus). What we should realize is that we just have one more of the numerous "fights" ahead for improving the system in Ghana. Look how long it took people to realize that someone coming into the country with a foreign currency is not a criminal, but rather contributes to the economy of the country in several ways. Too bad! We have to make people in authority realize that (may be by sending several letters

to parliament) computers have come to stay and they are going to shape the direction of human activity for a very long time. These people in authority should rather encourage Ghanaians outside to flood the country with computers and computer technology--**REMOVE TAXES ON ALL PERSONAL COMPUTERS**--could be a campaign from this end. Government should even go to the extent of paying for the shipment of PCs to schools in Ghana from those here who can organize to have some sent (I know of friends who wanted to send some computers free but met with a lot of frustration and had to abandon the idea). Anyway, what is the address of parliament? Any help?

16.10 Computers to Ghana, by *Charles Awasu, Syracuse New York, USA*

(Friday, September 3, 1993.)

I do support the call for duty-free computer entry into Ghana, at least for Ghanaian students. More so if students can provide documentation for research related activities or attendance at conferences etc. Since most of us on the net are computer literate, this is one problem we can't ignore and one that is likely to enjoy some consensus.

Lets get ideas on how to tackle this. Will letters to parliament work? Which subcommittee will be relevant and who is the chair of such a committee? What is the address/phone/fax to parliament? Is it possible to locate a local organization that we can work with as a pressure group? Has the NUGS some political capital to spend on this?

Lets pool together to impact some legislation on this.

16.11 PCs in Ghana, by *Alexander Nii Odote Addo, London, United Kingdom*

(Friday September 3, 1993)

I just want to add my voice to the call being made by others for us to try and lobby the government to remove ALL taxes on PC's being sent to Ghana. The importance of PC's to the development of the Nation in this 21st century is very obvious to all of us. However, it appears government is yet to realize that or even if it has, it is just refusing to act properly. A friend I met over here has lots of 286 for sale at ridiculous prices. I thus tried getting some to send home. But I was warned about the prices to be paid as duty. We are really in a sticky situation Let us all come together and write to Parliament and I bet they will sit up. The time has now come for action. Let us see whether we can rise to the challenge.

16.12 PC's and Custom Duty, by *Alex Aboagye, Trondheim, Norway*

(Tuesday, September 7, 1993)

I have also met a couple of guys who have taken PC's to Ghana and have been asked to pay ridiculously huge sums of money as duty. Linus was lucky he wasn't asked to pay anything. Perhaps the Customs Officer he met thought his laptop was a brief case :-).

But whether there are existing regulations as to how much one has to pay in duty for PC's or not, I think we need to bring this to the attention of the authorities. We need to impress upon them the importance of these pieces of equipment to businesses and many other ventures if they are to be competitive and successful.

I therefore, wish to suggest this as a line of action. One person should formulate a letter, (preferably a postgraduate student in hardware/software or anybody who can) stating what we have heard regarding the huge duties levied on PC's, asking the government to review the existing regulations if any with the aim of encouraging individuals who have such equipment to bring them in with minimal duty. The letter should briefly enumerate the importance of PC's to the developmental process.

S/he can then post the letter on the net and everybody can print it out, sign and mail it to parliament. Even if there is no sub-committee on this, I believe they will start one when we flood them with our letters. Those who want to write the letter themselves can of course do so. But it is importance that we send a large number of letters because the strength of

this appeal lies in the number of people making it. Thus all who believe that we need to influence things back home from here and that the government should encourage people to send their PC's home should participate in this exercise. It will also be a way of establishing some form of contact with parliament. I hope someone will take the initiative.

16.13 PC's and Custom Duty, by *Nii Anang Bossman, Columbus Ohio, USA*

(Tuesday, September 7, 1993)

.While I like Alex Aboagye's suggested line of action, I don't like shooting my mouth off about something I do not KNOW for a fact. Perhaps a letter to the Commissioner of Customs, Excise and Preventive Services (CEPS) Ghana could confirm our worst fears. Or is there anyone who can contact a knowledgeable customs official..

1. to confirm that PCs do not fall under the category "personal belongings" and therefore are dutiable.
2. to recommend the document(s) that we should review to ascertain that this indeed is government policy.

My main concern is that we lose credibility and become ineffectual if we begin ranting and raving without having the facts. Fellow Ghanaians, a little patience and planning could go a long way towards accomplishing our goals.

16.14 PC's and Custom Duty, by *Alex Aboagye, Trondheim, Norway*

(Wednesday September 8, 1993)

The only difference is that you say we should go down in the hierarchy to inquire. But I think an inquiry is far different from "shooting one's mouth off about something.." or "ranting and raving without facts".

Having hopefully put the records straight let me say that frankly speaking and with no intention of picking on you, I think you are a suitable person to formulate such a letter for us with your background in computers and all. The address to CEPS is:

Customs Excise and Preventive Services
P.O. Box 9046
Airport-Accra. Ghana.

16.15 PC's and Custom Duty, by *Nii Anang Bossman, Columbus Ohio, USA*

(Tuesday, September 7, 1993)

Opanyin Alex,
I stand corrected and apologize for my inappropriate choice of words.

I would be honored to draft such a letter on behalf of Netters. Thanks for the (lone) vote of confidence, Sir. This week is kind of hectic around here. Should be able to throw something together sometime next week... unless someone else beats me to the draw.

16.16 Parliamentary Mass Mail, by *Veng Veng Naa Bodomo, Trondheim, Norway*

(Thursday, September 9, 1993.)

The Parliamentary Mass Mail Action

I was taking some 'siesta' away from Okyeame but Bossman has used a clever means to draw me into this debate on the wider net. In the process, however, he has flouted one of Okyeame's central rules: do not post an individual's private mail unto the wider net without his/her consent.

Anyway, I do not blame him very much and I won't ask for sanctions because he was eager to document support for his bright reaction to Alex Aboagye's equally bright suggestion to send letters to parliament on the issue of the apparent taxation of non-commercially imported Personal Computers.

While supportive of the idea of highlighting the problems, if there are any, to parliament, I suggest we, as a group, be a bit more investigative and follow the lines of action suggested by others such as dialoguing with the trade attaches and other (ambassadorial) officials. This will, among others, enable us to really know the issues at stake. This is likely going to be our first 'mass mail' to parliament and it is in our interest to portray ourselves as credible observers of the Ghanaian polity, as people to do business with.

Why am I of this opinion?

On this issue of PC importation tussle at Kotoka International Airport (KIA), I have the impression, just an impressionistic observation, that we are usually exposed to the discretion of the first 'higher' customs official we interact with. It is unfortunate that Linus Atarah was virtually shouted down as not to 'waste our ears'. But I have to confirm that in Jan.92 I was able to clear a computer, not because I knew any customs officials but because I stood my grounds. I was told to pay 'taxes' on it but I produced a research letter and when the officer was adamant I demanded to see an official document showing I had to pay taxes on such a non-commercial PC. I was then told that I should keep my computer and passport at KIA and 'come back' later when he would have checked up that taxation document. That was where I stood my grounds: I wouldn't part with my computer! Finally I was told to go after being stigmatized as being 'too known'. Even some relatives who came to meet me agreed with this customs officer: 'why not just give him 'something'' and we go, this is not the whiteman country, o'

I stood my grounds!

I stood my grounds and went away without paying duty on my non-commercial PC. Why did he let me go? Was I wasting his time from 'chopping' from other potentially more willing passengers in the queue? Was I at the officers' discretion'? Was he actually enforcing any import law? Is there a law on imported research tools such as computers?

Let us find out. Let us not protest by instinct. Let us protest by judgment, informed judgment. Let us accompany the will to communicate with parliament with some kind of minimum awareness of the problem.

The suggestion for a plan of action is laudable. Let us formulate it together, grow it and trim it. Our action should reflect who we are.

Having said this I must say I am enjoying the debate very much, and I had intended to do so at the sidelines until Bossman brought me inside. Especially amusing is the delegation part of this exercise: Bossman used to be known as 'Jonathan Bossman' but when 'Opanin' Aboagye who until then used to be known as 'Alex Aboagye' gave Bossman the 'solo vote of confidence', Bossman all of a sudden became known and called 'Nii Annan Bossman'. Well, I am especially joyous of this 'confidence vote' in our traditional titles and I don't want to be the exception:

Editorial Note: It is interesting to note that Adams Bodomo, also, all of a sudden, became Veng Veng Naa Bodomo.

16.17 Parliamentary Mass Action --Petition On Taxation of PCs & Peripherals, by Nii Anang Bossman, Columbus Ohio, USA

(Monday, September 20, 1993)

The first draft of the long-awaited Letter to Parliament on the issue of exorbitant duties on PCs and other personal belongings is ready for your critiquing pleasure. I must apologize for the long delay in getting back to you and thank you for tacitly bestowing upon me the honor of composing the initial document.

If I may be so bold I would like to make 10 observations and recommendations related to our class action.

(1) That we all accept the POSTMASTER as moderator and coordinator of this action. The occupant of the office is more than just a titular head.

(2) In addition to Parliament (which is probably a toothless bulldog) the following institutions/offices/personages receive a copy of the petition:

Customs & Excise
The Daily Graphic
Ghanaian Times
Ghana Trade Rep Mission, US or UK
Castle
Ministry of Trade & Economic Planning

(3) We need a volunteer to obtain the addresses of these institutions. This is of paramount importance.

(4) In the petition, we identify our body politic by name. Suggested names Okyeame or OGA (Organization of Ghanaians Abroad), no pun intended. The petition shall begin with a self-introduction of our body politic by this name. (Note: Okyeame Net may not be suitable because we do not know if we are unanimous in this action)

(5) We provide a central address to which mailed responses to our petition can be sent. I trust the POSTMASTER can furnish us with such an address.

(6) That forty (40) volunteers mail \$1.00 cheques or money orders to the POSTMASTER to cover costs such as laser printing, envelopes and postage. The POSTMASTER's acceptance of this recommendation places the responsibility of despatching the petition squarely on that office. POSTMASTER please provide us with an address to which contributions can be mailed if you accept.

(7) Signatories should send their names and resident cities and countries to The POSTMASTER on e-mail entitled "ADD MY NAME" and in the format: Virginia Atwee Torto Paris, France.

(8) We allow a reasonable period of 10 days (i.e. until Oct 1, 1993) during which netters will post their suggestions or criticisms to the net, and indicate their willingness to be signatories before we finalize the petition.

(9) The POSTMASTER shall have final word on whether the suggestions on the prose or content of the petition will be accepted and incorporated or rejected.

(10) That these 10 recommendations be declared worthy of pursuit or rejected at the sole discretion of the POSTMASTER.

Draft of petition follows:

Dear Sirs/Madams,

Re: TAXATION ON PERSONAL BELONGINGS INCLUDING COMPUTERS

[**INSERT INTRODUCTION OF PETITIONING GROUP HERE]

We, the undersigned have, much to our dismay, received reports of exorbitant duties being levied at Ghana's ports of entry on personal computers and peripherals being brought into the country by returning students and other individuals. We humbly submit that this practice is counter-productive in that it is an impediment to the transfer of knowledge and technology so desperately needed for national reconstruction. We contend further that the potential benefits that will accrue from permitting the free flow of personal computers and peripherals into the country will more than compensate for the opportunity cost of relinquished tax revenues. Finally we strongly believe that we have a responsibility to expose and denounce a policy which cripples new arrivals financially before they have settled down to contribute to the development of our nation as grossly myopic.

The computer has been touted by some as the single most important invention of all time, a vaunt which has yet to be debunked. It is often referred to as “The Machine that Changed the World”. We in Ghana wish to be included in that “World”. The role of the computer in the development of our beloved country cannot be overemphasized. If we in Ghana and other Third World countries aspire to catch up with, and successfully compete with the developed societies, we must, among other things, learn to use and encourage the use of the computer in all facets of our daily lives.

In the field of medicine, a physician at KorleBu Hospital can retrieve the entire medical history of his/her Kumasi-based patient and the patient’s family at the touch of a button. A nurse can, with lightening speed, locate the name and address of the closest potential blood donor for the accident victim. Through modern information storage, indexing and retrieval systems, computers can be used to keep scientists, students and the intellectually curious abreast of important new advances in every field imaginable. The computer not only eliminates the drudgery of, but increases the speed at which the mechanical engineer designs a new product or tool, or the civil engineer, a new bridge. The teacher can return the test scores of 7,000 students within an hour of their having taken the multiple-choice examination. This multi-purpose machine can help musicians compose music for our listening pleasure. By analyzing trends in the marketplace the computer greatly improves the entrepreneur’s decision-making process. Software packages that help the entrepreneur in the accounting, payroll and inventory control functions abound in the marketplace. In the home the housewife can manage her finances by entering her weekly grocery list and prices into an electronic spreadsheet and adjusting the figures to determine their effect on her family’s other needs. Her husband can use the same spreadsheet application to determine which would be more beneficial -- investing in a taxicab or purchasing long term bonds. In the amount of time it takes to devour a bowl of fufu, the bank can debit or credit the accounts from or to which cheques were paid for an entire business day. These are but a few of the aspects of our lives that can be touched positively by the utilization of computers.

The government will be better able to track down and compute the tax liabilities of all duly registered businesses and individuals. A national census that takes advantage of the computer can only be more accurate and less time-consuming. National economic policy naturally would be based on more reliable figures than in the past. Computers can greatly enhance the operations of the Ghana Police and the Courts by providing up-to-the-minute profiles on ex-convicts or repeat offenders of the law.

Above all, through the marvels of telecommunications, computers will encourage the expansion and physical dispersion and decentralization of private and public enterprise. Proximity to the metropolitan center will in time no longer be an overriding concern of entrepreneurs who are inclined to open new branches of their businesses. This will of course arrest or slow down the rural-urban migration trends by creating jobs in areas other than our metropolitan centers, and improve the lot of the people in these areas. In its wake the computer industry will create opportunities in specialty areas such as telecommunications, desktop publishing, software engineering, robotics, education and, of course, sales and distribution.

In order to take advantage of the computer age and prepare for its inevitable utilization, we must first educate our young on the importance and use of computers. In what better way can we begin than to facilitate and welcome its importation into the country? We wish to stress that at a time when thousands of educated Ghanaians living abroad are apprehensive about returning home, National Policy must endeavor to create an inviting and benevolent climate which will lure them back to contribute to our national development. One way to begin this policy of enticement would be to desist from imposing exorbitant duties on personal belongings which can only benefit the nation in the long run.

We respectfully implore and urge you to draft, pass and institute measures to facilitate the enforcement of laws which protect returning Ghanaians from undue harassment at our ports of entry, particularly in the area of the importation of computers and peripherals, tools that would be used for the betterment of Ghana.

16.18 Dying PC Issue?, by *Michael A. Aveh, Trondheim, Norway*

(Tuesday, September 28, 1993.)

It seems the issue of sending an appeal to the authorities in Ghana concerning customs duty levied on PCs is dying or dead on the net. I might be wrong though.

The main lines of thought on the issue as I figured is the mode and method of action and who should spearhead it. Some accept the method of sending a single letter like the one supplied by Nii Annang to the authorities. Others think that we individually flood the authorities with letters modeled on the one supplied by Nii. Which is which? What do we do? Let us not allow this issue to die on the net. Let us for once put our thoughts into action by taking a vote on the issue and carry it out. We are all affected by this issue, for most of us, if not all, will be carrying home with us PCs that we have bought during studies and which we will need to carry out our functions effectively when we do take positions at home. And we want to experience no pains or embarrassment at Kotoka Airport and this I think is the bottom line of this issue.

If the issue of a postmaster to spearhead the collection of signatories and mailing the letters to the appropriate offices is the problem, then I, MICHAEL AFRICANUS AVEH, of TRONDHEIM, NORWAY, hereby wish to volunteer as POSTMASTER for the job. If netters agree that I am given the mandate to do the job, then let's tackle the issue now and get rid of it for once. I will like us to do the following:

1. Decide on whether we are sending collective letter or individual letters. We can vote on the issue, should it be necessary.
2. If we decide on individual letters, what should be done? And when?
3. If we decide on collective letter, let us work out the final letter to be sent, to whom, how, when etc. That is where I can come in to do whatever netters agree we do. Also those in cities where Ghanaian embassies and high commissions are located can get us the necessary addresses including phone numbers and fax numbers.

Editorial Note: Postal and residential addresses and telephone number of Africanus have been deleted, since they are no longer necessary for the yearbook.

16.19 PCs/Duties Petition Revised, by *Nii Anang Bossman. Columbus Ohio, USA*

(Monday October 4, 1993.)

Please find attached the revised PC Letter. If you would like to be a signatory please e-mail Michael Africanus Aveh at internet address <aveh@avh.unit.no> to submit your name, city and country of residence in the format:

Name, City name, Country.

Example: Kofi Mensah, Rabat, Morocco.

All interested netters, please have your names in by Friday Oct 8, 1993. Please give us your support. We are counting on a large number of names to lend extra weight to the petition.

Also those who may want to send individual letters may do so but we would still appreciate having you as one of the signatories.

Rest assured we are in the process of collecting all the relevant addresses to which copies of this petition will be sent. Any help you can give us in this matter would be appreciated.

Dear Sirs/Madams,

PETITION ON NON-TAXATION OF PERSONAL COMPUTERS AND PERIPHERALS

We, the undersigned, are a non-political group of Ghanaian citizens all living temporarily abroad, and who participate in a forum on Ghanaian issues through the electronic mail system of Internet.

We have received alarming but unsubstantiated reports of exorbitant duties being levied at Ghana's ports of entry on personal computers and peripherals being brought into the country by returning students and other individuals. The purpose of this joint action is to:

- (1) Confirm that there is a government or Customs and Excise policy which regulates the taxation of personal belongings in the manner described above,
- (2) Substantiate our perception on how the alleged regulations are actually interpreted and enforced by Customs Officials and
- (3) Submit a petition to have these regulations reviewed and replaced, if they exist.

Our position is that if the computers being brought into the country are personal belongings not necessarily to be used for commercial purposes, they should not be subject to any taxes at all.

If our reports are accurate, we humbly submit that this practice is counter-productive in that it is an impediment to the transfer of knowledge and technology so desperately needed for our national reconstruction. We contend further that the potential benefits that will accrue from permitting the free flow of personal computers and peripherals into the country will more than compensate for the opportunity cost of relinquished tax revenues.

The computer has been touted by some as the single most important invention of all time. The role of the efficient storage, retrieval and dissemination of accurate, timely information in the development of our beloved country cannot be over-emphasized. If we in Ghana and other developing countries aspire to be competitive in the global market place we must among other things, learn to use and encourage the use of the computer in all facets of our daily lives.

Below, we cite a few of the simple ways in which computers can enhance our lives and help in the developmental process. In the field of medicine, a physician at Korle Bu Hospital can retrieve the entire medical history of his/her Kumasi-based patient and the patient's family at the touch of a button. Or the name and address of the closest potential blood donor for the accident victim can be accessed with lightning speed.

Through modern information storage, indexing and retrieval systems, computers can be used to keep scientists, students and the intellectually curious abreast of important new advances in every field imaginable.

Today, civil and mechanical engineers routinely lower the costs of designing bridges or machines by using Computer-Aided Design (CAD) software.

In the schools computers are used for various purposes such as grading test papers and preparing accurate report cards.

By analyzing trends in the market-place, the computer greatly improves the entrepreneur's decision-making process. Inventory control and accounting software abounds on the market.

The government would be better able to track down and compute the tax liabilities of all duly registered businesses and individuals by using a computer-based information system. A national census that takes advantage of the computer can only be more accurate and less time-consuming. National policy naturally would be based on more reliable data than has been the case in the past. Computers can also greatly enhance the operations of the Ghana Police and the Courts by providing up-to-the-minute profiles on ex-convicts and repeat offenders of the law.

Above all, through the marvels of telecommunications, computers will encourage the expansion and physical dispersion and decentralization of private and public enterprise. Proximity to the metropolitan center will in time no longer be an overriding concern of entrepreneurs who are inclined to open new branches of their businesses. This will, in time arrest or slow down the rural-urban migration trends by creating jobs in areas other than our metropolitan centers, and improve the lot of the people in these areas.

Finally in its wake, the computer industry will create opportunities in specialty areas such as telecommunications, desktop publishing, software engineering, robotics, education and, of course, sales and marketing.

In order to take advantage of the computer age we must first educate our young on the importance and use of computers. A journey of thousand miles begins with one step. We must facilitate and welcome its importation in the interest of allowing the technology to take root in our society. Today, the cost of computer hardware is falling in the world's developed economies, making powerful desktop computers accessible to the average person. In contrast, the imposition of stiff duties on computer hardware at our ports makes the technology more expensive and inaccessible and ultimately hinders and delays Ghana's transition from dependence on foreign aid to self-reliance.

We wish to stress that National Policy must endeavor to create an inviting and benevolent climate to lure Ghanaians who with their technical know-how and equipment can contribute to our national development. One way to begin this policy of enticement would be to desist from imposing exorbitant duties on personal belongings which can only benefit the nation in the long run. To this end, we respectfully implore you to review and revise any existing regulation that imposes exorbitant duties on personal computers and peripherals.

16.20 PCs Letter Signatories, by *Elijah Kombat, Bergen, Norway*

(Tuesday, October 5, 1993.)

I think all of us should be grateful to all those who have sacrificed “to die a bit” to see to it that all the bright ideas brought up and discussed on the net do not remain here on the net but are advanced to the implementation stage. For example the PCs petition issue would never have reached the present stage if people had not kept asking what should be done; and others had not volunteered to draft it and some volunteered to expedite action by collecting signatures and despatching it.

But I would like to find out what others think about the signatories. My little experience with student politics here in Norway shows that the greater the number of signatories to a petition the higher the chances of the issue receiving hearing (Well, maybe the politicians here may be more pervious to public opinion than in many settings). The issue at stake now is not only in the interest of Ghanaians living abroad with access to network but encompasses all. In this connection can interested Ghanaians not on OKYEAME be signatories or should it remain esoterically for “us”? If yes, can Africanus be empowered to accept any Ghanaian not on the network as a signatory? [There is a substantial number of Ghanaian students here in Norway who have no access to computer networks anyway.] Let us have your views now for Africanus to act.

16.21 Internet, by *Benjamin Baidoe-Ansah, Canada*

(Thursday, September 9, 1993)

It is amazing how we quickly slid from the question of potentially helping Ghana with equipment to link to internet, to the less pleasant (in my estimation) one of customs officers! It is almost as if we stepped on some okro soup!

Could we somehow drag ourselves from this equally important subject back to how we are going to help with Ghana’s external communications? The concern that introduced the customs guys was that they will tax us out of existence if we dared stray into Ghana with a computer! That will definitely not happen if they are gifts to the country. I can guarantee that. Infact, I will stick my neck further and say that if we purchase any equipment I will handle the arrangements with government. That will see its clearance at the port of entry.

What we need is to ascertain the specific nature of help needed and what this help will accomplish: the kind of equipment, software, make, etc. Armed with this information. we can determine the cost here and raise funds from okyeame and elsewhere to purchase the stuff. I am thinking of Christmas as a tentative date to have what we have reach Ghana? Too optimistic?

I hate to do this to Nii Anang, but could he sort of coordinate this project? He definitely knows more about these things. I will assist in anyway to help get the information we need once Nii Anang assumes the coordination.

Comrades, this is an important and noble undertaking, let’s make something concrete come out of it!

17 AFRICAN AFFAIRS

Compiled and edited by *Samuel E. Aggrey*

17.00 Introduction and editorial comments by *Samuel E. Aggrey*

The independence of Ghana is meaningless, unless it is connected with the total liberation of Africa -

Kwame Nkrumah

March 5, 1957

This was the cry of Kwame Nkrumah at the eve of Ghana's independence. For a common goal, the Organization of Africa Unity was born and Pan-Africanism was the word of the day. Members of the net discussed the current state of affairs of the OAU. Problems in other hot spots in Africa caught the attention of netters from Liberia, through Somalia to Angola. United States policy in Africa and how the West views Africa in general came under scrutiny. As to whether the last President of "white" dominated South Africa deserved the 1993 Nobel Prize for Peace could not go away unnoticed. Well, it takes two to make peace and the next probable two people to share the 1994 Nobel Prize for Peace are Ishak Rabin (Israel) and Yasser Arafat (West Bank/Gaza) if a Peace Treaty is signed. Is the Nobel Prize for Peace politicized as a catchy "bait" to prevent former arch enemies from locking horns again? Lets find out who wins the 1994 Nobel Prize for Peace. African affairs is incomplete without a discussion of slavery and neocolonization.

17.01 Subject: The OAU, by *Samuel Armatei Laryea*

<laryea@sfu.ca>

A couple of days back, my colleague Mahamadu Bawumia posed the question as to whether the OAU had outlived its usefulness. I believe the OAU can still be a useful vehicle for the advancement of Africa's political, economic and social agenda. Yes she has had her fair share of problems, rendering her temporarily seemingly ineffective. Some of these problems are lack of strong political commitment to the implementation of resolutions, which in turn is fueled by the incredibility of most political leaders of member states.

Furthermore, the precarious economic conditions in member states, has meant fewer financial resources at the disposal of the organisation to carry out its numerous tasks. It must be also pointed out that other international organisations such as Bhutros Bhutros Ghali's United Nations, show signs of similar idiosyncrasies. A good example is her failure to move quickly on the Somalia issue.

However, that should not be an excuse for the OAU to rest on her oars. She has to wake up to the new dynamic changes sweeping through the continent, and above all move away from its 1960's agenda towards the realities of the 90's and beyond. But member states must also play their part. They have to pay their dues, show more political support and less apathy.

In conclusion, I guess what I'm trying to put across is that instead of debating whether to do away with the organisation or not, we should rather concentrate on the problems that are preventing the OAU from functioning effectively and deal with them. Posterity may not be kind to us, if we scrap the OAU. We should rather be energised by the new challenges around us and prove equal to the task.

17.02 Re: The OAU, by Alfred Opoku

Date: Wed, 31 Mar 93 13:51:35 EST

Alfred Opoku <aopoku@ccs.carleton.ca>

It's fast approaching the 30th anniversary of the creation of the Organization of African Unity, and I believe it is time to take stock of the achievements, or otherwise, of this regional grouping. Thanks to the netters who have broached on the topic, we can pick up on the whole issue of relevancy of this body. There is no doubt in my mind that the OAU is a necessary part of our search for continental unity and economic emancipation, yet I will be the first to admit that the organization as it is now structured has very little chance of living up to the expectations with which the founding fathers (and mothers, of course!) created it.

I disagree with Mr. Laryea that problems seem to have rendered the OAU "temporarily seemingly ineffective". I submit that the ineffectiveness of the OAU is neither seeming nor temporary; it is real and permanent, at least for now. This observation is based on a fundamental flaw inherent in the compromises that were reached in getting the two opposing sides to reach an early agreement for the establishment of the organization. One such compromise reached between the "Casablanca group" and the "Monrovia group" is on the subject of non-intervention in the internal affairs of member states. This ridiculous clause, obviously inserted as a deterrent against Nkrumah's so-called "expansionist designs", has been at the centre of several debates over the last few years. It is this clause which was quoted in support of the condemnation of Julius Nyerere, by some African leaders, when he "invaded" Idi Amin's Uganda. It is this same clause that prevented African leaders from denying Idi Amin the opportunity of becoming chairman of the OAU, even when it was crystal clear that he was killing his own people. Some non-interference! Ever wondered why the idea of an African High Command was bootied out? Non-interference!

Another fundamental problem with the organization is in the sort of political circus, in the form of a rotation of leadership, with a musical chairs format, from one country to another. This, in itself is nothing strange; however, it has prevented the organization from investing enough political power in the secretary-general to initiate policies and implement them, such that they would bind on all member countries, what currently obtains in the European Community. It was from the fear of a monopolization of power and a threat of losing political clout to such a secretary-general that brought the compromise to invest more power in the conference of heads of state. But with the rapid changes in the composition of this conference (due to political instabilities) it is doubtful that any concrete ideas would be able to come from them. Also, the rotation of leadership often brings a lame duck, who is often more interested in maintaining his own power at home, than he is in seeking the welfare of other people in other countries; this mentality has hindered the OAU!

Looking forward into the future, it is evident that whether or not we can survive as a continent, depends a great deal on our ability to forge political and economic cooperation among member countries, and it is for this that we need the OAU. However, it is high time we sat down once more to review the charter of the OAU and remove all such hindering provisions, and incorporate new ideas that reflect the changing socio-economic conditions on the continent. We need to include provisions for the environment, and role of women, and African content in our educational systems, in a new charter; an explicit application of a political economy discourse to defining our goals and how to achieve them. Let us not forget that with the gradual integration of Europe as a common market, and the advent of a North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), as well as trade agreements in the Pacific rim and South America, the world is moving slowly, but surely, into an era of trading blocks, and a new form of mercantilism is evolving (a continental version that sees the economic survival of a nation as highly dependent on the overall well-being of a region). Protectionism would

be the order of the day, and we as Africans (current hewers of wood and drawers of water) are in for tougher times ahead unless we can get our act together. But the OAU's dream of an African Common Market by the year 2000, will remain nothing but a dream unless the organization itself is reformed to pursue that purpose.

The problems of the OAU are not temporary, so long as the foundations on which it was built remains with all those debilitating clauses and principles. Sure enough, the moderate "Monrovia" and radical "Casablanca" groups within the organization are no longer in existence, but the wormy fruits of their compromises are still the principles upon which the OAU operates. It's time to deworm the fruit and it's time to clean house and set the tone for a better run and better oriented OAU.

17.03 Re: OAU, by *Alfred Opopu*

Date: Thu, 1 Apr 93 18:26:28 EST

From: Alfred Opopu <aopoku@ccs.carleton.ca>

It is good that people have lots of opinions on the OAU and how it should be structured to achieve the goals for which it was established. Charles Awasu's view, with regards to the strengthening of the secretariat, is an important point in any restructuring effort, because it provides the opportunity for a non-partisan approach to designing and implementing programs. Having a permanent headquarters is also important, to give a sort of permanency and continuity to the ideals of the organization. I, for one, do not envisage Addis Ababa as a permanent headquarters for the organization, for geographical reasons. It is too far north of a greater portion of the member states. It is necessary that the headquarters be located in a country that is neither too controversial (eg. Libya) nor influential (eg. Nigeria), but that would be a problem to be resolved in the future.

BEN ABABIO writes:

"I have a different view to the suggestion that the summit of head of states be held PERMANENTLY in Addis Ababa. I will encourage the continuation of holding of summits at different venues. At least, it enables the hosting government to add some new infrastructural monuments to their CV. Had Rawlings & co. put up the new conference centre in say, Bamgaba or Nkonya at least in the long term, the effort would be made to developed this places for the sake of visits from foreigners; an indirect way of making us MOVE and DEVELOP. The continuous planting of new structures in already congested areas, eg. the new conference centre, and the new theatre at the old Drama Studios only overuses current secondary facilities; eg sanitary."

This view sounds laudable, but we all know that the economic situation cannot allow a country such as Ghana to build conference centres in areas which are not accessible. If the aim is to open up such places, sure the government can still build the infrastructure without waiting to have a conference. By the way, the last OAU summit in Ghana was held in 1965! The criticism of Nkrumah for wasting money on "white elephants" tend to be based on the underutilization of such facilities. The state house, after the 1965 OAU conference has seen little activity. The new Accra International Conference Center (the pink lady) built for the NAM conference is yet to attract the expected clientele that made the project feasible. But for the present use of the facility as a temporary parliament building, we would be faced with another "white elephant". So while I agree that there are some benefits to be derived from such a rotation, we must not forget that there is little economic benefit to be had.

In spite of all that, let me say that my disapproval of the rotational process is not so much in terms of venues, but with the leadership which packs so much authority into a symbolic role. This has deprived the secretariat of the power needed to initiate and implement programs. As Charles pointed out, a stronger secretariat, independent of petty national politics, is what the organization needs to move ahead into the future.

17.04 OAU!, by *Charles Awasu*

Date: Thu, 01 Apr 93 10:26:45 LCL

From: Charles Awasu <CAWASU%SUVM.BITNET@mitvma.mit.edu>

In reaction to my point about the OAU using their Addis Ababa facilities on a permanent basis, Ababio stated that it would be more beneficial in the long term for member countries to build modern facilities to host the yearly summits

I still argue that it is a waste of the poor countries resources. It will make sense if the diplomats attending the summits bring in foreign exchange. But in places in Ghana, most of the costs for the diplomats are borne by the government. ie food, transportation, accommodation and other "allowances" are provided for free.

In a situation where the people of Nkonya etc can't get a cure for malaria, no portable water etc., it is counter productive to construct white elephants. Secondly, such edifices do not represent development. Otherwise, in the conventional sense anyone can argue that New York City with its skyline is highly developed but maybe the poor in that city exceed the rich. This is precisely the kind of development that we don't need.

Also if JOB 600 was useful, the Rawlings gov't. will not have wasted funds constructing the conference center on the race course. Most of those meetings or summits are just talk shops. They bring very little to the average citizen. With our scarce resources it makes more sense to hold those meetings in Addis. From an economic point of view, the rate of return on the conference halls is very low, making them bad investments.

17.05 Development on the African continent with particular reference to Ghana, by *Emmanuel Aouade*

Date: 20 Apr 1993 22:34:25 -0400 (EDT)

From: Emmanuel Aouade <AOUADE%SNYBUFVA.BITNET>

I would like us to initiate a stepwise analysis of development on the African Continent and the role Ghana has to play in that process. In order to make this discussion fruitful, all contributions made should be sorted out logically, arranged in the proper format and Published as proceedings on the net. All contributors should have their names listed as references. Just as is done in any journal article.

I would at this point, contribute plausible topic headings under which we can attack this problem. Each of these headings should have one ultimate objective. The objective being the answer to the question, " Why are people in Africa still looking up to Europe and everywhere else but themselves ?" During this process of inquiry, I would like us to make concrete certain assumptions about the theory of need. I would like to expound further on the theory of need as becomes appropriate.

The following are the topic headings we might want consider :

1. Africa before the industrial revolution.
2. Evidence of protoindustrial activities in Africa.
3. At what point in Africa's history was industrial take-off aborted ?
4. Is there a conspiracy to keep Africa divided and weak ?
5. Road networks in Africa and their impact on rapid industrialization.
6. Is there a need for Africa to catch up with Europe and the rest of the world ?
7. Why does Zambia send her copper to Japan to be turned into electrical motors and sold back to her ?
8. Why are the Universities in Ghana producing Engineers, Chemists Biologists, Physicists and other highly specialized people if no provisions are made to harness and coordinate their talents.
9. Where do we want to see Ghana in 10 years, 20 years or 50 years time and what are we doing to help these goals become a reality ?
10. How do we foresee the world economy in 20 years time and how would Ghana and Africa fit into this picture ?
11. Market forces and their effects on Ghana and Africa as Whole ?

12. Africa as one big giant common market.
13. Environmental mismanagement in Africa.

The list is endless. I just want to start the ball rolling. Once again, I suggest we keep a logical record of these proceedings. I remember growing up idealistically to the tune “ forward ever, backwards never “ but having to confront harsh reality later on.

If man can harness the destructive force of lightning to do useful work, then definitely, putting our heads together, we can rise to the occasion and push back the boundaries of uncertainty as we chart a clear course through history.

17.06 The Internal Development of African Society

Date: Mon, 14 Mar 1994 01:06:57 -0400 (EDT)

From: AOUADE@SNYBUFVA.CS.SNYBUF.EDU

The Internal Development of African Society

Ref: A History of Africa by J.D Fage
Published by Alfred A. Knopf, N.Y, 1978

The Mane (Mandes) in Ghana

A final Mande contribution to the ethnic and political geography of West Atlantic lands came when these were invaded from the east during the first half of the 16th century by marauding bands of conquerors called the Mane (Mande). External sources cannot take them back further than about the middle of the Liberian coastline. There is a Mane (Mande) tradition, recorded in writing about 1625, to the effect that they first reached the coast close by a Portuguese fortress. This, it seems, can only have been on the Gold Coast (i.e. the coast of modern Ghana) some 600 miles further east..

By, about the 1540s the Mane were advancing westwards parallel to the coastline of modern Liberia, fighting in turn with each tribal group that they came across. Following each victory, some of them settled down as overlords of a new petty state, while others were enabled to sweep up in their train some of the local people as auxiliaries (called Sumbas) and, thus reinforced, to continue to further victories further west still. The Mane advance was really only halted when, in the north-west of what is now Seirra Leone, they came up against the Susu, like themselves a Mande people, and Possessing similar weapons, military organisation and tactics.

The end result of the Mane conquests was to complicate the ethnic situation in the southern and south-eastern borderland of West Atlantic territory. These conquests made the Mande-speaking Mende, the dominant stock of Sierra Leone. Further north, the Loko are also Mande speaking. Their neighbours, the Temne, though speaking a West Atlantic language, seem to have an aristocracy of Mane origin, and it seems that some chieftaincies among the Kru, the dominant stock of much of modern Liberia, may have risen in the same way.

Mande influence in lands to the east of Liberia, in the modern republics of the Ivory Coast and Ghana, seems to have been primarily commercial in intent, Their forays into the political spheres of these two countries were connected with the expansion of a specialized class of Muslim Man traders called the Dyula (Dwala), who seem in origin to have been connected with, if not identical with, the Soyinke Wangara gold traders. The trading city, Jenne, was the home base of the Dyulas (Wangaras). The city was situated on the river Bani, a tributary of river Niger in present day Mali. The Dyulas traded in gold found in the country of the Lobi in the valley of the Black Volta, about 300 miles SSE from Jenne and also in the valleys of the rivers Offin and Ankobra in the Ashanti Region. The second southern commodity of major interest to northern merchants was the cola nut, the product of trees which grew wild in the tropical forests.

The most lucrative trade routes seem to have gone further east, either directly from Jenne towards the gold-bearing Lobi lands, or from Bobo-Dioulasso and Kong (Kpong ?) towards the lands inhabited by the Akan-speaking peoples

Who today are the dominant stock of the southern half of Modern Ghana. There were important early Dyula settlements at Begho, south-east of Kong in a gap in the Banda Hills, and seventy miles beyond this at Bono-Manso, near modern Tekyiman in the Brong Ahafo Region.

In the 15th century, the Portuguese, in their attempts to wrest the Gold trade from the Dyulas, managed to secure a fair amount of information about the trade from Jenne to the lands of the Akan, and this is reflected in the writings of Cadamosto (c. 1455), Pacheco Pereira (c. 1505), Valentin Fernabdes (1507) and Joao de Barros (1552).

In about the 14th century, the Akan seem to have been predominantly inhabitants, not only of the forest lands in which lay the richest gold resources, but of the savannah immediately north of it. One result of the arrival in their country of the Dyula traders seems to have been to encourage the emergence of positive kingdoms controlling the outlets of the forest paths along which the gold was brought (An instructive parallel with ancient Ghana). Certainly the first known Akan kingdoms lay north of the forest or on its fringes, rather than in the forest proper. Close by the Lobi gold mine was Bona, originally, it seems, an Akan state, though it was conquered from Dagomba towards the end of the 16th century.

By the time of the arrival of the Portuguese on the coast, there was already a significant nucleus of Akan settlement and economic and political activity in the forest with its southern boundary roughly on the rivers Offin and Pra, corresponding to the modern Ashanti state of Adansi. Although its own name was Akyerekyerere, it was known to Europeans on the coast as Akany and Twifo. For the nineteenth-century Ghanaian historian, C.C Reindorf, "Akany was the first seat of the Akan nation.....from whom the others acquired knowledge and wisdom." The ruling dynasties of many of the later important Akan kingdoms traced their descent to Akany or Twifo, and the development of these is viewed as being connected with the establishment of the Dyula trade route from the North. Thus the rulers of Akwamu, one of the three major kingdoms which competed for the trade with the Europeans in the 17th century, preserve the tradition that their ancestors came from Twifo, before that from Dorma (just south of Begho), and before that from Kong (Kpong). Down to the 20th century links were still preserved with Dormaa.

It has been suggested that the Royal families of Akwamu and other Akan states were in fact of Dyula origin. This is probably to push the evidence too far. Perhaps the most that can be said is that the new economic opportunities presented by the Dyula would have served to stimulate some traditional leaders of Akan kinship groups to develop more positive and extensive political power; that Muslim Dyula leaders may often have been useful advisers to them in these processes; and that sometimes the leading families on the two sides may have become allied, and so to some extent merged, in marriage. But the institutions and customs of the Akan states seem to have been developed from indigenous bases, for example the great yam festivals or matrilineal inheritance to office, and even as late as 1798 a major Akan king, Osei Kwame of Ashanti, was deposed for being too partial to Muslims.

My comments: (1) This confirms the rumours I heard as a kid in Kumasi, that Arabic was what the scribes used at the Ashanti Court. (2) Akans have had a long history with the people from the northern part of Ghana with some miscegenation going on.

17.07 Leadership Qualities, by *Korku Dayie*

Date: Mon, 7 Jun 93 13:12:02 EDT

From: Korku Dayie <kwaku@heimdall.med.harvard.edu>

In his introductory piece, Alex Aboagye tabled for discussion and outlined some desirable leadership qualities. He dismissed some unspoken prevailing criteria such as <<tribalism, old-boyism, fraternities, sexism, religious affiliations, partisanship, academism>> as inappropriate; I couldn't agree more. He then raised three possible desirable traits:

(1) Adherent to and guarantor of individual human rights; (2) A believer and practitioner of "true" education; and (3) Past accomplishment in contributing to the needs of society.

All three qualities have always undergirded the unwritten constitutions practised by the various groups in present day Ghana. (a) Eg. the Mogho Naba (the King of Kings in the Mossi Society) was the CUSTODIAN of the land who

was expected to assure fair distribution and actual use. (b)Using the Mossis as an example, the Mogho Naba derived his legitimacy from belonging to the lineage that united (and therefore founded) the various core Mossi states. The same holds true for the Ashantis, Ewes, Gas,etc...

Lessons to be learnt from our history?

*We need leaders, NOT RULERS, who are chosen for their vision (long-term), their valor (in charting bold and audacious courses), their integrity (evidenced from public office and service), deep KNOWLEDGE of the Ghanaian society and the workings of modern states around the world. *Great Leaders are nurtured, sometimes they arise as a result of crisis. Do we have any institutions that nurtures our future leaders? In the past this was taken care of. Remember Moxon's comment? Royalty is not hereditary, it is learnt!!

*Above all we need leaders who have the interest of our country at heart; they will guard our wealth and our culture jealously without selling us cheaply to international agencies. Take any American (USA that is) president, they vow to protect American Interest. Period. All Nations are defined vis -à-vis that interest.

17.08 Anatomy of an African dictator, by *Alexo*

Date: Tue, 30 Nov 1993 15:42:34 EST

From: ALEXO <udkj001@bay.cc.kcl.ac.uk>

An interesting cartoon titled: Anatomy of a typical low-cost African tyrant and despot appeared in the July 19-25 edition of the Ghanaian Chronicle and I share it with you:

Head: Mainly solid bone, contains very little brain

Eyes: Green with envy for rich and successful private businessmen

Mouth: Foul with lies, insults and expletives

Heart: Hardened and devoid of any human feeling

Stomach: Distended and large with the proceeds of massive corruption

Fingers: Trigger-happy and ever ready to shed innocent blood.

Feet: Firmly rooted to undeserved positions until booted out of power

17.09 UN spends on itself in Somalia, by *Ebow Halm*

Date: Wed, 8 Dec 1993 09:52:30 -0500 (EST)

From: Ebow Halm <ehalm@lynx.dac.neu.edu>

Amanfour,

Though talk on Somalia has long died on the net, here are some interesting titbits I'm forwarding for those who didn't get it. Apologies to all those on Africa-n who may have already read this.

_____ Forwarded Article _____

(Reuters, Los Angeles, November 28) - The United Nation's mission to rebuild Somalia has spent more than \$300 million in the last six months on its own forces and profit-seeking contractors but has done little to reconstruct the country, the Los Angeles Times reported Sunday last week.

Only a fraction of the money the United Nations has spent in the war-torn nation has gone toward projects that directly benefit Somalis, the newspaper said, citing documents and interviews with dozens of UN officials and business people.

The United Nations, which once billed its most costly operation as a blueprint to define a new world order of peacemaking and national reconstruction, has spent most of the millions on itself, the Times reported from Mogadishu.

In the process, business people from countries such as the United States, Canada and Saudi Arabia have reaped huge profits, it said. The services they have provided include \$6.50 fast-food pizzas, a \$9 million sewer system for the UN headquarters in Mogadishu and a \$2 million-a-month helicopter taxi service to ferry UN personnel across a city still unsafe for travel by land, the Times reported. But in the capital itself, the United Nations has not installed an electrical line, a sewer pipe or telephone wire for use by the general population, the newspaper said.

Somalia offers a case study in how the United Nations and the contractors who profit from its missions in troubled lands have transformed international peacekeeping into a growth industry, the Times said. UN officials defended their record by insisting there are high costs attached to maintaining, feeding and transporting a peacekeeping force of 29,000 soldiers from around the world in a dangerous land with little infrastructure.

UN officials were cited as saying that in addition, humanitarian and development projects are financed out of a separate budget for which international contributions are harder to obtain.

UN documents examined by the Times show that the largest single expenditure that the United Nations has made in Somalia -- more than \$200 million since last May -- has been paid in cash to governments contributing to the peacekeeping force.

The money, which mostly comes from donations by the United States and the world body's wealthier European members, is a valuable source of foreign exchange for the poorer countries contributing troops, such as Bangladesh, Pakistan and India, the Times said. But the international force has thus far fallen far short of its mandate to maintain safe land and supply route throughout Somalia and to restore enough order to the capital for the delivery of humanitarian aid.

The newspaper cited documents showing that in the first six months of the mission, only \$7 million has been spent on infrastructure and repairs outside the agency's compounds.

SNU is an entirely independent newsletter devoted to critical analysis of the political and humanitarian developments in Somalia and Somaliland. SNU is edited and published by Dr. Bernhard Helander, Uppsala University, Sweden. SNU is produced with support from the Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, Uppsala, Sweden.

This article was quoted without permission.

17.10 Re: Hospitality, by Akwele S. Bortei-Doku

Date: 16 Aug 93 16:27:06 EDT

From: "Akwele S. Bortei-Doku" <Akwele.S.Bortei-Doku@Dartmouth.EDU>

There is a Tanzanian proverb which goes like this:

"The first time Kofi [swahili name] visits you, he is treated like a king,

the second time, he is made part of the family,

and the third time he is given a hoe to weed on the farm..."

(cited from a friend)

Ghanaians will still be very hospitable to you if you visit them for the first time. And a lot of them will treat you like part of the family if you visit them for the second time. Probably, Ghanaians or non Europeans only get 'mistreated' (sent to the farm to weed) if they abuse the friendship/relationship that exists between them and their host.

It is pointless to deny the fact that some Ghanaians are biased towards Europeans or Ghanaians who have travelled outside Ghana before. On the other hand it is not always the case. The Dagomba's do not readily fuss over a visitor from a different (say, white) culture, particularly if the visitor refuses to identify with their culture (this was my own observation). Try pulling a face while a Dagomba woman prepares the meal and see if you will receive any attention from her after that!

Most of the comments that I have heard about our hospitality have been from white foreigners. What do other Africans have to say about us?

I think that we are still very hospitable people.

17.11 Re: U.S. Bashing, by Yaw Agyaba

Date: Fri, 15 Oct 93 10:03:55 CDT

From: Yaw Agyaba <EPID048%UABDPO.BITNET@mitvma.mit.edu>

I am amazed at your revision of history - an obvious lack of understanding of or a blatant neglect of the global political forces that were at play in Southern Africa, the bitter history of the struggles for independence in Angola, Mozambique, Namibia and for majority rule in South Africa and Zimbabwe. The US certainly prolonged the struggle in these countries and by its actions drove the patriotic movements in these countries closer into the arms of the eastern bloc (and not vice versa). The first place Samora Machel, for instance, went to solicit support and arms for the independence struggle was not China or the USSR but to the US. You can guess the American response for yourself. Virtually all the patriotic movements in these countries were forced to turn to China or the USSR and Cuba for arm support as a matter of practical necessity. The eastern bloc was no "papa bronya". These countries then became the theatre of the east-west conflicts: the genuine aspirations of the people became submerged in these proxy wars.

Certainly not all the leaders had the analytic abilities of Amilcar Cabral. Few were able to exploit these contradictions for the benefits of their people. Wasn't Mugabe labelled a communist by the USA? How was Mandela labelled just a few years ago? Jonas Savimbi and his roving bandits received their initial support from Portugal to thwart the anti-Portuguese colonial movement. The red carpets rolled in Washington, DC for Savimbi not because he cared for his people but because he was seen as a potent counterforce to what was perceived as the soviet domination of Southern Africa. A change in US foreign policy has occurred not because MPLA, FRELIMO, SWAPO or the ANC has renounced its ideology but because the USSR has disintegrated and no longer poses a threat to American domination of the world. Get this clear. Africa has Africa as its only ally. Africans deserve the right to manage or mismanage their own affairs. No nation evolved without fumbles. As citizens of beloved Africa, let us band together to resurrect our people and our nations rather than regurgitate the rehearsed lies and propaganda from both east and west. Let us dare to dream for ourselves, fashion out the true essence of democracy in consonant with our culture, our values and our African aspirations. Let us unite around goals and continue to differ about strategies whilst striving to achieve those same set goals with the plethora of approaches. Too many people have died for Africa. Let us begin counting those willing to LIVE FOR Africa. Let us look into the future with the eyes of objectivity and realism, with the best of our people as our only yardstick, instead of the fogged and tainted prisms of western and eastern ideologies. We certainly can think for ourselves and we can learn many things from the failures in Russia to the homelessness and street crimes in Washington, DC. Let us begin that synthesis.

17.12 re US bashing, by Linus Atarah

Date: Fri, 15 Oct 93 20:52:36 +0200

From: Linus Atarah <ssliat@uta.fi>

Yes communism is terrible, so terrible that we must fight it with all means available, including allying ourselves with racists, who don't believe that the black race is worth less than a ball of shit. To be under communist rule is the worst that can ever happen: So kill and maim, it is justified in the name of fighting against communism! Ask the people of Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala ask them whether the thousands of people who have disappeared there whether they knew what communism is like. It is so sad that this ultra-right wing ideology has seeped so deeply into some of us that we can easily close our minds off against any sober reflection of things. Jesus Christ Mohammed! To reiterate further those thousands of people who disappeared under fire-brand right wing regimes weren't even given a choice to taste life in a communist state. Yes all right wing death squads of the world unite! By the way US was the main supplier of arms for UNITA and not South Africa.

17.13 U.S. Bashing, by *Charles Awasu*

Date: Fri, 15 Oct 93 14:08:20 LCL

From: Charles Awasu <CAWASU%SUV.M.BITNET@mitvma.mit.edu>

To Kyekyeku: what kind of communism are you talking about? There was no system in Africa which was communist. Some African leaders flirted with communist countries, but that was because the west opposed their self-rule approach.

African people have never experience any sort of communism: the farmers don't produce food for government. People never lived regimental lives in any part of Africa. Africans have always lived free regardless of their so-called "leaders political leanings. Its pure nonsense referring to any African system as communism. None was close to that.

Your reference to Angola etc. is the lies and propaganda that westerners propagate. Unless of course you're trying to equate central planning/import substitution as communism. Or unless you equate populist slogans, and dresses as communism.

You need to go back and recheck your definitions. Your conclusions do not reflect an understanding of African systems.

17.14 RE:US Bashing

Date: Fri, 15 Oct 1993 17:18:48 EDT

From: amoah@maple.circa.ufl.edu

In support of what Yaw Agyaba and Charles wrote in response to Kyekyeku's bit, I want to ask whether chanting slogans etc by African leaders really amounts to evil communism which had to be fought by all means by the US. Could anybody in his/her right mind call Krobo Edusei or Okutwer Bekwai communists even though they called themselves "Comrades" till their deaths. Infact would it have been right for Ghana to be devastated by years of civil war just because these guys called themselves comrades though they were sleeping on golden beds?

The irony of the Angola situation was that Neto first approached the US for help to fight colonialism and was refused because the US thought he was not the biggest player in Angola at that time. So what was the justification in subjecting Angola to years of civil war because of a leader who was only a communist for convenience. Infact during all this time the greatest buyer of Angolan oil was the US. Don't netters think it is absurd for Angola to fall on Cuban troops to defend the oil installations of US companies mining oil in Angola and for the US to provide Savimbi with stinger missiles to shoot down the Cuban planes so the oil installations can then be bombed? If this is not stupid, I don't know what is!!

I only wish the US will go to Angola and collect their guns from Savimbi so Angolans can leave in peace. But who said they they will. After all, according to their leaders, there is no US interest at stake in these places any more, but there is an Akan proverb which states "I am sorry does not make the wound heal." I say whether US troops want to be shot at or not, they must go to Angola and collect their guns, led by Reagan, Bush and Sen d'Amato.

17.15 Subject: re US Bashing, by *Linus Atarah*

Date: Sat, 16 Oct 93 11:28:35 +0200

From: Linus Atarah <ssliat@uta.fi>

I feel I have not done enough justice to Kyekyeku's "red scare" article. We have to be careful not swallow anything that comes from right wing ideologues in Washington. Why is communism so scary? Who are communists? What do they do?

In 1954 the CIA marched into Guatemala under the orders of United Fruit Company and overthrew a popularly elected government of Jacobo Arbenz. This was a man who was elected by a wide margin of the popular vote. What was the situation prevailing in Guatemala at that time? 2.2 of the population owned 70 per cent of the arable land. What Arbenz did was to initiate a land reform which would give land to 100 000 landless peasants, in addition to other social reforms like trade union rights etc. This was enough to attract the label of a communist from Washington and he had to be overthrown. The Guatemalans themselves are in a good position to recount the carnage that followed the right wing coup d'etat.

Another example is Chile where the story is far too familiar to be told again. I could go on and cite a dozen more examples but that would be unnecessary.

The point I am driving home is that regimes which Washington labeled communists and felt the need to overthrow were replaced by right wing Regimes which were far murderous than any living communists have ever been. And Washington supports those murderous regimes just because they protect its interests and not because of any phantom communism. They have to scare us about terrible communism in order to justify their action. Not long ago, in 1976 The John Birch Society, a right wing society, which George Bush is a member was telling its members that communists eat their children!

This red scare was used as a powerful tool during the cold war. It was enough for anyone, just about any shadowy third world figure to loudly claim that he was anti-communist and Washington would be ready to beef up such a figure. Savimbi is a paid bandit of cold warriors from Washington. A similar thing can be said of RENAMO in Mozambique. They had to cloth their quest for power under an anti-communist crusade. As some netter just asked, if he so much a democrat, why did he reject the results and went back to continue with the carnage? If communism is so terrible why did most Angolans choose that? Suicide isn't it?

17.16 The Angola issue, by *Francis Akoto*

Date: Sun, 17 Oct 93 18:16:48 +0200

From: Francis Akoto <csfraw@vehka.cs.uta.fi>

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WASHINGTON BEHIND WAR IN ANGOLA

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By G. Dunkel

The government and people of Angola, led by the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), are in a life-and-death struggle with UNITA, the U.S.-armed and South African-supported terrorist organization.

Thousands of Angolans are being killed every week in a raging civil war. The New York Times and the Washington Post have both recently run big articles on the plight of "poor Angolans," suffering from civil war and "corruption."

The blood spilled is squarely on Washington's hands. And on those of the apartheid forces of South Africa.

A high-ranking, unnamed U.S. official in Angola--probably the ambassador--recently said: "We didn't create [UNITA head Jonas] Savimbi. We may have rented him for a couple of years but I don't believe we owned him." (Sept. 24 New York Times)

In a very limited sense, part of this statement is true. But overall, it's a bold-faced lie.

Jonas Savimbi, the founder of UNITA and its leader since its formation in 1964, was the creation of Portugal, the colonial power in Angola since the 15th century. It was with Portugal that Savimbi concluded a formal military alliance, beginning as early as 1967-68 and lasting until the Portuguese were forced to leave in 1975. (See "Operation Timber" by William Minter for details.)

However, from 1961 to 1975, Portugal relied on the connivance and financial aid of the U.S. to fight the strong Angolan national liberation movement, led by the MPLA. Once the Portuguese colonialists were defeated, Savimbi threw in his lot with the U.S. and with South Africa, which had just invaded his country in an attempt to overthrow the MPLA.

Since then, Washington and its apartheid allies have overtly and covertly funded a brutal counter-revolutionary war against the popular MPLA government.

The "rent" the U.S. paid Savimbi is at least \$250 million and probably well over a billion. The "return" on its rent: 300,000 Angolans dead, hundreds of thousands of Angolans mutilated by UNITA's land mines, and between \$20 billion and \$30 billion worth of damage done to potentially the richest country in sub-Saharan Africa.

Savimbi has been a shining example to all the reactionaries in southern Africa. He proves if you are enough of a thug, you too can get U.S. support.

CURRENT SITUATION

The first time the U.S. ever expressed any dissatisfaction with Savimbi's campaign of murderous terror was this past May.

Washington finally recognized the Angolan government, in large measure because the MPLA still retains the support of the masses.

The MPLA forces are now regaining strength and winning territory from UNITA. This has prompted Savimbi to declare an immediate, unilateral cease-fire.

South Africa is still shipping arms and supplies to UNITA. But that might change when the transition government comes into power.

The strength of the MPLA has also forced previously unresponsive organizations into action. The UN, declaring that last September's elections won by the MPLA were fair and democratic, has called for a boycott of UNITA, albeit a weak one.

Will the UN next propose sending "peacekeepers" like those currently killing Africans in Somalia?

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17.17 Re: S.Africa & Nobel Prize, by Afrane

Date: 16 Oct 93 00:02:27 SAST-2

From: Afrane <YAW@energetic.uct.ac.za>

Elizabeth Asiedu wrote:

“The question is does de Klerk deserve this award? I don’t think so. What about removal of Sanctions? Isn’t it a little Pre-mature? Would you have voted for de Klerk if you were a member of the award committee?”

If Mr Mandela, the leader of the main opposition party who suffered so enormously in prison under the racist rule of Mr de Klerk’s National Party, finds it appropriate and timely to stand side-by-side with Mr de Klerk to receive the Nobel Prize, who else should complain? One must not forget that the times have changed a lot, even for this short period I have been in this country. It pays to be tolerant at times in order to acquire what belongs to you.

As for the removal of sanctions, the hopeless situation of the numerous black youth without employment in this country makes it very imperative. All the same, the violence is likely to limit its positive results if a trustworthy security force is not in place. It would be so surprising to most of us that many of the Frontline States who made(ke) so much noise about South Africa have been in brisk business with them even before talk about sanctions removal. South African products sell like hot cake in the Southern African region. So whether sanctions or no sanctions, the business of the racist entrepreneurs still goes on and it is the question of foreign investment in the country which is the main problem.

17.18 Re: S.Africa & Nobel Prize, by W. Tchaka Owen

Date: Fri, 15 Oct 93 19:14:27 EDT

From: “W. Tchaka Owen” <wto3e@darwin.clas.virginia.edu>

According to Elizabeth Asiedu:

“I heard on the news this morning that President F.W de Klerk and Nelson Mandela are the recipients of this years Nobel Peace Prize.

The question is does de Klerk deserve this award? I don’t think so. What about removal of Sanctions? Isn’t it a little Pre-mature?

I hope the World and S.Africans in particular isn’t going to fooled by the “ Micky Mouse” freedom promised by de Klerk’s government.

Would you have voted for de Klerk if you were a member of the award committee?”

I pondered on this issue while taking my shower this morning and definitely feel that Mr. Mandela would be more deserving than Mr. de Klerk. Upon longer thought, I felt that de Klerk should be given credit for changes. Maybe he isn’t an angel and maybe he is not for change; maybe he fears the consequence of not progressing towards ‘one man, one vote’. Nevertheless, the bottom line is that he has moved forward and things are looking better than when PW Botha was there.

I thought the removal of sanctions was very premature, but that decision should lie with South Africans, not us. I understand that Mandela stated he wanted sanctions removed. Is this true? If so, we should stand by him. If not, I am in full agreement with you.

Regarding the “Mickey Mouse” freedom, I hope de Klerk’s government isn’t fooling themselves. I will personally assist anyone willing to ship arms to the oppressed. OK, so maybe I’m a bit too emotional. The point is I don’t think he will try to be sly.

As we all know, the main problem to be faced by S. Africa is not the ‘freedom’, but economic prosperity. Will land be

redistributed? How will non-whites get property? Great if I can vote, but what good does it do when I have to buy bread from Mr. White?

17.19 Re: S.Africa & Nobel Prize, by *benjamin baidoe-ansah U*

Date: Fri, 15 Oct 1993 22:45:39 -0300 (EDT)

From: benjamin baidoe-ansah U <bbaidoe4@mach1.wlu.ca>

Liz raised some interesting questions in her piece. It is very difficult to forgive the white minority in South Africa for what they have done to the blacks. I however think that it is time to forgive. BUT NOT FORGET!! Forgiveness is appropriate because I believe South Africa is on to a new chapter, a chapter that will lead to eventual peace. Like Gorbachev, De Klerk could have prolonged the inevitable demise of apartheid, and in the process caused more deaths and suffering. He chose to do otherwise and I think he deserves credit for that.

The process of change is irreversible and I wouldn't worry about a slide back to apartheid. The reason for my confidence is simple: the cold war has ended!! It took apartheid this long to die because of Western(and especially U.S.) fears of a communist (socialist?) Southern Africa. There is no "strategic" reason for the West to support apartheid now, so there is no big force that will prevent its death.

The evil system of apartheid must not be forgotten however. We must constantly remind ourselves, our children, our children's children, and generations yet to be born, of what we have gone through. We must frankly discuss the shortcomings in our system that allowed apartheid, and also allowed millions of our relatives to be shipped abroad and sold like cattle.

This way we will ensure that we do not repeat the mistakes of the past. I think we have a lot to learn from the Jews and how they handle the holocaust and issues related to it. So forgive, yes, forget, NEVER!!

I am greatly troubled though by the form post-apartheid South Africa will take. Will the extreme right groups be able to form a force big enough to divide the country, or at least destabilize it in terrorist attacks? Will Inkatha, PAC, etc fight the ANC or whoever will happen to be in power?

What about the land question? Most South Africans had their lands taken away from them and given to whites. These people want their lands back, lands that are now occupied by whites. Through decades of discrimination, South African blacks have been reduced to paupers in their own country. The biggest concern is how this problem is going to be righted. This is where I tend to distrust the West: the call to right these wrongs strikes fear in Americans, Canadians, Australians, etc who took land away from the indigenous people they met on their arrival. The lifting of sanctions might be a bit premature given these unsettled questions. After all, what is political power without economic power?

However, some form of bitter compromises will have to be made to arrive at majority rule. The lifting of sanctions is needed to bring back jobs to South Africa. The devil finds work for idle hands! When people get up in the morning and have no job to go to, when they have no property to protect, and for these reasons do not have a family to protect, it becomes easy to mobilize them to go kill each other. The lifting of sanctions may start bringing jobs, jobs that will help reduce the violence.

I am also concerned that the ANC and Inkatha have not settled their differences. I am greatly worried because I see a replay of the age-old "whiteman" tactics of divide and rule. We are aware of the support that was given to one faction of blacks to kill the other, by the white regime. I strongly believe that the killing of Chris Hanni was meant to look like the work of Inkatha so that a black on black war could be started. The only thing that foiled it was the fortunate witnessing of the murder by Hanni's neighbour who immediately called the police with a complete description, car number and all.

So yes, considerable progress has been made, but there are very difficult questions yet to be dealt with. I only hope that the ANC will not fall into the trap of accepting unfair advantage from the whites. Such advantage may give them power, but it will also sow the seeds of future conflicts with Inkatha and other groups. All groups should be encouraged to participate for LASTING peace.

17.20 Re: S.Africa & Nobel Prize, by Afrane

Date: 16 Oct 93 23:34:27 SAST-2

From: Afrane <YAW@energetic.uct.ac.za>

Tchaka Owen wrote:

“I will personally assist anyone willing to ship arms to the oppressed. OK, so maybe I’m a bit too emotional. The point is I don’t think he will try to be sly.”

From my little observation in this country, I doubt very much if arms supply to the oppressed people of this country has any solution to offer them for their deplorable situation within this era. I don’t think anyone will be morally justified to assist the disadvantaged people of this country to continue to kill one another and destroy the little hope ahead. The society is already an armed one and the crime rate is extremely high. It is so easy to take sides out of emotions but let us remember that the crime that goes on here has no respect of “skin colour” and it is usually the same miserable blacks who are the victims. The issues of black casualties are usually not “great news” and therefore you can easily underestimate the black losses but it is extremely enormous. Journalists who venture to cover violence in the townships are in a very risky business irrespective of one’s skin colour.

Should arms supply be a prescription for the sickness in this society? If any of us is in a position to “personally assist” the oppressed in this country, like our friend Tchaka is promising in his statement above, please let it be something that will repair the damage done to their dignity and set them on a path of hope and not despair. They need jobs if you can help them find one. They need houses (not shacks and hostels) if you can help them build some. They need access to basic amenities in their homes if you can assist them pay for the upfront cost of extension of needed services. They need “good” land to work on if you can put some pressure (not arms please!) anywhere for them to acquire some. Etc, etc.

Hope we would not follow the old conventional way of “helping” people with arms.

17.21 Re: African solution and nobel peace prize, by Afrane

Date: 20 Oct 93 17:48:46 SAST-2

From: Afrane <YAW@energetic.uct.ac.za>

Mr Sowah Simmonds wrote:

“Regarding Liz Asiedu’s question on whether de Klerk should have been given the nobel peace prize, my own opinion is: please read the whole thing twice before you jump on my neck, it should had included chief Buthelezi - why - That prize is a curse, anyone who gets it becomes handicapped, they cannot advocate the use of force under any circumstance, once they accept that prize.”

My comments:

Giving Chief Buthelezi the Nobel Peace Prize is an interesting thought and a brilliant one indeed. Trouble is that, I don’t think there is any guarantee or reason to believe that he would restrain his violent nature at all even if he did have the prize; his character is so insecure that it would take much more (than the Nobel Peace Prize) for him to accept the realities of his lack of real support in SA. What’s more, I (and I guess I’m not the only one) would lose all my future respect for the Nobel Committee and the Peace Prize if they made such a tactical blunder of such proportions. His selfish ambition under the disguised “wish of the Zulu people” is an uncovered secret to the majority of this nation.

17.22 Re: Re-colonisation?, by *Paulinus Chigbu*

Date: Mon, 26 Apr 1993 22:35:19 -0700 (PDT)

From: Paulinus Chigbu <tochi@u.Washington.edu>

Paul Johnson's historical account of the impoverishment of the African countries following independence, and the changing role of the United Nations is noteworthy. However, his suggestions that the so called third world countries particularly African countries should be recolonized leaves nothing to be desired. He specifically stated that "Africa's problems-and the problems of some states outside Africa-are not created by colonialism or demographics or natural disaster or shortage of credit. Most of the horrors, including famine, are created by government: bad, incompetent and corrupt government....."

Admittedly, the establishment of stable and corruption-free government is the responsibility of Africans and they must strive to achieve these. I must add however, that it is naive to completely absolve colonialism of a blame in the political crises that African countries are facing. The good and bad effects of colonialism on Africa have been discussed exhaustively by European and African historians. So, it is no use going over them here. Nevertheless, I would like to use one negative effect of colonialism on Africa to attempt to show that Johnson's thesis is unacceptable.

Colonization of Africa resulted in massive transportation of plants, animals, humans and diseases to and from Africa. Studies conducted, at least, in the past three decades by ecologists have demonstrated that introduction of some exotic species results in devastating effects on indigenous communities. This may be through competition for available resources, predation or both. Once a plant or animal community is adversely affected, it usually takes a long time for such a community to revert to the original state. The length of time it takes, is a function of several factors, including the generation times of the inhabiting species.

Unlike some plants and animals, introduction of "human exotics" into another region may not negatively affect the indigenous people if the "human exotics" become assimilated into the culture of the native people. On the other hand, if the "human exotics" impose their culture on the native people to the detriment of the local culture, then the identity of the indigenous people is at stake. The latter was the case during European colonization of Africa. Empires and ethnic groups that took several years to evolve distinct culture and that had established respect for one another based partly on their military strengths were coaxed or forced to accept a new political, religious and economic culture. Africa was also partitioned and the arbitrary countries were made to function as though they were "true" nations. Thus, like the recent introduction of a piscivorous fish into East African lakes which ruined the indigenous fishery, colonization of Africa resulted in identity and leadership crisis. For example, contrary to Johnson's statement that "Ghana and Nigeria, for example, were meticulously prepared for their freedom", the first few years after Nigeria's independence witnessed severe politics of ethnicity. Because the physical presence of Europeans in Africa lasted several years, it is expected that several years will have to elapse before African countries will witness lasting political stability, assuming that there are no outside influences on the political affairs of these countries.

Mr. Johnson might argue that since some countries in other continents were also colonized at one time in their history, the leadership problem in Africa cannot be blamed on colonization. However, such an argument would be absurd for several reasons: 1. Compared with those countries, most African countries gained their independence very recently; 2. Liberia's own case is different because to my knowledge the psychological, and political effects of such a massive relocation of freed slaves is yet to be documented; 3. Most African countries, upon independence, were not obsessed with imaginary or real external enemies which might have enabled them to avert or reduce the incidence of internal strife; and 4. Because of ethnic politics, tyrant political leaders, instead of transforming the African countries (held together mainly by exotic political strings left behind by their colonial masters) into true nations indulged in self aggrandizement and favoritism. Consequently, African countries are still struggling to form a political identity and are therefore, undergoing a natural process of nation-building.

This struggle has manifested itself in the form of civil wars and, of course, political instability. As noted by Johnson, this struggle is not limited to African countries. The splitting of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and the war in Yugoslavia are all examples of political problems. In deed, they suggest that these countries were held together by artificial forces. The reunification of Germany in contrast indicates that a true nation will continue to exist inspite of attempts to separate it into parts. If this hypothesis is correct, one would expect north and south Korea to reunify in no distant future.

It is interesting to note that inspite of the political problems in the eastern European countries, Paul Johnson intentionally picked African countries as places for experimenting his idea of trusteeship. By picking on Africa, he has exposed his prejudice, ignorance, arrogance and/or ill will towards the African people. We certainly do not need people like him to tell us what to do in times of crises. He should simply understand that a doctor who prescribes injection of Plasmodium (malaria-causing protozoan) into a patient as a cure for malaria fever should be stripped of his or her license. Africa and other countries should be left alone to solve their problems. If Johnson has arrogated to himself the duty of prescribing what should be done to countries with unstable government, he should not stop at that. In fact, he should also suggest that countries that are notorious for violating human rights or that have massive social problems should be recolonized. There are several ills in these so called "civilized world" that are also "an affront to our consciences". Interference in the affairs of sovereign nations should be limited to provision of relief and the use of diplomacy to settle disputes.

17.23 Subject:ON ARABS AND AFRICANS

From: g93v3708@warthog.ru.ac.za (MR V VUMA)

Date: 22 Apr 93 22:45:38 GMT

In the past few weeks there's been a lot of debate on the issue of whether Arabs really regard themselves as Africans(a la O.S.S.A)..., well here's something that may shed more light as to what Arabs REALLY think of "Africans".This story appeared in the HERALD newspaper(Zimbabwe),Sat, April 3;1993.

"An Egyptian sports magazine,expressing widespread bitterness at the decision by the worlds governing soccer body FIFA to order a replay between Zimbabwe and Egypt, has carried a commentary which African diplomats felt was highly unfortunate" (Diplomatic Lingo!!!)

The article in the Al-Ahlwiya of March 16, vol 608, page 16 evokes racial issues in a matter that is purely sport. The major claim that the magazine makes is a conspiracy of blacks against Egyptians for the annulment of the Egypt/Zimbabwe game played in Cairo.

Headlined "Dirty plot and black slave" the commentary said: "The African referees are still living in the days of racial discrimination. They show their hatred of everything WHITE(my emphasis!!). They haven't forgotten they are SLAVES,and naturally there is a great difference between the MASTERS and their SLAVES. They look at everything that is WHITE with a sore eye, because their hearts are full of hatred."

"Definitely we have been afflicted with great pain with those blacks in our last match against Zimbabwe(on Feb 28)... The match was handled by a wild bear called Deremba from Gabon. Spite and hate against Egypt and its people was clear. The was conspiracy from the Zimbabwe team, the ref, the linesman and match commissioner against Egypt. It was clear that the ref was sympathising with his BLACK tribesmen. This is not the first time the AFRICANS have treated us like this and have passion for their BLACK race. They hate ARABS and they are fond of getting bribes...."

The Arabs might as well get used to the idea of playing second fiddle to the BLACK AFRICANS at least on the soccer fields... all they had to do was watch Ghana dazzle everyone in Australia.... For a good measure Zimbabwe drew with Egypt in the replay in France and are through to the second round.

I don't know about everybody else out there but I am not buying this AFRO-ARAB brotherhood nonsense anymore!!!

17.24 Subject:Re: ON ARABS AND AFRICANS

[Posted on Okyeame by: ESSANDOR@cc.Helsinki.FI on Thu, 29 Apr 1993
22:44:17 +0200 (EET) Subject: Re: ON ARABS AND AFRICANS <editor>]

From: rousky@ennex5.eng.utsa.edu (Redouan Rouzky)

Date: Fri, 23 Apr 1993 04:17:51 GMT

It took to me a long time to decide to post an article regarding the debate on Arabs and Africans. First of all I don't know how you got the idea of separating the Arabs from the Africans. I am a Moroccan, and the first article of the Moroccan constitution says that Morocco is an African Arabic country, not an Arabic African country. Everybody knows that as Muslims we don't discriminate between black and white. I firmly believe that Arabs, especially North Africans, cannot live without the rest of the continent and the rest of the continent can not live without the Arabs of "North Africa".

Someone said one day, that Morocco is like a tree that has its roots in Africa, and breathes from Europe. And I will add to that that the rest of Africa breathe the same air that the North Africans breathe.

I think that it is about time to stop this vain discussion, and start thinking about how to make our relationship stronger, to go forward, and assure a secure future to the next generation of Africans.

Two years ago there was a similar problem between Senegal and Mauritania. These are two African countries aren't they? So let me ask you this question, do you want to separate North African countries from the rest of the continent?, If yes do you want to separate Senegal from Mauritania, Sudan from Ethiopia, Sudan from Sudan, Somalia from Ethiopia, Ethiopia from Ethiopia, chad from...etc.? I don't think so.

It seems to me that there are people from "North Africa", who don't want that kind of separation (there are some North Africans who posted the same idea I am talking about), and sometimes I feel as if we are "North Africans" begging the rest for SOLIDARITY, and UNION, Maybe because we know where the interest of the continent is and you don't?(I am sorry "VUMA" I didn't want to be that rude even though you are !!).

I was born in Morocco, in Africa, and I will be an African until I die. Not only that, but I will make sure that my kids will be Africans, and nobody will take away those roots from us. I was born African, and I will do my best to do anything as a Moroccan AFRICAN Arab to help out that land. Please lets concentrate on some thing more productive, for us and for our nations, and lets cut that crap.

18 AFRICA AND ITS DIASPORA

Compiled and edited by *Samuel Aggrey*

18.00 Editorial comments

Africa, the most ancient of all the continents of the world, is acclaimed by evolutionists as the place where human genesis began. A continent full of historic events, both sad and happy ones. Though Africa is known for most part of early civilization and originality of thinking, the continent is not by any means given the credit it deserves. To mention a few, some topics in Mathematics and Architechure take their roots from Africa. The dark history of Africa is perhaps slavery. For centuries, Africans served as unpaid labor for the development of most parts of the Northern Hemisphere against their will. Through the “bad politics of color” African men and women of dignity and respect found their way into strange lands only to become slaves. The legacy of slavery left millions from the great continent in the diaspora. The majority of Africans in the diaspora are in the United States of America. Have they forgotten their roots? This section starts with “The Gabon conference” of African-Americans trying to reconnect to their roots. This begs the question, are the current African-Americans and Africans the same ? Maybe yes, maybe no. This section ends with the second diaspora which comprises of mostly African children born abroad.

18.01 The Gabon Conference, by *Samuel Amartei Laryea*

From: Samuel Amartei Laryea <laryea@sfu.ca>

Date: Tue, 1 Jun 93 19:33:15 PDT

Judging from the relative “quiet” on the network, I thought I should throw this in to stir up some debate.

Leaders of African countries and some prominent African Americans just concluded a conference on African issues in Libreville, Gabon. I got this info from CNN sometime last week. Amongst the issues discussed were how best to strengthen Afro-Afro American ties, and the need for African American Investments in the African region. I have a few questions vis a vis Afro-Afro American ties in general, and maybe fellow netters can help me out.

- (1) Do African Americans genuinely identify with indigenous Africans?
- (2) If the answer to (1) is in the affirmative, why have they been so apathetic towards African causes?
- (3) Some examples. The African American community can boast of very

affluent personalities like Bill Cosby, Oprah Winfrey, Arsenio Hall, Eddie Murphy, “Michael Jackson”(I’ve put his name in quotes because I’m not sure whether he’s black or white), just to name a few. But has any of these guys invested a cent in Africa, or even donated a bag of rice to Somalia as a humanitarian gesture? Furthermore, given their rich expertise in entertainment and sports, what prevents them from building some recording studios in Africa or making training facilities available for preparations towards major competitions such as the olympics.

I guess my bottomline is that, if our “brothers and sisters” on the other side of the atlantic cannot assist meaningfully, then they should leave us alone to our fate, and stop squandering hard earned foreign exchange on lavish conferences which produce nothing substantial. Actions speak louder than words!!!

18.02 Re: The Gabon Conference, by *Alfred Opopu*

From: Alfred Opopu <aopoku@ccs.carleton.ca>

Date: Wed, 2 Jun 93 18:17:33 EDT

I want to make a few remakes on the above topic, as introduced by Mr. Laryea. The relationship of African-Americans to their kins in Africa has come up for discussion in many a debate. Sometimes, I believe, we tend to be too harsh on our brothers and sisters of the diaspora and forget that we as a people are also to blame for the lack of effective communication with them. From the “little” reading I have done, and also from talking to a few of these people, I realize that most of them, at least the educated ones, are very curious to know about their heritage. In fact, some of them have taken it upon themselves to research about their cultural heritage, and even visited the motherland. The trouble is that we always tend to see these people as more privileged, perhaps because of their citizenship, and therefore expect them to dole out largesse to the continent. Let’s consider the following facts!

1. That as a people, African leaders have not as yet apologized to these brothers and sisters for the our part in the slave trade. While we can blame slavery on the “whiteman”, we cannot forget our duplicity in the whole deal. Some of our people connived with the slave traders, while others used it to enrich themselves. Of course, we can always explain away how we were forced into it etc, but the fact remains that in the US and Caribbean today, students are taught that their brethren in Africa sold them away. If you have a friend from the Caribbean, especially Jamaica, please enquire. This is not an attempt at revisionism, we have not cleared the bad blood between us and the relatives in diaspora; why should they care about us?
2. Mr. Laryea mentioned names like Oprah Winfrey, Bill Cosby, etc. as people with the means to help out. Well, let’s not forget that the problems in America’s inner cities are, in some cases, worse than those of some African countries. If these people feel the need to help others, perhaps it would make sense for them to help turn the system around in such a way that their own kids, cousins, and nieces would benefit, rather than dole out monies to African countries.
4. No one should lose sight of the fact that while some of these people are rich, they have remained so only by investing their monies in useful ventures. On one level therefore, they behave like rational economic beings looking for investments with high returns. With our history of political and economic instability therefore, they are very unlikely to put their monies into our economies. No African nation has a section in its investment code targeted at this group. If we don’t give them preferential treatment, we should not expect one in return.
5. Since the time when Nkrumah made frantic efforts to “get in touch” with the Africans in the diaspora, and linked up with other pan Africanists like Du Bois and Marcus Garvey, in the “Back to Africa” crusade (in fact, the black star in Ghana’s flag and the name of its shipping line “Black Star Line” can be traced to ideas formulated under this crusade), no African leader has had the guts to even think of an idea remotely similar to that. All they know is to ask for reparations for a crime in which they are indirectly implicated. Just waiting for them to come home so we can make them honorary chiefs is a pathetic display of our lack of imagination and initiative towards creating cordial relations between the two groups.

Personally, I don’t believe we have any morale right to accuse African-Americans, or other black groups in the world, of neglecting their kins in Africa. We need to get our act together and start making policies that would bridge the ridiculous gap which we have allowed to develop. Believe me, they would love to know us, but we must also be ready to accept them.

On the question of Micheal Jackson's color, let me say that I believe he is still black. We must disabuse our minds of the trash we read and hear in the media. Even in America, the black community is learning to accept him for who he is, and not who the media says he wants to be. That is one way we can start the healing process!

18.03 Contribution to African American debate, by *Osei Kofi Darkwa*

From: Osei Kofi Darkwa <C95979OD@WUVMD.Wustl.Edu>

Date: Wed, 02 Jun 93 18:30:21 CST

I read with interest the two interesting discussion on the relationship between us and our African American (AA) brothers and sisters. I think both contributors have very good points to make. However, we should not look at the issue from only one angle as Alfred pointed out. The issue is not what they are doing to help us. The issue is what are we doing as a race to help each other deal with the fundamental challenges confronting us in this world. It is difficult to talk about AA or Africans in general without reference to the relative position each of the classes within the group find themselves.

I interact a lot with AA of all classes and I can see a form of class bias when it comes to identification with the "motherland". Generally speaking, it seems to me that more lower class/working class AA identify themselves with the "motherland" than well-to-do AA. What can Africans expect from these people who see "Tom" as the root cause of their problems. They channel all their attention toward fighting the whiteman. By so doing, they fail to see the problem within a broader context. Given the logic of their situation, what can Africans expect from the "truly disadvantage". Some upper/middle class AA are aware of their African heritage but since they want to gain recognition in this society they are less likely to articulate the "Afrocentric agenda". I think African leaders and AA leaders in this society can do a better job by jointly working together on our common problems. African leaders can for example grant citizenship to all people of African descent and cancel all visa requirements. This will not take away the problems but it will give them a sense of dignity and purposefulness in life. I think we'll all agree that we sometimes have to go home to "renew our humanity" in the course of our sojourn in the whiteman's land. I have provided a very simplistic view about the issue. The issue is very complex but I believe we can do a better job by internationalizing the black problem.

18.04 Africans/African Americans, by *Korku Dayie*

From: Korku Dayie <kwaku@heimdall.med.harvard.edu>

Date: Mon, 7 Jun 93 14:46:39 EDT

I know this issue was raised a few weeks ago, but I feel a rejoinder is in order. In answer to Samuel Laryea's questions:

(1) Do African Americans genuinely identify with indigenous Africans?

Yes, probably more than some Africans from the continent do. For example the first black astronaut in a documentary "Black Stars in Orbit" said categorically at the time of his interview that he made it his personal duty to take satellite pictures of the continent Africa as the spacecraft he was piloting passed over Africa. You can name Dubois who lived the last leg of his life in Ghana. And Maya Angelou who lived for some time in Ghana and wrote about her experiences. However, the general populace has very negative images about Africa, perhaps from Tarzan movies and western propaganda. The West has imprinted into their (and our) subconscious right from slavery (and colonial days) that their (our) BLACK side is evil, retrogressive, barbaric, uncivilized, savage.

(2). If the answer to (1) is in the affirmative, why have they been so apathetic towards African causes?

It's not true they are apathetic to African causes; on the contrary some have always taken an active interest. The problem is that it is not a collective effort. Of course one can argue that we Africans are guilty of the same apathy.

- (4) The African American community can boast of very affluent personalities ...has any of these guys invested a cent in Africa, or even donated a bag of rice to Somalia as a humanitarian gesture?

Yes. The example that jumps to mind is the House of Representative I think Delaney who died in a plane crash over Somali while on a fact-finding and humanitarian relief mission. Dr. Mae Jemison, medical practitioner, first Black woman in Space on Board the Shuttle Endeavor, spent 2 years in Sierra Leone and Liberia as a Peace Corps Medical Officer after completing Medical School at Cornell. Currently, she has founded a company whose primary aim is to develop satellite-based telecommunication system to improve health-care in WEST-AFRICA!! I happened to attend an annual gathering of MIT Black Alumnae and heard her speak and later talk to her on Saturday.

I know a couple of people in the Computer business who are seriously considering setting up sister branches in Cameroun and Nigeria.

Where do we go from here?

In order to create any meaningful working relationship, we (Africans from the continent) could begin to build bridges (those who feel the need and are capable) with the African Americans here in the USA.

18. 05 The Man Garvey, by *Isaac Thompson*

From: Isaac Thompson <ixtst+@pitt.edu>

Date: Thu, 2 Dec 1993 12:18:08 -0500 (EST)

On this day in 1927, the US government deported Marcus Garvey for being a "tiger." I thought it appropriate, on the anniversary of his deportation, to follow up my recent quotes of Garvey with a sketch of the man, his life, and his legacy.

Marcus Garvey was born on August 17, 1887 in Jamaica of Maroon parents. (The Maroons, I should point out, were largely descendants of the Kromantsis of the Central Region of modern Ghana. So I guess if we really want to stretch our imagination, we can say Marcus Garvey was a Ghanaian, or at least a Fanti!)

He came to the United States in 1916 to meet Booker T. Washington, after reading the latter's seminal book on Black self help, UP FROM SLAVERY. Washington died on the eve of Garvey's arrival, but he came anyway. The purpose of the visit was to use Washington's influence to raise money for the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), which he had formed in Jamaica. Suddenly finding himself at sea, Garvey decided to make the best of a bad situation.

He tried, and failed, to win the assistance of the NAACP in his enterprise. After preaching in Black churches across the United States to raise money, he settled in Harlem. There, with 13 initial followers, he went on to form the largest world-wide organization of Africans ever--the 4-million strong UNIA.

The remarkable thing about Marcus Garvey was that he never once called for the use of arms. Yet the thunder of his words was such that three of the Greatest empires of the time--the American, French, and British empires--were terrified of him. They sabotaged him every chance they got. Attempts were made on his life.

The battle cry of the association was "Africa for the Africans". The idea was to link all Africans through a global commercial network using the Black Star Line. Simultaneously, the continent was to be liberated from colonialism and turned into a "scientific and industrial empire."

The nucleus of this empire was to be Liberia, then the more accessible of the two non-colonized countries in Africa--the other being Ethiopia. Liberia also had a special attraction for Garvey because of its free-slave settler history.

In pursuit of this goal, Garvey dispatched an expeditionary team of eminent Black scientists--from surveyors to agronomists to architects--to Liberia. Land was purchased and plans were drawn. But the empire was not to be.

The Americans--and possibly the French and the British, who did not want any "agitator" next door--quickly stepped in and sabotaged the plan. The land that Garvey acquired was sold to Firestone, to be made into one of the largest rubber plantations in the world today. When the expeditionary team arrived in Liberia, its members were detained, their equipment seized, and they (the members) were shipped back.

It is said that the Liberian oligarchy got angry after discovering that Garvey's first emissary to Liberia had written a secret memo to Garvey in which he documented abuses by the "settlers" against the "natives". (This letter would later serve as the basis of Garvey's admonishing to Americans wishing to immigrate to Africa to give up the idea of lording over indigenous Africans or stay back.)

Despite these setbacks, Garveyism grew in leaps and bounds. One of the early Garveyites in Africa was the Gold Coast nationalist, Casely-Hayford (a Kromantsi?!). In fact early UNIA missionaries to French-speaking Africa, where there were several underground branches, were Gold Coasters. From Cuba, which had one of the largest branches, to South Africa, the word spread about this man who was uncompromisingly telling the whiteman to "get out" of Africa, and had even gone so far as to draft a constitution for a free Africa! His newspaper, the *Negro World*, was the hottest selling "seditious material" throughout the colonies. Garveyism, it seemed, was on a roll. But the Americans weren't finished with him yet.

In 1923, he was tried and convicted of "mail fraud." It is noteworthy that the crucial evidence in the trial was an empty envelope whose purported mailer admitted he was a liar and that he'd been coached by the prosecutor. The trial was a flagrant travesty of justice. (US Congressman Rangel recently started a move to have the conviction overturned and Garvey's good name restored.)

During the trial, the prosecutor repeatedly asked the jury:

"Gentlemen, are you going to let the tiger loose?" An interesting choice of words, when he was supposed to be trying a CRIMINAL. Much was made of the fact that the Black Star Line was having financial difficulties (which it was). But Garvey reminded his accusers that some of the greatest achievements in human history had had inauspicious beginnings, the Black Star Line being no exception. The Association, he said, was prepared to learn from its mistakes.

At the end of the trial the prosecutor shouted triumphantly, "We have caged the tiger!" To which Garvey retorted: "You may have caged the tiger, but my cubs are running wild!" Unfortunately, the cubs were no match for the powers of the US government and the two European powers. After spending about three years in jail (having lost appeals between 1923 and 1925, the year he was sentenced) Garvey's sentence was commuted by President Coolidge. He was immediately deported to Jamaica. It was to be the beginning of the end of an indomitable visionary and his uncommon dream.

The symbolism of his persecution was not lost on either his followers or even ordinary observers. Some Garveyites were quick to point out that Jesus Christ died a criminal. A less religion-minded reporter noted that Socrates was murdered for "corrupting the minds of the youth". By these references, then, Garvey belonged in a pantheon of martyrs whom only history could absolve.

After trying in vain to hold his organization together, Garvey eventually settled in London. There, among other things, he provided the first rented space to the West African Students Union (WASU), the organization which was to serve as Nkrumah's launching pad to continental fame. Nkrumah, of course, was a Garveyite.

On June 10, 1940, Marcus Mosiah Garvey died of stroke in London. He was 52 years old. But he had blazed a trail like no other before him--and none since.

18.06 Re: Africans and Africans, by *Isaac Thompson*

From: Isaac Thompson <ixtst+@pitt.edu>

Date: Thu, 11 Nov 1993 14:08:17 -0500 (EST)

Just a brief report on our forum on Africans and diaspora Africans. Attendance was the highest of any event our organization has had in its one year existence. (I'm still walking on air for that!) There were over 200 people,

compared to the average 50-60 we usually get. One reason was we went beyond the campus and invited people from the community.

The theme was the “cultural basis of political and economic unity”. There was a general agreement that while we share a common heritage (a state of nature), we are culturally different (historical accident), and that most of the misconceptions that keep us apart are the consequence of these cultural differences. The general consensus was that we should view these differences as a POTENTIAL source of strength, not separation and weakness. How to tap into this potential formed the basis of the second half of the discussion. Not unexpectedly, there was no common approach: suggestions ranged from deliberate attempts to change our (personal) attitudes towards each other (b4 talking unity) to launching an assault on “capitalism,” and “neocolonialism,” our common enemies. (The “best” suggestion came from a brother from South Africa who thought we should inter-marry!) In the end, we agreed that this was only the first, small step in a long and arduous journey. We plan to do it again.

18.07 Re: Fufu for Thought, by *Daniel Appiah*

From: Daniel Appiah <dappiah@ccs.carleton.ca>

Date: Fri, 12 Nov 93 22:26:35 EST

The Garvey's verses are really refreshing. I have not read any of Garvey's works but I've been nursing such ideas for quite sometime now. For those ideas to be expressed in the way that Garvey has done is both amazing and enlightening. Infact I've read and will continue to read the sayings with that kind of solemnity that is reserved only for use by prophets when they are divining the intentions of God. No wonder, Kwame Nkrumah, one of the greatest leaders of our time, allowed himself to be profoundly influenced by such inspired words of wisdom.

Indeed, they are inspired words which capture all the hopes and fears; the aspirations and doubts; the dreams and visions of our race. A race which has been and is being physically and psychologically robbed and raped of its identity and resources. A race which risks extermination (in Garvey's own word) and recolonisation(through the debt trap), if we, the blessed and chosen few, fail, both individually and collectively, to utilize our knowledge and exposure to improve the living conditions of our people.

Such a risk is real, . It is not just a figment in anybody's imagination; neither is it the words of some disgruntled prophets who are prophesying doom and gloom: nor is such a risk the crying of wolf by a sick child who has not seen any. This is because for once we are witnessing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in all continents except Africa. How do we defend ourselves in the event of any nuclear threat? For once we are witnessing a world which is both unipolar and lacks any alternative ideology. A world, which under the guise of environmentalism and the liberalization-globalization construct of the world Bank and IMF, is seriously undermining and eroding the ability of African nation-states to design and engineer their own socio-economic development.

Given such real risk, I'm frightened by the feeling that such inspired ideas of Garvey and others have not found their way into the thinking and acting processes of many of us and our leaders who might have read them. In my opinion such great sayings should be made available and read by all Africans. The display of inaction, indifference and apathy by almost all Africans towards our problems has made some people to suggest that the only circumstance that can force us to act is a long and costly war. These people cite the post-world II development miracles of the strongest economies of the world-Germany and Japan, countries which suffered costly and humiliating defeat in that war-to back their position. Once Germany and Japan managed to turn their economies miraculously around after the war, Africa should also develop after a protracted war, the argument goes.

I have, however, argued against such a position on the grounds that Africa has suffered so much as a result of the slave trade and colonization that the effects and damage of any war now or in the future may be eternal and irreparable. But as Yaw Agyaba's and our hopes that political independence promised fizzle into thin air, I sometimes tend to be swayed by the Development-after-War argument. Nonetheless, I would like to share the wishes of Isaac and Charles that the formation of trading blocs such as NAFTA, EEC, ASEAN, and the Southern Cone Countries should be enough motivation for Africans to collectively seek and find solutions to their problems rather than wait for a war.

True, the sayings constitute FUFU for thought for me. I hope all of us will consume it with some microwaved “Nkatie Wonu” (groundnut soup) and allow its nourishing effects to stimulate and challenge us to take action to develop and preserve, at least, Ghana. Because it is the only Ghana that we possess.

18.08 I love my African man. (fwd)

From: AGYEI@net2.eos.uoguelph.ca
Date: 15 Nov 93 11:36:45 EDT

Ever since I realized that most of these so called African Americans have a similar disrespect for we Africans just as so called ‘whites’, I stopped saying ‘hi’ to any unfamiliar ‘black’ man (to those of us who don’t feel comfortable with this word, accept my apology). I did this because I didn’t want to ‘bump’ into any body who for any reason refuses to respect my dignity as a human being. This forwarded message tells my story. Please read it..

...observing the hypocrites; as they will mingle with good
people we need...
(B.Marley, track: No woman no cry)

As for us, we have a place to go when the crises get higher; what about them ?...

@@@@@ Quoted Without Permission from Soc.Culture.African.American
@@@@@

Newsgroups: soc.culture.african.american
From: if57@jove.acs.unt.edu (Dean Dawn Renee)
Subject: I love my African man.
Organization: University of North Texas
Date: Wed, 10 Nov 1993 04:40:30 GMT

I am an African American female college student dating an African man, and I would like to say that I sympathize with my African brothers who have had negative experiences with their African American counterparts. I assure any African coming to the US that these rude and ignorant individuals are not indicative of the entire Black American population.

My boyfriend who, is from Nigeria, has told me that he has encountered similar problems with African Americans, they say stupid things and make fun of his accent, and make tasteless references to monkeys, jungles, and naked savages, all of the stereotypes that we’ve been trying to abandon for years! In fact, he feels that ‘white’ Americans in general have treated him with more dignity and respect than Blacks. What’s the problem here?

I just assume that (Black) people reference these tasteless African stereotypes in his presence because of 1) ignorance and 2) jealousy.

1)Ignorance because for all of our talk about “afro-centrism”, back to Africa, black power, multiculturalism, and renaming ourselves African Americans(?) we basically do not know shit about Africa.

Solution: Talk to the Africans on your campus/in your community/at your workplace. Get to know them. Get off the American ego trip and Listen to what they have to say about themselves and their culture. Deal and respect them as a human being. Get your eyes off of color, and forget the black nationalist rhetoric. Ask lots of questions, and listen, let THEM tell YOU about THEIR Africa. Don’t assume you know it. Be polite and show respect. Be patient if you can’t understand them (because of their accents).

2) Jealousy - I think Black Americans get defensive when they see successful Blacks and if you happen to be African then you are REALLY the enemy. I really feel that my man gets these vicious attacks from our African American peers because he is intelligent, handsome, charming, tenacious, and ambitious. He what he wants for his life and he will do what it takes to get it, be it working two jobs, studying his ass off, whatever it takes! Our peers here at college are intimidated by that, not to mention other Black adults.

Solution - what's the only solution to jealousy? GET OVER IT. Get off your ass and do something for yourself instead of hating your brothers and sisters who are trying to get ahead.

There are many stereotypes with regards to African men and women and interpersonal relationships. The only thing I can say that my man and I have stayed together for a couple years now because we discuss all those things. I ask him every question I can think of, and when we hear about male/female issues, like on Oprah or the news, or the local gossip, we talk about it and argue about it until we understand each other's point of view. WE REFUSE TO LET OTHER PEOPLE'S STEREOTYPES INTRUDE ON OUR RELATIONSHIP.

Not only do I seek his opinions about gender roles, I also talk to his Nigerian male friends. The results are the same as if you took a random sample of Black men in America. The older ones are basically more traditional, and conservative with regards to women. The younger ones, including my man, have a more modern or liberated view of relationships, they believe in a more equal distribution of power. And within that same group there are differences of opinion of what is important in a woman: one that can cook, one with a career, one that will run the house, one with a nice ass, one that will provide a male heir, whatever-this may be a revelation but they are as varied in opinion as Americans are. Not all Africans have multiple wives, not all Africans have only one wife, the point is to free your mind and come together with our distant cousins from the mother (father?) land.

I love my African man.

18.09 Subject: Ghana in the Year 2004...., by *Isaac Thompson*

From: Isaac Thompson <ixtst+@pitt.edu>

Date: Wed, 17 Nov 1993 13:49:21 -0500 (EST)

Ever since Tchaka raised the issue of the "color bar", and the issue of "language" dominated net discussion for weeks, I have been reflecting on a "multi-ethnic" Ghana of the future. This is a Ghana more "multi" than what we have now.

Hear me out.

Beginning in the early 1970s, highly skilled Ghanaians began leaving the country in large numbers. Twenty years later, as a result of this migration, there are Ghanaians in virtually every corner of the world. (There is even a Ghanaian doctor--not working with the UN--in Bosnia!)

Most of these Ghanaians are professionals and technocrats of all stripes who married women or men from their guest countries. Hence, we have Finnish-Ghanaians, Japanese Ghanaians, Aussie-Ghanaians, possibly Bosnian-Ghanaians, Dutch-Ghanaians....the list goes on. If it is true that highly educated people tend to have children who are as educated as they the parents are (or better), then in the next 10-20 years we can have a large pool of second-generation, highly skilled "Ghanaians" scattered all over God's creation. Their fate might be similar to that of the Jews of Europe and America, who though highly skilled were discriminated against because of their ethnicity.

As Africa gradually becomes "livable" again and Europe less so because of racism and discrimination against "non-Europeans (even those born there), chances are these "diaspora Ghanaians" would like to turn to the land of their mothers or fathers for escape. There would be a "Sankofa" movement, so to speak, similar in spirit to the Zionism of the Jews. And as in the case of the Jews their skills would be invaluable to national development.

If that happens, we could have "Ghanaians" who speak little or no Ghanaian languages other than, say, German or Japanese or French. And of course they would be conspicuously DIFFERENT because among other things they would LOOK different, eat different foods, walk differently, do many things differently.

The question I have been tossing about in my mind is this: Are we prepared, culturally and constitutionally, to welcome back these scattered children of the land? The Ghanaian constitution, for reasons best known to its crafters, forbids dual citizenship. That will be a problem for these "returnees", especially those who would like to straddle their two worlds in terms of citizenship and make the best of both. Culturally, can we make them feel at home or would

there be some sort of resentment, especially since their high skills would make them, not by design but by circumstance, into a social class of sorts?

Just a thought I figured I should bounce off the net.

18.10 Ghanaians in diaspora, by *Paul Agbedor*

From: paul agbedor <PAKA6@UVVM.UVIC.CA>

Date: Wed, 17 Nov 93 12:00:57 PST

Isaac sent a posting about a possibility of Ghanaians in diaspora returning home as the Jews have done, and asked whether we are ready to receive them. I think that question goes equally to the would-be returnees. That is: are they ready to fit into the cultural and social setting of the land they left for a long time? I think culturally, they (the returnees) would have to work harder to fit into the society. I am sure relatives would be happy to welcome them home, but they would have a hard time fitting in. As far as jobs are concerned, things can work out well, provided they and the Ghanaians already in the system are given equal opportunities for employment. What I mean is that things should work out if an existing Ghanaian is not thrown out of his/her job for a returnee if they both have equal qualifications, no matter where one is trained. The moment the returnee feels s/he is more qualified because s/he is trained elsewhere, there would be friction. I know the solution is not all that simple, but a little tolerance from both sides should make things easier.

19 FROM WAAKYE TO CHEMISTRY - THE STORY OF 'KAU'

Compiled and Edited by *Sam Asomaning*

19.00 Editor's Preface

A call from Nii Annang Bossman for directions for cooking 'waakye' resulted in a complex lesson in the chemistry of 'kau', 'kanwa' and 'kanwe', names that apparently can be used interchangeably to describe the local variety of what looks like baking soda sold on Ghanaian markets.

I have personally considered the section on 'kau' as humor. Thus contrary to some recent opinions humor can be found on Okyeame, albeit ones that we can learn from. I am confident that if members of Okyeame were pooled in late 1993, one would have found a few who learnt something from the 'kau' affair. I personally never knew that 'kau' was used in cooking waakye.

From the discussions on the net, kau, at least as sold on Ghanaian markets, is an impure form of naturally occurring carbonates and bicarbonates of Sodium or Potassium or both. It brings to mind another substance sold on Ghanaian markets called Alum, used in purifying water. Alum is a complex or double salt and occurs in nature often with aluminosilicates. It is a hydrated Aluminum sulfate and in addition to the major constituents aluminum, Potassium and the sulfate ion, impure alum can contain Sodium, Silicon, Calcium, Iron and even Chromium. These additional elements are found in minute quantities. This tendency is due to the simple fact that 'birds of the same feather flock together' or 'it takes one to know one'. Thus once an element in the periodic table is found in appreciable quantities, other members of the group are always found together in varying quantities. Thus Potassium and Calcium are always found with naturally occurring Sodium; Silver, Platinum and Copper with Gold etc. etc. This phenomenon explains in part the numerous elements found in the analysis of the Saudi group. It also shows why the health hazard is minimal, since the apparently harmful elements either occur in very minute quantities or as harmless salts eg. Chlorine as Sodium Chloride.

Generally the articles were humorous and educative. We even caught a glimpse of why waakye turns brown or pink-brown upon cooking. To use the words of Kwabena Ofori, the postmaster, 'there is some serious chemistry going on in our kitchens'. I am grateful to Yaw Amoateng Agyepong and Adams Bodomo for proofreading the section and offering useful comments.

Now read on and enjoy the postings and next time you buy 'waakye' or 'shitoo' or 'yorke gari', don't think too hard because you might never know entirely what is in it, much more all the chemical reactions that took place in the kitchen bowl. Go for the taste and leave everything else to God.

Sam Asomaning
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Section Editor.

19.01 waakye, by *Jonathan Bossman*

Date: Mon, 18 Oct 93 16:50:13 EDT
From: "Jonathan Bossman Prod. Dev." <jonbos@jonbos.rnd.symix.com>
Subject: waakye

For about the tenth time since I was forced to begin cooking my own Ghanaian meals, I have failed to prepare the perfect waakye. I'm using a high-tech method known as "trial-and-error".

The problem is that even though the beans are soaked for 24 hours beforehand, and the meal is cooked over very low fire, the beans still end up being harder than they should be. Cooked, but still on the hard side.

Is there anyone out there who knows the secrets of waakye cooking? Please e-mail me privately. I think most netters would either know the answer or not be interested in the solution.

19.02 Reply to Waakye

Date: Tue, 19 Oct 93 09:07:25 SAT
From: RSIE26B%SAUPM00.BITNET
Subject: Reply to Waakye

I have received the SOS from Bossman regarding 'Waakye', and I must respond.

First of all you don't soak the beans, you bring the water to a boil, then put the beans into the water. If you want to prepare a professional 'waakye', you must have "Kanwa" that base-like substance, which I believe is mostly sodium hydroxide (don't quote me on this chemistry). The addition of the Kanwa gives the 'waakye' the brownish-red color and also helps bind the rice to the beans. Thirty minutes after the beans have been brought to boil, you add the rice. You should add a lot of water, about a cup of beans to 3 cups of water. You should not add salt to the beans until you have added the rice, otherwise your beans will not cook well and will feel crispy. The longest time it takes to cook 'waakye' for 3 persons is only an hour and fifteen minutes.

Note that you cannot add oil to the 'waakye' while it is being cooked. The stew should be prepared separately, preferably hot chilly sauce (shitoo). Also the "Kanwa" is a very important additive. It's as simple as that. Every Saturday afternoon is a 'Waakye' special in my house here in Saudi Arabia. My mother sells the best 'Waakye' in Walewale, Northern Ghana.

[Nii Annang Bossman's SOS resulted in several suggestions all entailing the use of an additive called by several local names such as 'kanwa', 'kanwe' and 'kau'. Bewildered with these names, Nii Annang asked for further clarification. As we shall see below, these terms refer to the same substance and hence can be used interchangeably. - Editor]

19.03 Re: “Kanwe” and baking soda, by Alex Aboagye . Kjemiteknikk

Date: Thu, 21 Oct 1993 11:55:01
From: “Alex Aboagye . Kjemiteknikk” <alexab@kjemi.unit.no>
Subject: Re: “Kanwe” and baking soda

Bossman (Nii Annang) asked:

“Could it then be that “kanwa” is sodium hydroxide and “kanwe” is sodium bicarbonate? If so then which of them would fall into the category of this famous baking soda? I am confused.”

My comment:

I am not quite familiar with the terms “kanwa” and “kanwe”. But I think what you want to know is the chemical composition of baking soda and the substance added to beans to soften it while being cooked (in twi this substance is called “kau”).

Well, baking soda is sodium bicarbonate (NaHCO_3). It decomposes upon heating to carbon dioxide (CO_2), water (H_2O) and sodium ion (Na^+). It is the CO_2 gas and H_2O vapor that gives bread its porous texture.

From my FUE chemistry, I remember that “kau” the stuff used to soften beans, etc. while being cooked is a mixture of Sodium bicarbonate (NaHCO_3) and sodium carbonate (Na_2CO_3). I do not remember the proportions of these two compounds in “kau”. I have some of it here, hence I can run a chemical analysis to tell netters the proportions of each. However, both substances are basic, ie. they generate OH^- ions in water due to a process called hydrolysis.

I know that OH^- (hydroxide ion) is not a harmless substance but since we are talking about small amounts to catalyze the cooking of our beans I don’t think we need to worry about this. The crucial point here is to use small amounts.

19.04 KANWA (analysis of), by Alhasan B. Fuseni

Date: Sat, 23 Oct 93 09:08:59 SAT
From: “Alhasan B. Fuseni” <RSIA90C%SAUPM00.BITNET
Subject: KANWA (analysis of)

We in the Research Institute here in Saudi Arabia have long been curious about “Kanwa” and its composition. Some time last year we took two samples from two kitchens here and did the elemental analysis using X-Ray Diffraction. Below are the results obtained for the two samples which we named K1 and K2.

SAMPLE K1			SAMPLE K2		
ELEMENT	ATOM %	WEIGHT %	ELEMENT	ATOM %	WEIGHT %
Calcium	5.03	6.15	Calcium	23.48	28.02
Silicon	61.58	52.71	Silicon	55.36	46.24
Aluminum	----	----	Aluminum	0.86	0.70
Sulfur	1.20	1.18	Sulfur	-----	-----
Potassium	11.01	13.12	Potassium	13.13	15.28
Iron	6.54	11.19	Iron	3.68	6.15
Chlorine	14.64	15.66	Chlorine	3.47	3.63

We hope this will satisfy other curious souls wherever they may be. Thanks are due to Dr. Osei-Twum who coordinated the above project.

19.05 Re: kanwa, kanwe, kau and waakye, by Alex Aboagye . Kjemiteknikk

Date: Wed, 27 Oct 1993 13:47:59 +0100

From: "Alex Aboagye . Kjemiteknikk" <alexab@kjemi.unit.no>

Subject: Re: kanwa, kanwe, kau and waakye

For those who are interested in the results of my analysis of a sample of "kau", here you are:

bicarbonate (HCO₃⁻) 25 wt %
carbonate (CO₃⁻⁻) 34 wt %
rest (impurities and water) 41 wt %

I have done a confirmatory test for the presence of the above mentioned ions and have observed that "kau" contains the above mentioned substances. I have not done any test for the cations sodium (Na), iron (Fe), silicon (Si), chloride (Cl-) and aluminum (Al).

For those who want to ascertain whether the samples they have in their kitchens are "kau", a simple method is to put a small amount of the substance in a clean drinking glass and squeeze some lemon or lime juice unto it. If you observe a fizzling / bubbling / foaming reaction, your substance is "kau". You should not fear to use small amounts in boiling your beans, "wole", etc.

I have included the procedure below. Those who consider chemistry and chemical analysis confusing need not read it. I included it for those who are interested.

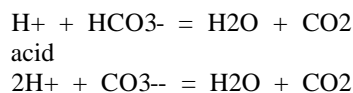
PROCEDURE

PRESENCE OF CO₃⁻⁻ AND/OR HCO₃⁻

Addition of acid (eg HCl, lemon juice [contains CH₃COOH]) to sample of 'kau' gives fizzling/apparent boiling/foaming reaction due to possible evolution of CO₂ gas.

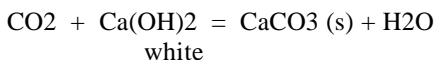
Indication: CO₃⁻⁻ and/or HCO₃⁻ present.

Reaction:



Pass the evolved gas through Ca(OH)₂ solution. If it turns white/milky/cloudy, it shows that the evolved gas is CO₂ and confirms the presence of HCO₃⁻ and/or CO₃⁻⁻.

Reaction:



Titration with standard HCl using Phenolphthalein and methyl orange indicates that both HCO₃⁻ and CO₃⁻⁻ are present. Proportions of each are as below:

bicarbonate (HCO₃⁻) 25 wt %
carbonate (CO₃⁻⁻) 34 wt %
rest (impurities and water) 41 wt %

Reactions:

With Phenolphthalein; $\text{CO}_3^{--} + \text{H}^+ = \text{HCO}_3^-$

With methyl orange; $\text{HCO}_3^- + \text{H}^+ = \text{H}_2\text{O} + \text{CO}_2$

NB: No analysis was done for cations. Not everything dissolved in water and dilute HCl. Did no test to verify what the impurities are.

19.06 KANWA, KANWE AND KAU, by *Kwabena Ofori*

Date: Sun, 24 Oct 93 20:20:48 EDT

From: Kwabena Ofori <ofori@MIT.EDU>

Subject: KANWA, KANWE AND KAU

When Alex Aboagye posted his qualitative analysis of “kau” on Okyeame, which contained

sodium carbonate (Na_2CO_3) 34 weight percent,
sodium hydrogen carbonate (NaHCO_3) 25 weight percent,
rest (water and impurities) 41 weight percent,

I requested that he posts the method that he used in his analysis. His acid-base titration allows him to make a positive identification of the HCO_3^- and the CO_3^{--} ions but a test was not done to detect the Sodium (Na^+) ion. I remember vaguely that a flame test could allow one to make a positive identification of the Na^+ ion.....right? (it's been 9 years since I took chemistry so my memory is fuzzy). Therefore, from Alex's analysis, we can only conclude that some stuff called “kau” contains HCO_3^- and CO_3^{--} ions.

Shortly after that, Alhassan B. Fuseni posted the results of an analysis of “kanwa” which he and his colleagues in Saudi Arabia had performed. Their method (x-ray diffraction) is a little more sophisticated and I am not familiar with the procedure. My extremely limited experience with X-ray diffraction was the use of it to study crystal lattice structures. Their results, however, were drastically different from that of our colleague in Norway. The results obtained are shown in a posting above.

There was Potassium (K^+) which may be consistent with Alex's findings if he identifies his cation as K^+ instead of Na^+ . There was neither Sodium (Na^+), Carbon (C), Oxygen (O_2) nor Hydrogen (H) in the samples of “kanwa” that our fellows in Saudi Arabia analyzed. Moreover, it contained Chlorine (ouch!!), Aluminum, Silicon (maybe the substance had too much sand on it) and Sulphur! Doesn't look too healthy!

My only conclusion is that we are not talking about the same substance i.e., “kanwa” and “kau” are two different things; not to mention “kanwe”. This leads us to consult the polyglots on Okyeame. Are “kanwa”, “kanwe” and “kau” the same stuff?

I have only heard of “kau” and I know it fizzes when you squeeze lime juice on it (maybe that is the village man's way of detecting the HCO_3^- and the CO_3^{--} ions, through the evolution of what may be Carbon Dioxide (CO_2), since lime juice (“ankaadwewaa”) is acidic)!!! “Kau” softens hard meat (such as “wole”) and it also has many medicinal uses (I personally have used it to cure my mother's goats and sheep of certain kinds of diarrhoea). So my village chemistry tells me that the “kau” is basic; an antacid of a similar nature to the “alka-seltzer” or “alka-seltzer plus” that is available at your local drug store.

So without conventional fancy lab equipment, but lots of first-hand experience with this substance, my village chemistry makes me believe that the substance that Alex analyzed in Norway is the “kau” that I am familiar with. As for “kanwa” or “kanwe”, I don't know what they are and they may be quite different from “kau” especially if it contains such high proportions of Silicon and Chlorine.

19.07 Re: Kanwe, kanwa, kau stuff and waakye, by Alex Aboagye . Kjemiteknikk

Date: Sun, 24 Oct 1993 13:01:42 +0100
From: "Alex Aboagye . Kjemiteknikk" <alexab@kjemi.unit.no>
Subject: Re: Kanwe, kanwa, kau stuff and waakye

Ofori, I am also wondering whether we are talking about the same substance. The analysis of the Saudi Arabia group does not show that their substance ("kanwa") contains any carbon (C) and oxygen (O). So I presume we are talking about completely different substances.

To ascertain whether the substance I have here (kau) contains CO_3^{--} and HCO_3^- I did a qualitative test. If one adds an acid (eg HCl) to a CO_3^{--} and/or HCO_3^- there should be evolution of CO_2 gas. This can be observed visually by bubbling the gas through a solution. The substance I have here (kau) gives a positive result for this test. As a confirmation, I should pass the gas which I suspect to be CO_2 through a solution of calcium hydroxide [$\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$]. If the latter solution turns cloudy or milky it is a confirmation that the gas evolved is CO_2 and that the stuff kau contains CO_3^{--} and HCO_3^- . I will do this confirmatory test and post the results on the net.

So far the results I have posted are quite consistent and makes me believe we are not talking about the same stuff. What is this "kanwa" and "kanwe" substances? What language is it? Do you know?

19.08 DESCRIPTION OF KANWA

Date: Mon, 25 Oct 93 13:54:47 SAT
From: RSIE26B%SAUPM00.BITNET
Subject: DESCRIPTION OF KANWA

The "Kanwa" we're talking about is a rock-like substance that is mined locally in certain areas in Ghana. It is whitish-grey and tastes terribly bad. In the north of Ghana, when it is hard to come by, the women would collect some ash in a sieve and pour some water on the ash which seeps into a separate bowl below. The color of this liquid is brown. The liquid is a substitute for "kanwa". In certain markets in Ghana you can find kanwa in powder form wrapped in plastic bags. I hope you understand what I'm describing.

Another use for this stuff is to prevent soup from turning sour overnight, or when you prepare a stew with lots of tomatoes, a drop of kanwa will prevent the tomatoes from turning sour. Dr.Osei-Twum is going to repeat the of "kanwa".

19.09 Re: DESCRIPTION OF KANWA, by Kwabena Ofori

Date: Tue, 26 Oct 93 10:23:35 EDT
From: Kwabena Ofori <ofori@MIT.EDU>
Subject: Re: DESCRIPTION OF KANWA

In our quest to figure out the composition of "kanwa" MAHAMADU SUMANI wrote:

"In the north of Ghana, when it [kanwa] is hard to come by, the women would collect some ash in a bowl with holes and pour some water on the ash which seeps into a separate bowl below, the color of this liquid is brown. The liquid is a substitute for 'kanwa'".

Once again this leads me to suspect that the active ingredient in "kanwa" is alkaline (basic) in nature. Economic circumstances forced me to make my own "Lux" (soap) in my village, I was taught through oral tradition (and later on in secondary school [reference: some book written by a Nigerian called Baja, I think]) that one can use the ash from

burnt dried plantain peels or cocoa pods (we had plenty of those and I can arrange a sale for anybody who is interested at a very good price) as a substitute for caustic soda (NaOH ?) in the soap making process. Now, if I can take a giant step and extrapolate, my first instincts tell me that if you put litmus paper (good luck finding one on your local village market) in the brown liquid from ash that is used as a “kanwa” substitute, it will probably turn blue; thus confirming its basicity.

MAHAMADU SUMANI wrote further:

“Another use for this stuff is to prevent soup from turning sour overnight, or when you prepare a stew with lots of tomatoes, a drop of ‘kanwa’ will prevent the tomatoes from turning sour”.

When most things go sour, they become acidic. If drops of “kanwa” can prevent things from going sour then wouldn’t that suggest that it is basic in nature or some stuff that inhibits an oxidation reaction? A reducing agent?

DISCLAIMER: I am not a Chemist so quote me at your own risk. I only had up to A-level Chemistry and since then I have been studying Electrical Engineering. All the stuff I write is from a rapidly fading memory. I am particularly interested in this whole ‘kanwa, kau and waakye’ stuff because there is some serious, fancy chemistry that goes on in our village kitchens in Ghana that we do not take the time to understand.

19.10 From Waakye to Chemistry, by *Dr. Emmanuel Osei-Twum*

Date: Tue, 26 Oct 93 14:43:43 SAT

From: “Dr. Emmanuel Osei-Twum” <RSIV95D%SAUPM00.BITNET>

Subject: From Waakye to Chemistry

After Alex’s posting on the titration and the acid test, I decided to re-examine the substance, this time, using other techniques. I have finished with the basic work of identifying the constituents of the sample. At this point it would not have been necessary to do any further work, but I would like to know the % compositions of the constituents. I am therefore submitting some of it for quantitative analysis. After the analysis I will report the results on the net.

Meanwhile I will only say that we are all dealing with the same substance; Alex is right in his analysis and we are right in our reported analysis. There is carbonate, and bicarbonate. There is also silicate (in the form of quartz, sand which one bites into when eating waakye), some aluminosilicate, sulfate and water in the form of water of hydration. The cations (the positively charged radicals) include sodium, potassium, calcium and iron. The last element present is chlorine as a chloride.

As far as health aspects are concerned, I think the substance will get a clean bill of health for use in ‘waakye’. Any one who has been using the stuff should not stop using it for fear of getting sick.

Why is it that rice and beans turn pinkish in color when it is cooked with “Kau?” This was the question we had on our minds about a year and half ago when we decided to carry the analysis on the stuff. I hope to tell you more in my next posting on the subject.

19.10a Re: From Waakye to Chemistry, by *Kwabena Ofori*

Date: Tue, 26 Oct 93 11:54:15 EDT

From: Kwabena Ofori <ofori@MIT.EDU>

Subject: Re: From Waakye to Chemistry

Osei Twum writes:

“Why is it that rice and beans turn pinkish in color when it is cooked with “Kau?” This was the question we had on our minds about a year and half ago when we decided to carry the analysis on the stuff”.

I have not seen pink waakye but I have seen brown ones. Could it be the Iron (Fe^{++}) which oxidizes to (Fe^{+++}) in the process of cooking? i.e. an accelerated rust reaction? Quite plausible, isn't it?

19.11 Thanks for Waakye Advice, by *Jonathan Bossman Prod. Dev.*

Date: Thu, 21 Oct 93 12:45:30 EDT

From: "Jonathan Bossman Prod. Dev." <jonbos@jonbos.rnd.symix.com>

Subject: Thanks for Waakye Advice

The response to my appeal for 'Waakye' Culinary Secrets was overwhelming. Not only were some of the responses (over 20 of them) informative, but they were also humorous. Some people suggested that I "import" a Ghanaian woman into my home. Others suggested I should use my old method to cook the food but wait until I was extremely hungry before eating the mess!

I am quite sure that we are now all experts in 'Waakye' cooking. So I will not summarize my findings on how most of us prepare it. We even got a lesson in the chemistry of "kanwe", "kanwa", "Kau" and NaHCO_3 .

Thanks to all who responded. No matter where I am, I will never again be far from Opera Square, Nima or Kumasi Aboabo! "Meda mo ase"! "Meda mo ase"!

19.12 The chemical constituents of Kau, by *Dr. Emmanuel Osei-Twum*

Date: Sat, 13 Nov 93 15:40:19 SAT

From: "Dr. Emmanuel Osei-Twum" <RSIV95D%SAUPM00.BITNET>

Subject: The chemical constituents of Kau

I do realize that the discussion on the topic of "waakye" and "kau" ended a while back. However, before it ended I promised to report back to members the results of the analysis of "kau" which were obtained in our laboratories.

The work of Alex in Norway was very helpful. We had not thought of the substance as containing sodium bicarbonate and that led us to use much more sophisticated instruments for the analysis. One may say that what we did was very much like going after an ant with an assault rifle. That may be true but we have learnt more from what we did.

Using Alex's results we decided to confirm the presence of bicarbonate in our sample. We heated the sample in a mass spectrometer and found that water (H_2O) and carbon dioxide (CO_2) were produced at the same time. That is what one would expect when bicarbonate is heated to 270 degree C (see Alex's posting on the topic). However, we observed evolution of more water at a higher temperature. This is called "water of hydration", the water that a molecule picks up when it crystallizes from aqueous medium.

The next test was carried out to determine whether we could detect carbonates and other negatively charged radicals (anions). We obtained the infrared (IR) spectrum of the sample and found that it had carbonate (or bicarbonate), sulfate, silicates. We also found water of hydration by this technique. Elemental analysis indicated to us that the sample contained about 4.5% carbon, 1% hydrogen and 16% oxygen. Since we had not found any carbon of living organism origin, we attributed the observed amount to bicarbonate or carbonate. The hydrogen would be due to water.

The last test we did was by atomic emission spectroscopy. It is known that when a molecule is completely broken down to its atoms in the gas phase, the atoms emit (or absorb) specific colors of light. Using the technique, we found aluminum (1.2%), calcium (3.3%), iron (0.4%), potassium (1.3%), sodium (25%), sulfur (0.4%), and silicon (45.4%). We had previously found chlorine in the sample. This element was not detected because the sample was treated with HCl. We therefore assumed that there is chlorine in the sample. The last test indicated that about 24% of the sample was lost on heating to very high temperature. The water of hydration and bicarbonate would account for this.

I asked my wife about this “kau” business and she informed me that some friends use sodium bicarbonate (baking soda) to cook their waakye. So we cooked waakye with some baking soda and “viola”, the color turned pinkish brown. If you have been eating waakye cooked with “kau”, then you notice a slight difference in the taste of the one cooked with baking soda.

I must add that we did not find anything that would be a health hazard in “kau”. I suggest that, in order to avoid eating sand in the stuff, one should dissolve the “kau” in water and use the aqueous portion in cooking.

20 CIRCUMCISION AND FEMALE MUTILATION

compiled and edited by *Samuel E. Aggrey*

20.00 Introduction by *Samuel E. Aggrey, Section Editor*

Circumcision dates as far back as 1898 B.C. when God made a covenant with Abraham (Holy Bible): “And God said unto Abraham, thou shall keep my covenant, thou and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant that ye shall keep ...Every male child among you shall be circumcised. Any ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant between you and me.” (Genesis 17:9-11). Ishmael, whose later heritage became Moslems, and Isaac of the Judochristian lineage were both children of Abraham, hence male circumcision became an ordinance for Jews, Moslems and Christians. This ordinance has survived over the years, taking different forms in the different evolving cultures and traditions in which it is practised.

Among the later additions to circumcision is female genitalia mutilation which is widespread among Moslem societies. There are varying reasons for male circumcision and female genitalia mutilation in cultures where they are practised now. The most popular reason for male circumcision is religious, as stated above. However, oral tradition in certain cultures maintains “The Supreme Being” created human beings as bisexuals. Humans committed the unpardonable sin and hereafter, the sexes separated only to result in imperfect humans. That, there is part of a “woman” in a man i.e. the foreskin, which makes him imperfect. Conversely, there is part of “man”, the clitoris in a woman, which makes her imperfect. Therefore to achieve perfection, males have to be circumcised and females have to have their genitalia mutilated.

Some societies take both circumcision and mutilation as initiation to adulthood which has to be bought with one’s own blood from “mother earth”. In some societies, infibulation in females is done to prevent her from having sexual intercourse before marriage. One other reason for female genitalia mutilation is to deprive the female of sexual enjoyment so that she would remain faithful to her man. Traditions evolve under certain environments and get propagated down. However, since culture is dynamic, the logic and reasoning behind circumcision and any form of

female genitalia mutilation should be reappraised. Netters discussed this topic thoroughly, emphasizing the impact of both practices on men and women. The material presented contains some suggestions for further reflections and actions.

20.01 FEMALE MUTILATION ON THE RISE IN EUROPE, by *Adams Bodomo, Trondheim, Norway*

(Culled from The Afrocentric Net)

<adams.bodomo@avh.unit.no>

Among the tribes of the European Continent, it is still common in this era of civilisation for a young lady to have her breasts cut open and some of the fluids sucked out to make them look smaller. Sometimes these breasts are completely cut open and pumped up with dangerous steroids. In worse cases, some men, who seem not to be mentally stabilised, have their genitals cut off to enable them take the semblance of women.

I wonder why these people still do such “primitive”, “inhuman” operations, I just wonder why these people and their Eurocentric agents in Africa don’t mind their own business and still go about forming ‘concerned agencies’ and ‘organisations’, who, too incompetent to give an EMPATHIC interpretation of a people’s complete cultural set-up, then go about fanning sensational reports about an apparently uncivilised group of people in the world? Is that the best way to approach the problem of female circumcision in some African communities?

20.02 Re: FEMALE MUTILATION ON THE RISE, by *Isaac Thompson*

<ixtst+@pitt.edu>

Pittsburgh, USA

Breast implants and sex change on the one hand and female genital mutilation on the other are two separate things, culturally and morally. In the former, you have consenting adults who for any number of reasons choose to subject themselves to surgical mutilation. In the latter, you have helpless children who are forcibly subjected to such mutilation. Again, two separate things.

I think also that we should stop justifying things we do by default:

“Others are doing it, so....” We ought to be able to assess our actions and practices on their own merit, not against the background of the quirks and mores of others. For example, those women in these parts who have breast reductions (or enlargements) do so for career or aesthetic reasons. Men who have had their “schlongs” lopped off have often offered logical and utilitarian reasons for that: They were women trapped in men’s bodies and simply wanted to correct that which nature had twisted. And nature sure does twist a lot of things!

The reasons for female genital mutilations, on the other hand, defy any logic, nor do they even have any redemptive qualities of vanity or such. Several reasons for the practice prevail, all questionable upon close examination. Among the popular explanation given is that, female genital mutilation was the result of male insecurity--to tame the female genitalia, minimize the desire for sex and keep the woman faithful. Alas, mutilating the female genitalia does not eliminate sexual desire, since that is psychological. It only kills sensation, making the woman, paradoxically, insatiable during sexual intercourse. Some also have alleged Koranic injunctions as the source of the practice. (The practice is quite widespread in Islamic societies). But Islamic scholars, notably in Egypt, have been at a loss to find any part of the Koran that makes such an injunction, particularly for women. This is a completely useless practice. This practice is said to have been handed down from antiquity. As it happens, our ancestors were not Gods and not everything they handed down is socially useful, even if they were at one time. Female genital mutilation is one such “hand-down”.

20.03 Re: Female Mutilation on the Rise, by *Elizabeth Asiedu*

<easiedu@uxa.cso.uiuc.edu>, Urbana-Champaign, USA

It is unfortunate that we sometimes go so far as discrediting other societies in order to justify some of our outrageous cultural practices. Granted, this Society (Eurocentric) is not perfect, but, is that an excuse for us to condone SAVAGE and CRUEL practices like female circumcision? How can one possibly compare a silicon breast implant surgery with female circumcision? One glaring difference is that the former is optional and the latter is not.

Is it fair for young ladies to undergo such brutality in the name of CULTURE PRESERVATION? Isn't culture supposed to be dynamic? Some of our cultural practices are outdated. They may have worked for our ancestors, yea, but we should be able to modify them to suit us.

Lets make changes where they are due. I hope that those who have the courage to effect such changes will not be labelled as 'sell outs' or 'liberals'.

Whilst we are still on the subject of "Cultural Transformation" let us broaden our scope and look at the "bigger picture". What do netters think of human sacrifice? The practice among certain tribes in Ghana whereby several human heads go down the grave with a dead chief. That is worth debating alongside female circumcision/mutilation. We are all looking forward to a better Ghana!

20.04 Re: Circumcision, by Alex Aboagye, Trondheim, Norway

<alexab@kjemi.unit.no>

I hope the consequences of male and female circumcision are not being compared. The pain may well be the same - this is difficult to say since no one person can experience both and therefore be in a position to compare. But whatever the case, the reasons and consequences are vastly different.

In the case of male circumcision, for starters, I understand it is medically more hygienic. (I stand to be corrected by our medical community). Another reason is that it enhances pleasure during sexual intercourse.

None of these can be said for the female circumcision. If anything at all, they are done for the opposite reasons or for the opposite results. No, I do not think men should be complaining at all. Most men get circumcised even before they become aware of their surroundings so that the pain is minimal. The same cannot be said of their females counterparts. Women who go through this have a traumatic experience. The practice is bad and we need to find ways of stopping it.

20.05 Re: CIRCUMCISION, by *Michael A. Aveh, Trondheim, Norway*

<aveh@avh.unit.no>

My People, the subject of female circumcision was featured on the Human Rights Program, "Rights and Wrongs", on the Super Channel before it appeared on the net. One netter called the act primitive cultural practice that should be done away with in the Ghanaian society. I do not know if he or other netters who wrote on the issue regard the practice as Third World or found only in Ghana and the developing world. It is also practised in countries like Britain and New Zealand. Surprised?

About two years ago there was a television documentary entitled RITES on the issue of female circumcision and there I gathered that it is practised in some 'civilised' places as well. I think the practice is predominant among Muslims. What do I think of it? Hmmmm. Male circumcision? Well, I was circumcised when I was a week old (so my mum says) and could not and cannot tell the pains. As for the 'functionality' of the penis, I will say it is alright, no problem. I wish I had grown with the uncircumcised one, tried it, get circumcised and retried it, to be able to tell the difference. However, I have not come across anyone who has complained about his uncircumcised penis' 'functionality' nor has anyone also complained of problem with his circumcised penis. But for the female one, there have been ladies in the

said documentary and the TV programs that I mentioned earlier on, who complain that they have ‘functional’ problems resulting from female circumcision but I am yet to hear from a lady who will tell me the advantage she has with her circumcised something over those who have not. Maybe somebody on the net who is enlightened on this subject can explain to us how the thing is done, why it is done and other related questions. Or without sounding pornographic, someone who has tried both the circumcised and uncircumcised female something can tell us the difference. I would have told netters if I had, I swear!

20.06 MALE CIRCUMCISION, by *ENOCK, Dalhousie, Canada*

<NOCKY@ac.dal.ca>

Arguments against male circumcision include the following:

1. Circumcision is considered by the medical personnel as an unnecessary surgical procedure.
2. The practice has no medical benefits, no study has proven that the uncircumcised are more prone to genito-urinary tract infections.
3. It is a cultural and/or religious practice imposed on society by the adoption of Judeo-Christian ethics which is no longer necessary for society.
4. That the infliction of pain during infancy produces imbalances in the psyche and behavioral problems later in life of the victims.
5. The stand of medical associations has changed because of the Jewish lobby to keep the practice it. (Initially the pediatricians in America favored abolition, presently many will go for the exercise of individual rights)
6. It brings about unnecessary costs because it is an unnecessary procedure.
7. That removal of the foreskin desensitizes the glan penis, the sensitive part of the penis.
8. There may be various complications from the procedure.

Those for the practice argue that:

1. The presence of the foreskin makes the environment conducive for genito-urinary tract infections.
2. That circumcision causes no changes in behavior and psyche; that the studies cited above were flawed in their design.
3. The uncircumcised are more prone to developing cancer (can't remember the type).
4. That circumcision does not affect the sensitivity of males
5. That the pain due to circumcision is minimal and the wound heals quickly with little or no complications.

I observed that most Western cultures are no longer keen on having their male kids circumcised at birth. In Britain, Australia and the USA about 35-60% of males are reported to be uncircumcised. An interesting observation was that those who want to regain their foreskin after circumcision can actually pull the remaining skin back! (there're materials to help with the endeavor). I also read the experiences with uncircumcised partners which decency forbids me to recount here but the long and short of those stories favor circumcision.

Whether or not male circumcision is justified is debatable; culture and religion seem to play a big part, what will pertain in Ghana in the future is not known but for now I can say that the PNDC government is busy upgrading the skills of the traditional surgeons (wanzams).

20.07 Re: CIRCUMCISION, by *Isaac Thompson, Pittsburgh, USA*

<ixtst+@pitt.edu>

The fact that there is no outcry against male circumcision is perhaps indicative of the qualitative and physical differences between male and female “circumcision.” We can discuss this difference better by first looking at female “circumcision”--or what the experts more appropriately call “female genital mutilation.” (I'm not one of those experts and the knowledge I share here is based mostly on proceedings from conferences on women in development I have attended and other sources. It is a layman's view, if you will.)

First, “female circumcision” is only one of three types of female genital mutilation. (For convenience the term is generally used to cover all three). The other two are “incision” and “infibulation”. They range in severity from circumcision to incision to infibulation.

CIRCUMCISION: The mildest form and the most popular, especially in Arab countries, it involves the removing of the “skin” from the clitoris—very much like male circumcision, except that it deadens the clitoris, killing sexual sensation.

INCISION: Involves the COMPLETE removal of the clitoris (for reasons I have stated in my previous posting on the subject).

INFIBULATION: The most severe, it involves incision PLUS (are you ready for this) the removal of the inner vaginal lips. The vagina is then sewn together.

Why do people subject their daughters to these practices? As I said in my previous posting, nobody has any socially useful reason why, other than the fact that people are following tradition. The problem with traditions, be they in Ghana, Antigua, India or Japan, is that they derive their legitimacy from antiquity. They seldom, if ever, stand the test of rational inquiry in a contemporary setting. Female genital mutilation falls in this category.

How do female genital mutilation and male circumcision compare? An answer to this question requires an acceptance of the role the penis and clitoris play in sexual intercourse. They both are the two principal organs of sexual sensation. The only advantage women have is that they can continue to have sex without “enjoying” it even after their organ had been removed; men have no such luxury. (Is there any among us who lost their penis as a result of circumcision? Please speak now or forever hold your peace!)

Note has already been made by some netters about the health benefits of male circumcision: A person with an uncircumcised penis is more likely to contract STD because the foreskin traps and holds germs often. Secondly, a circumcised penis does not mean loss of sexual sensation—for only the foreskin is rolled back. Thirdly, on an aesthetic level (and this is what I PERSONALLY think), a circumcised penis just plain looks better! (I have seen both, and believe me I choose circumcision any day).

The health threat to “circumcised” women is to be found in all three types of mutilation, but it is most prevalent in infibulation. Here, when the vagina is sewn together, bodily functions such as urinating and menstruation are severely restricted. As a result, some impurities that are normally discharged through menstruation and urinating are retained in the body and diverted into the blood. The result is disease and too often death, especially after child birth. Such loss transcends the individuals or families involved. It affects all of society. The resources expended in caring for these victims of what is otherwise a preventable tragedy could be better utilized in providing for the welfare of the larger society, including of course the victims themselves.

20.08 Re: MALE CIRCUMCISION, by *Alfred Opoku, Ottawa, Canada*

<aopoku@ccs.carleton.ca>

Amanfuor, anyway, my reason for posing that question is that I find it rather confusing that we can talk about the concept without putting it in context. Perhaps, if earlier contributors had provided a comparison it would have helped some of us understand better. Isaac’s information on the differences between circumcision, infibulation and incision are really educative and it brings home the point that we have been throwing words around without a real knowledge of what is involved. I beg the question as to whether the “victims” should be given the choice to decide on whether to go through with it. In answer to my question, someone suggested that male circumcision had some religious significance. Now assuming the same can be said for females, won’t it be prudent to leave it to different societies and individuals to decide if they would rather go through such a religious ceremony or abandon it altogether? I don’t know much about societies with such practices, and therefore I do not understand their reasons for doing so, as such I would not jump the gun and label it as barbaric or primitive. What if, in some areas, even the women accept this practice. The issue of male circumcision comes in handy because in North America, from what I have heard from friends, circumcision is the exception rather than the rule. In fact, a friend from the Caribbean even came to me to find out how true it is that guys

are circumcised in Africa. If a poll is conducted on this net among guys, I am sure we would all affirm that it is a good practice, but don't tell that to guys in North America, with the exception of the Jews. My point is that the discussion should not be one-sided, that is what we believe because for all we know there could be another side to it. I won't practice it, and I think anyone who abhors it should be free to opt out; but are we really sure that everyone (and that is those women who practise it) thinks the same way? I read a story about a woman in France who went to court to challenge the decision to ban the practice. Is there something we don't know?

20.09 RE: CIRCUMCISION, by *amoah@ufcc.ufl.edu*

Florida, USA

Hi, I just read a bit about circumcision and it appears this discussion has been going on for some time though I must say I just read about it cos I wasn't hooked up until recently. As far as I am concerned (and my medical colleagues will agree with me on this), female circumcision has no merit to it whatsoever beside its cultural import. The unhygienic way it is carried out leaves a lot of infection and scarring in its wake. Thus at childbirth the usually elastic birth canal refuses to expand to allow the easy egress of the baby. The effect of this on the delicate head of the infant is head injuries which may not be overt enough at birth but all the same, enough to affect the IQ of the child and thus impede his/her ability to compete with peers in school etc. Serious injuries may occur especially if this is the first child of a young girl and epilepsy is not an uncommon sequelae. On the mother's side, apart from the effect on sex, (the clitoris is a very important part of the female sexual psyche) the refusal of the rigid birth canal to dilate means the child does not come out (obstructed labor) and if the delivery is at home the old ladies shout at and force the poor girl to push or blow into a bottle to increase intra-abdominal pressure in order to force the baby out. There is hideous vaginal tears and uncontrollable bleeding which has resulted in the deaths of several unfortunate girls who did not reach hospital early enough, or delivered in rural hospitals where blood for transfusion is hard to come by. I have had several experiences with such girls at Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital, Accra.

Even in situations where such deliveries occur in the hospital, extensive episiotomies (cutting into the vagina with surgical scissors) has to be undertaken to allow easy birth. This invariably leads to bleeding which is hard to control cos the cut is made in scar tissue. I don't think any of us will want to expose our sisters and wives to such pain and suffering and possible death at childbirth just cos our forefathers used to do it. We might as well revert to human sacrifice cos that was also part of our culture.

The case of male circumcision is slightly different. One, it is done usually at a very early age when the nervous system is not yet fully developed, so the pain is less. If done by the Wansam, the scarification from infection may be bad, but if done under aseptic conditions, the scar is small. There is some evidence that the incidence of cancer of the penis is less in circumcised men than in uncircumcised men cos the prepuce (foreskin) is subject to cancer and also allows the accumulation of dirt and secretions which are potential carcinogens, under it. Note, cancer of the penis is less common among Jews, (they practise routine circumcision) compared to their peers. I hope I have answered some questions.

20.10 FROM FEMALE CIRCUMCISION TO EMPATHY, by *Adams Bodomo, Trondheim, Norway*

I enjoyed reading reactions to my apparent reaction on the issue of female circumcision. I think a useful discussion has ensued from it. Some contributors seemed to believe that I was justifying the practice, some kind of defending the indefensible. This is certainly not so.

I should have to clarify that my ultimate purpose of reaction was to suggest, as I have probably done on this net many times, a more justified methodology of the study of comparative cultural practices - EMPATHY, in fact, subjective empathy. This must have been fully ignored, even though I insisted on the method.

With empathic (not emphatic) approaches we will cease to look at groups of people and their cultures from a Darwinist, evolutionary perspective with the consequence that some groups are more civilised, more up to date, etc than others. With empathy each group of people will be taken right from the study as good well-meaning people who are trying to subdue the vicissitudes of nature for a living, for a way of life, a way of life that will necessarily be different from others due to historical and environmental parameters that are different too.

Empathic approaches should see us do away with eurocentric approaches, whose 'experts' start from a premise that they are out to study 'primitives', 'to save their souls', 'to knock some kind of civilisation into their heads'. It is from such premises, from such perspectives that a war general in Bosnia is a clan leader in Somalia, national unrests elsewhere are tribal conflicts in Africa, that while a law is being passed in a Paris political setting to ban "savage female circumcision", a young man is turning into a woman somewhere in a nearby hospital - a modern technological achievement and not a savage act. It is from such perspectives that lettuce is salad for the educated man and gyangboro is looked on as savage leaves in my village, that yam becomes some kind of defective potato.

It is my personal view that modern day afrocentric methodologies as suggested by people such as Molefi Asante should incorporate empathic techniques for studying human societies, human cultures, for studying comparative ethnology. Empathic studies will ensure that humans are seen on an equal footing, are seen from a comprehensive outlook, are better understood. It is only then that we can begin to offer more appropriate solutions to the problems that confront humans who are common in being warriors in constant search for a better way of life, for a better culture.

My personal experiences are that if you go to the Gurenne people, the Dagaaba, the Kusaasi, etc. and tell them that they should stop female circumcision because it is 'SAVAGE' and 'CRUEL', if you go and completely condemn it in front of them they will never stop it. That is the mistake that has been made till now in our dear country. Why is the trokosi still going on? Why is there still female circumcision in Northern Ghana? Why is there still human sacrifice in Sefwi and other places?

I suggest that we should try to put ourselves in these people's situation, identify with them, see what they see and feel what they feel. In the long run we can lead them to the changes we want. Missionaries are beginning to see that; they will soon succeed. They have come from far, have thrown away eurocentric missiology, in favour of a more afrocentric one. AFROLOGISTS like Molefi Asante are beginning to throw away eurocentric African studies; they have seen the light.

Nobody is talking about fanatical cultural preservation but everybody should be against the use of such words like 'savage' and 'barbaric' on other persons ways of living; it does not solve any problem, it does not stop them from living; on the contrary it offends them and they will resist any influences, any patronising civilisation missions, any 'concerned groups' any 'organisations' with eurocentric arsenal.

I humbly submit that those ethnic groups in Northern Ghana and other parts of Africa who have practised and still practise female circumcision cannot just be described as primitive, savage or backward; nor should parents in these groups be seen as cruel and wicked to their children. These people are as equally concerned with the future of their children as would any parent in any part of the world. It has been their genuine conviction that circumcision and other rites would prepare their children to lead adult lives as good wives, mothers, fathers, farmers and useful citizens of their society. I sincerely believe that if anybody is patient enough to listen to them, understand their world out-look and finally try to convince them that current knowledge and practices in science and medicine can take the place of such rites and make their children successful adults without going through all the ordeals, they will quickly embrace these newer ways of doing things.

We have been talking about the issue of ethnicity on this net for some time. My suggested methodology could be of help. Let each and every one of us look at the other with EMPATHY. We are all good to start with. No one is inward looking or backward, no one is more intelligent genealogical, let alone to talk of ethnic origins. Let us study each other from an afrocentric, empathic perspective, we will understand each other more, that we have a common destiny, that a person does not gain anything from having 5 of his people in the management of a corporation when he himself is unemployed for lack of skills.

I could write more but I think the methodology I suggest for the study of our societies could help us solve the problem of female circumcision, could help us solve our ethnic problems, could help us rediscover and reorganise our values as

Africans, our values as Ghanaians. Once we understand this, opposition politicians who run out of ideas will no more take their pencils and papers and go about head-counting in corporations and then crying foul; the statistics thus got will be diversionary, reactionary, anti-developmental; these statistics can easily burn down our huts, these statistics have fatal semantics, they kill and maim us. This will not lead us anywhere, it can only perpetrate fanatical ethnicity!

But I want us, I really want us to develop as a nation, to put the more useful parts of our various cultures together to form one Culture. Sons and daughters of Twum and Antwi, Nii Anyitey Kwakwanya, Naa Gbewaa, Sulemana Ibn Dauda, King Gartey and of Idewura Japka, we could do more and build one nation, one modern Ghanaian 'tribe'. But first of all let us be EMPATHIC in methodology, in orientation. Thank you.

21

POLITICS AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

compiled and edited by *Daniel Appiah*

21.00 Introduction by *Daniel Appiah, Section Editor*

Two crucial questions have been shaping many of the debates and discussions on the net. These are: 1) why is Ghana underdeveloped or poor? and 2) how can Ghana develop or achieve socio-economic and political progress? Finding answers to these problems can be difficult. This difficulty, notwithstanding, netters have been trying to make their contributions. Many postings have been made to offer answers to the two questions.

A collection of some of those postings is conveniently grouped under the topic-"Politics and Good Governance. The postings which constitute the topic were sparked off by Charles Awasu. In his posting "Pseudocapitalism", Awasu argues that lack of finance or what he terms "pseudocapital" to finance development projects and programmes lies at the root of our problems. He further argues that if investible capital is so crucial to our developmental efforts, why is it that Ghana has not been able to attract such capital.

The reason why Ghana, in particular and Africa in general has not been able to attract such capital is the thrust of Kofi Amoah's rejoinder. Amoah maintains that the reason is bad governance which manifests in the form of mismanagement, dictatorial practices, and leadership crises. Following from this analysis Amoah concludes that good governance is the key to open the door for the free flow of Pseudocapital into Ghana. This position of Good Governance as the key is supported by other supplementary rejoinders. However, the position did not go far enough to address the difficult question of: what is good Governance and how can it be achieved?

This question is the subject of my rejoinder. In my contribution I attempted to provide what I call a "context specific" definition of what good governance may mean and how it can be achieved. I argue that Good governance should be seen as a means of achieving developmental outcomes. I maintain that if developmental outcome is the end, then the development experiences of the Western countries and South East Asia teach that cultural variables play very important roles in securing development. I conclude that competitive Multi-party democracy (often used as synonym for good governance) and "developmental Culture" may lead to developmental outcomes.

This conclusion was supported by Mahamudu Bawumia. However, he maintains that, historically, democracy has not lead to development. In response to Bawumia, I concur that History has not given verdict on the Democracy-leads-to-development view but what history seems to be teaching is that wherever and whenever development has occurred, three ideas have been present. These ideas are commitment, competence, and consensus or the 3Cs as they are called. I therefore contend that for development to occur in Ghana, the politicians should show commitment, the bureaucrats must be competent, and the public should be provided with consensus.

As if not satisfied with this my contention, I attempted to provide a further flesh to the idea of good governance. In the posting: good Governance-a Recipe, I propose a three-factor formula for good governance. These factors are political, economic and human behaviour. On Political Factors I call for the formation and strengthening of civil societies. On the economical factor I suggest the total deregulation and decontrolling of the economy. On human behaviour, I argue for more proactive ways to solve the seemingly endless problem of corruption. This posting received critical reviews and cautions from Sitsofe Anku, Isaac Thompson, and Samuel Asomaning in their rejoinders.

21.01 Pseudo Capitalism, by *Charles Awusu*

(Editorial Note: It was not possible to locate this key article at later stages of editing the Yearbook. The sectional editor has however done a good job by giving us an “abstract” of the article:

‘In his posting “Pseudocapitalism”, Awusu argues that lack of finance or what he terms “pseudocapital” to finance development projects and programmes lies at the root of our problems.”

We would be happy to share this article with netters if we ever relocated it.- - A.B. Bodomo)

21. 02: Re: Pseudocapitalism by Kofi Amoah-Apraku, Maple, Florida, USA

Date: Sun, 21 Nov., 1993.

It is interesting to note some of the reasons given on this net as to why most African countries are lagging behind in development. However, I think so far, I only agree with Baidoe-Ansah’s explanations ie BAD GOVERNANCE. Since independence Africa has been governed by de facto dictators, whether ABONGO BOYS or civilians. These guys have always seen their political opponents and successful businessmen as contestants to their throne who must be eliminated at all cost.

Intellectuals who criticize government policy in no uncertain terms are persecuted because their criticisms are not “CONSTRUCTIVE”, even if they suggest alternatives to government policies. These dictators have usually taken arbitrary decisions which have driven away potential investors or have engaged in acts which have created a situation where their own citizens(including professionals and intellectuals) do not feel safe and therefore have either had to flee for dear life or save somewhere in order to safeguard their lifelines.

It is not that Ghanaians or Africans for that matter, cannot start bicycle factories and later put engines into them. The fact is, they have not been allowed to!!!!. Examples can run into pages!!! Anybody remember Mark Cofie Engineering, Kowus Motors, Tata Brewery, Vacuum Salts and many ceteras. These people start ventures which have potentials of growing into something big. To give a latter day example in Ghana, Safo-Adu was dragged to tribunal and tried for months unend for industrial fraud after he had managed to acquire a World Bank(?) loan on his own account to start a chemical factory. It was only when the tribunal chairman surfaced in London, that the public got to know what had been suspected all along.

Another example is the head of state who, at a time he was canvassing for private investment in the country, tried to exhort Ghanaians not to buy certain products of Ghanaian entrepreneurs because they may potentially sponsor an opposition party. Appenteng has had his life’s efforts dashed and all his investments gone to naught. His Vacuum Salts have been seized and all the industries which spun off it(eg Intravenous Infusions which supplied all Ghana’s needs of hospital infusions) taken over and sold. Yaw Agyaba wrote a nice piece about how we need to help develop our country. Infact we have always been willing to help but we are not allowed to. Remember the “culture of silence” era? Only those willing to be sycophants got their voices heard.

Some netters have raised the issue of Africans saving in foreign banks. Much as I would like to condemn this practice, I would also like to point out that this has been necessitated by expediency. In Ghana, currencies have been changed in manners which either reduced one’s savings or make useless any unchanged left overs. Assets have been arbitrarily frozen. At one point in time, anybody with more than fifty thousand cedis in his/her account had it automatically

frozen. Under these circumstances, it will be only a fool who will carry all his/her life's earnings and dump them in a Ghanaian bank. The consequence of this is that there is no capital accumulation.

A case in point: after the recent fire at Makola No.2, it was discovered that traders lost huge sums of money to the fire. One woman had C18 million burnt on her premises. A Malian was more fortunate, the C58 million he kept in a Hole under his store escaped the fire. The question obviously is why were they keeping all these sums by themselves instead of keeping them in the banks, where the monies could be borrowed and used as capital in other business ventures? The answer I think is obvious.

In fact I have come across a lot of Ghanaians here in the US and in Europe (and I am sure most of you have also) who have money enough to open any type of business in Ghana, but are thinking twice, because of the experience of the pioneering entrepreneurs. A lot of people think we need a new type of government in Africa to develop and are blaming the intellectuals for not coming up with the appropriate ideas. I do not share this view at all. What we need is governments that will guarantee our individual freedoms to develop our talents and conduct our businesses without fear. A type of government we can change peacefully, if we do not want it; a type of government which will allow us to do our business in peace, even if we openly condemn its policies; a type of government that would not freeze our assets under dubious circumstances. I am not saying that if some businessmen are found to be wanting in certain areas like taxes etc, they should not be disciplined. Most of the time what we see is political persecution disguised under "probity and accountability"

Some netters have touched on the need to form regional groups. They should take a look at the ECOWAS protocol. This is a wonderful piece of document but what happened to its implementation? Rawlings is afraid that Eyadema is harbouring dissidents ready to cross the border and overthrow him and vice versa. So the piece in the ECOWAS protocol which allows for the free movement of goods and people across borders is only on paper!!!. would this be the situation if there exist in both countries governments which are only changed periodically in FREE AND FAIR elections? So no matter what groups we form, unless there are free governments around Africa which are only changed democratically, and are not distrustful of each other, it will not work even if God co-signs it!!!.

And anybody who thinks the era of dictators are over in Africa should think again. Just look at what happened in Burundi and Nigeria a few days ago. Even in our dear Ghana, there is bill which has been submitted to parliament by the government called the Serious Fraud Bill. Basically what it says is that a committee is to be set up by the government which will have police and judicial powers to trace, arrest, and prosecute individuals considered to be engaged in serious fraud. The committee will have the power to freeze the assets of persons "being investigated or going to be investigated". The scary part of it is that the term "serious fraud" in the bill is not to be defined. It will be left to the chairman of the committee to determine case by case, what constitutes serious fraud. So, netters, as you can see the potential for abuse is enormous.

To conclude, I do not think we need an Africanised form of democracy to develop. What we need are governments which will allow their citizens to develop their individual talents without fear or favour, governments which are only changed at the will of the people through the exercise of their suffrage. This will create an environment in which Africans with money abroad will be free to invest and save at home, and African intellectuals will be willing to return home to work in an environment where they can influence policy. Without this we can Africanize, westernize, capitalize, socialize or communize our governments to no avail. The results will be the same: the flight of professionals and intellectuals, savings abroad to protect our earnings and no matter how we formulate and sign them.

21.03 Re: Pseudocapitalism, by *Danial Appiah, Ottawa, Canada*

Date; Tuesday 23 Nov., 1993.

The postings so far on the topic have been very illuminating and informative. Amoah, in his analysis, painstakingly gave a depressing lists of some of the evil effects bad governance has brought to the economy of Ghana. This analysis has led to what appears to be a general consensus that good governance is the panacea to all our developmental problems, or at least, the problems that inhibit the free flow of pseudocapital and stifles individual creativity and innovativeness. Well, as the name suggests GOOD governance is a good thing. And who can be against a good thing.

Good as it may, we have not engaged ourselves in the difficult questions of: what is this good governance?; and how can it be achieved? I think we all have to engage in finding answers to these questions which are so crucial to our development. But answering such questions in such a forum may be difficult. The difficulty arising from the fact that such discussion will necessarily demand the use of some “technical terms”. And considering the composition of the Okeyeame audience and the recent incidents of accusations and counter-accusations of untamed use of “frightening jargons” one may be challenged to use lay language to express such answers.

Thus Challenged, I will attempt to offer a context-specific answer to what I think good governance may mean. From Amoah’s analysis, which is located within the context of pseudocapitalism, one can say that good governance is a system that promotes and encourages the free flow of investible capital and creates conditions where all Ghanaians, irrespective of their ethnic background, religious persuasions, party affiliations, gender, and sex, have the opportunities to realize their creativity and dreams.

This good governance may be achieved to a large extent by laws and institutions and to a less extent by moral suasions. It is how these laws are made and institutions formed that distinguish a democratic governance from authoritarian governance. And while it is increasingly recognized that these opposing forms of governance or regimes are not ends in themselves but means to achieving development, it is, however, not settled which regime can better lead to the achievement of development.

This lack of settlement is evidenced by the development experiences of the western industrialised countries which are considered democratic and the Newly Industrialising Countries(NICs) including Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, and lately China. These Countries used authoritarian governance to achieve their miraculous developmental outcomes. The goal of good governance is to achieve development. And good governance itself may be measured by desirable developmental outcomes.

The achievement of desirable developmental outcomes in both some democratic and some authoritarian regimes, has compelled some commentators to argue that the most important variable required for desirable developmental outcome is culture. This culture is conceived to embrace all aspects of political and economic life. It embodies such ideas as hardwork, efficiency, honesty etc. Such a culture should perhaps, in summary, embody the protestant and Confucius work ethics. Work ethics which we are being made to believe, drove and are still driving the the development of the first world and South East Asia and China.

If we are to accept this culture argument, which derives its support from empirical evidence, we can argue that the development that we all want can only be achieved by a “developmental Culture”(the best of protestant,Confucius, and traditional African ethics) and not a regime, authoritarian or democratic.

Despite this argument, when given the choice of regimes, I will choose a democratic regime, with all its shortcomings, over an authoritarian one. A democratic regime of the competitive party election type is my preference. Thus in my opinion, a developmental culture combined with a competitive democracy may be the variables to achieve developmental outcomes. Given this opinion, my desire has always been how to preserve democratic regimes and avoid coups. It may be difficult to prevent coups in Ghana, since there are many people in the military who are power-thirsty and would wish to carry out military adventures. But coups, when they occur, can be aborted by a determined and courageous people. A case in point is the Russia people, who through sacrifice and courage, aborted the communists coup of August 1989. A coup, which they felt, would turn back the clock of progress and development of their dear country.

Good governance and coup-free competitive democracy are good things which we all want. But like many other good things in life, they are not free. They are costly. And as one netter observed we should be prepared to pay the price for them. Are we prepared?

21.04 Democracy vrs Authoritarianism, by *Mahamudu Bawumia*

Date: Sat., 27 Nov., 1993.

Dan, thanks for your incisive analysis. I think the issue of what is good governance is a normative one and thus, there is unlikely to be a consensus. Like you, I instinctively prefer the democratic route but it does not appear as though history is on our side. Are you aware of any country where democracy has preceded economic development? A friend of mine posed this question to me and I am afraid I have not been able to convince him as yet. May be you could help me out.

21.05 Re: Democracy vrs Authoritarianism, by *Daniel Appiah*

Date: Fri., 26 Nov., 1993.

Mahamudu, I have read your posting. And let me admit outright that the question you posed is a very, very difficult one. True history is not our side. But the unfortunate thing is that democracy is being marketed world-wide as if it was the magic wand that conjured development to the so-called developed countries. The fact is democracy has been so marketed in recent years that it has even been elevated to development itself. However, as you rightly asked it is not clear, theoretically or historically, whether democracy leads to development or vice versa.

What is clear, nonetheless, is the fact that where development has occurred, there has always been what is referred to as the 3Cs. These are COMMITMENT by the top men or the politicians: COMPETENCE of the bureaucrats and policy makers and: CONSENSUS of the people. These are the ingredients required to bring about sustained development in any country. It therefore follows that it matters very little whether the regime is democratic or authoritarian. If the 3Cs are not present, it will be very difficult to expect any meaningful and sustained development in any country.

What emerges from the above suggests that much as history is not on democracy's side, it is also not on the side of authoritarianism. What is on the side of the developed countries, which history has given verdict is the 3Cs. Of course of the 3Cs consensus building is the most contentious. And that begs the question: how do you build consensus for the sound policies designed by the competent bureaucrats, and supported by the committed politicians? Consensus is a very crucial ingredient, because it is required for the successful implementation of the policies. And without consensus, the sound policies may be reduced to mere paper work.

And as we are all aware, under an authoritarian rule, consensus is achieved largely through coercion and intimidation. The advantage of these means of achieving consensus is that, among others, they lead to speedier implementation and less distractions from interest groups and lobbyists. The downside, however, is that such means are considered evil and unacceptable. Under democracy, the consensus is built through long debates and voting. The advantage is that such means are considered acceptable and "civilised". The disadvantage is that they lead to slower implementation and more obstruction from interest groups pressure. Thus, both of the means have their evil sides.

The question then arises: which of the two evils - democracy or authoritarianism is suitable for Ghana and, perhaps the whole of Africa. I will say, with some qualifications later, that the stage of our development seems to suggest that authoritarianism may be the better of the two. This is because as Julius Nyerere once said "where others have crawled we have to run". And to run, we need to implement our policies faster with less interest groups pressure. Such a need, in my opinion, may be met under authoritarianism.

The countries of Latin America, particularly Chile under Pinochet, used what has been called the Authoritarian-Bureaucratic governing apparatus to launch and achieve some developmental outcomes. Similarly, the tigers of South East Asia used the same apparatus to reach where there are in the seemingly endless development race. In Africa, however, the use of this apparatus has produced rather dismal failures. And among the reasons given, the most convincing ones are that Africans lacked the commitment of their leaders and the competence of the bureaucrats. The only exception in Africa is, perhaps, Ghana under the Rawlings military regime. The regime did not achieve development, and of course no regime could have achieved that within ten years, but what it achieved was to lay the foundation and create the conditions for sound development to take off.

Such foundations and conditions, although not fully completed, have made the country to reach the stage where, I think, there is a need for some power sharing and open discussions for democratic consensus building. The sad thing is that even if I do not think, which I am sure you do not too, the international community thinks that way. The Fall of the authoritarian socialist alternative, which is being celebrated by liberal democrats as the "end of history", has effectively weakened the position of any democracy-dissident.

Such overwhelming international thinking has culminated into what is now referred to as the “Washington Consensus”. This consensus has been built by the World Bank and the IMF. The consensus has been packaged as the liberalization-privatization-democracy construct which is being sold to developing countries as the Structural Adjustment Programme. One fact, though, is that we need financial resources to carry out any developmental efforts. The World Bank and the IMF command such an enormous amount of financial resources and clout, that if you do not accept their package, it will be impossible to make any headway in development. So we have little option but to accept their package. And included in this package is democracy.

For this democracy to lead to the development that we all want, there will be the need for both commitment on the part of our politicians and competence on the part of bureaucrats. Without these ingredients, I’m sorry democracy will not lead us anywhere. Rather it may provide a recipe for anarchy. History or theory has not proved that either democracy or authoritarianism has led or can lead to development. What, I think, history has taught is that wherever and whenever, sustained development has occurred, such development has been led by the 3Cs.

21.06 Good Governance: A Recipe?, by *Daniel Appiah*

Date: Sat., 04 Dec., 1993.

Answers to the questions of what is good governance and how it can be achieved remain elusive. Much as such answers are elusive, one can think of certain conditions, which when present, can ensure good governance. These conditions can be divided into three areas: Political; Economic and; Human Behaviour.

Political Conditions.

Under the political conditions the following can be identified:

- a) the level of organization and political power of civil societies such as the Labour Unions, Students Movements, Farmers Associations, Religious Organizations, Miners Group, Small-scale Firms Associations etc.
- b) Good laws and the institutions to enforce those laws. The effective enforcements of laws that guarantee the freedom of the press, the independence of the Judiciary and the Legislature.

Economic Conditions.

To the extent that economic crises can be translated into crises of governance, the following may be relevant at the MICRO level;

- a) the total deregulation of all prices - price of goods and services; price of labour(wages); price of capital(interest rates); price of foreign exchange(exchange rate); price of land and property(rent)
- b) the elimination of all licensing and control systems with regard to trade and investment. These will include the elimination of the import licensing system, the import controls, the quota system, and the high minimum capital requirement for setting up limited liability companies.

These economic measures are necessary. This is because one of the enduring lessons that can be learnt from our post-independence economic history is that policies of price, trade, and investment controls have done more harm than good. Such policies, more than any other else, have provided absolute recipe for corruption, bribery, nepotism, and all the attendant evils which are so endemic in our society. These policies have the effects, among other things, of creating powerful constituencies of winners(such as importers). And such winners, once created become very difficult to dismantle. They will fight to maintain those policies, although such policies may not be in the national interest.

- c) Legislations and policies that create incentives for cheating and corruption or give undue advantages to any individual or group of people should be identified and repealed and abolished. Thus, any new policies or commercial

laws should be analysed and evaluated on the basis of whether they will create incentives for cheating or whether they will create winners who may not be able to give fair compensation to the losers. Every policy or law inevitably creates winners and losers. But, what this condition is saying is that the winners and losers of any policies or laws should be identified and evaluations be made on how the winners can be made to compensate the losers.

On the MACRO level, the following may be considered:

a) there should be a legislative commitment to macroeconomic policies. For example, a commitment on what type of budget policy should be designed and implemented. Parliament should decide, every year, whether the government should run a budget deficit, a budget surplus, or a balanced budget. A case in point is Japan, where the constitution mandates a balanced budget every year. Perhaps, we can take a cue from that.

b) the legislature can also set target for inflation. For example, in Germany parliament sets inflation target at 2-3% every year. Similar legislative commitments on setting targets for the Balance of Payments and Unemployment Rates may also be necessary conditions for good governance.

Human Behaviour.

The realizations of the above political and economic measures will hinge, to a large extent, on the people who will design and implement the policies. Consequently, the commitment and competence of the politicians and bureaucrats will be crucial for the conditions to be realised. In order to ensure that the people with the requisite competence and commitment are chosen, the following may be relevant:-

a) there should be a compilation of contemporary and historical data of individuals who want to serve in the public service in whatever capacity. Based on such data the psychological and sociological profiles of such individuals may be constructed. Such a profile may enable the identification of people who may be more or less predisposed to behaviour which may be or may not be needed for effective and efficient public service.

b) an effective and efficient information system is also required. There has been many discussions about policy implementation vis-a-vis the competence of bureaucrats. It is instructive to note that the capacity to implement policies essentially involves making decisions about: what to do; how to do it; when to do it; where to do it and; why to do it. And for these decisions to be intelligent and effective, they require information. Hence, the design and implementation of an information system which is able to provide bureaucrats with the needed information at the right time, will go a long way to improve bureaucratic performance.

c) The issue of political and bureaucratic corruption has been widely discussed. And one way to reduce it will be the construction of psychological and sociological profiles which I alluded to above. Another way is to strengthen our institutions: the family units; educational establishments; the churches; the mosques and; the shrines. These institutions can play significant roles in inculcating, into both the young and the old, acceptable social behaviours.

Besides, corruption can be reduced by re-defining our folk hero. It has been observed, and with some truth, that the Ghanaian folk hero is Kwaku Ananse. In many of our folk tales and lores, Kwaku Ananse is portrayed as a cunning, clever, and someone who usually employs tricks to reap where he has not sown. Perhaps, it is about time we re-created a better image about Ananse. An image that will cast him as a hardworking, clever, and honest hero. Similarly, with the increasing role of women in nation building, it is time also to portray the female counterpart of Kwaku Ananse, Anansekwa as a hardworking, honest, and independent person. Such recreations may help curb the corruption and the stealing from “aban”(state) which are rife in our society.

Well, these are some of the ingredients that I think can make for a good governance “meal”. Others can add, subtract, or do whatever, all in the spirit that together we can make a difference.

21.07 Re: Governance Recipe, by *Sitsofe Anku, Vancouver, Canada*

Date: Mon., 06 Dec., 1993.

Dan, you provided a recipe, fine!. But I think there will be problems with “total deregulation of all prices...” and “elimination of all licensing and control system with regard to trade and investment”. I do not know of any country whose government (through the central Bank) does not control interest rates, for example. Would you allow for example, trading in guns and pornography in Ghana? Not everything done by other countries(the west?) should be desirable for Ghana. And it will not be desirable to eliminate ALL licensing and control and deregulate ALL prices. We must be selective.

21.08 Governance Recipe: Caution!, by *Isaac Thompson, Pittsburgh, USA*

Date: Mon., 06 Dec., 1993.

I think there are aspects of your proposals that could actually UNDERMINE democracy, not promote or sustain it.

Your proposal that “ psychological and sociological profiles” be created of potential civil servants smacks of an instrument of police state, not a democratic one. Just what sort of criteria would you use in assessing someone’s “sike” and sociological profile? Answering such a question leaves a huge room for abuse. Simple competency tests and experience, along with a system of accountability will do just fine, I think.

You also focus on “politicians and bureaucrats” in policy formulation, to the exclusion of the PEOPLE who ultimately matter. I would like to think, based on Ghana’s experience, that in the “common” people whom we tend to ignore in the policy-making process, sits an untapped reservoir of ingenuity and knowledge.

You may remember that the current system of collecting income taxes on daily basis in Ghana was the result of a suggestion from an “illiterate” market woman. It has worked so well that donor organizations are thinking of introducing it elsewhere in Africa! It makes you wonder how many other wonderful ideas have gone untapped for the past 35+ years because of top-down policy making.

In calling for total deregulation of prices, you seemed to have taken the efficiency of the market as an article of faith. Watch out, Bro.! There is no such place on earth where prices are wholly deregulated--not here in America, not in Europe, and certainly not in Asia.

The Japanese certainly have been some of the best engineers of the market(Look at their rice market, for example). In the US anything containing sugar, steel, or dairy costs at least 16% more than it would, if the government let the market set the price. Billions of dollars are spent yearly for other such market manipulations.

Lesson: The market is good, but it has its limitations and we would do well to bear that in mind when formulating policy. Over to you.

21.09 Good Governance etc. - Some Comments, by *Sam Asomaning, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada*

Date : Mon., 06 Dec., 1993.

I have been so pressed with time to contribute to the debates on coups, the military etc., I feel I should jump in with some comments, however, incoherent my ideas might be before the debate dies out. Dan Appiah’s posting on Good Governance has been eloquently put. My comments are:-

1) On human behaviour, the caution given by Isaac, should not be taken lightly. While Dan did not elaborate on the use such data might be put, it is not hard to realize that in the wrong hand, their adverse effects will be uncalculable. It is also noteworthy to remember J. Edgar Hoover and his blackmailing of Americans, both powerful and weak, due to data he had gathered on them. It is also worthwhile to note the ex-soviets attempts to create a “new person” over a period of more than 70 years through indoctrination and coercion yielded no fruits, but only added to their miseries. The behaviour traits we normally observe in our public service, more often than not, have deep economic roots.

2) On the economic front, I cannot agree more with the idea of deregulation - not only of prices, but also of all aspects of our economic life. While there might be many evidence against it, I think, it worth considering it again for various reasons. In setting out regulations associated with policies, we have tended to rely too much on evidence and examples from the matured economies. Ours is by no means a matured one. And as has been pointed out by many postings on the net, our debt service ratio, for example, is one of the worst in the world today, and our growth rates are mostly negative.

Faced with such state of affairs, I think policy makers not only be creative, but also bold at trying drastic or extreme measures, including letting the economy runs its course. The government should close its eyes and ears to rules as long as useful production takes place. Keep in mind that I am not a disciple of the efficient free market school of thought. But, I do believe that due to the structure of our economies, rules and regulations do more harm than they help us. I believe we need to jump start our economies; and the quicker, the better.

To this end, we will be better off with minimal rules and allow the market to dictate a large part of our economy. I would like to draw netters attention to the fact that close to 40% of the Italian economy is said to be an underground economy. No taxes, licensing etc. Yet it is a very integral and prosperous part of the economy. It has been speculated that any attempt to crack down that sector, will see over half of it disappear. The consequences to the Italian economy, as a whole, can only be speculated on paper. Heard about the domino effects!!

Another point is that Ghanaians tend to be uncomfortable with some of their own amassing substantial wealth(not stealing please!) to the extent that they tend to undermine them, while encouraging foreigners. No xenophobia here. My point is we have to do some work by ourselves before relying solely on foreign investment. No matter how we cut it, trickle down economics will exist in every economy. So we have to recognize the reality and live with it. J Paul Getty once said if all the wealth in the world were shared equally amongst all people, within days, some will be rich and some poor. The idea of fairness will lways be a relative notion.

Hence, what matters is how much trickles down. This should certainly not be done with rules, at least not at this stage of our economic development. There is evidence to support the opinion that, the more the top makes, and keeps it in the economy, the larger the proportion that trickles down to the grassroots. On the attempts at redistribution of wealth - a lot of regulations do that- result in a host of negative economic phenomena, including tax evasions, flight of capital, unwillingness to invest etc.

I dare say that the same goes for our participation in international fads, such as the environmental movement etc. I am not against it except that it costs us more than any section of the world population. At this stage of our development, our capital is better used to solve our economic problems. Because many of our problems, including military coups, inability to implement problems etc., have their roots in economics. Hence, unless we tackle the economic issue successfully, I am afraid many of our problems will remain unsolved, no matter the bright ideas and intentions.

To successfully deal with our economic plight, we must adopt STRATEGIES that suit our STRUCTURE, a topic I intend to elaborate on later.

22 RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Compiled and edited by *Sam Asomaning*

22.00 Editor's Preface

In 1993, there were two major discussions on research and development on Okyeame. The first one was a direct result from the discussion on sex education when James Essegbey (see article 2.16 in Section 2: Sex Education) asked whether there were any members of Okyeame who knew the details of puberty rites. This led to questions from some members as to whether we do research into our traditional and cultural practices. The exchanges resulted in numerous articles on research and development with particular emphasis on research and development in science and technology.

The second debate resulted from a discussion on herbal remedies and patent rights. This discussion quickly spilled into research and development in science and technology and the role of the universities. The general consensus seems to be that we need more 'appropriate' research and development. Research and development that can yield immediate benefits in the form of products. Research and development that results solely in the publication of scientific papers was viewed as a misallocation of scarce resources at this stage of our development.

Research and development in Africa is a topic dear and emotional to the 'educated elite' in Africa. On the one hand we can boast of all raw material resources, and a sizeable pool of necessary skills yet we are marred in poverty and do import things as simple as dog chains and keyholders. It is not too uncommon to hear ordinary folks and external detractors use our inability to develop effective technological processes as a proxy for the failure of our educational systems.

It is noteworthy that research and development - especially its funding, has always been a controversial topic the world over. For example, a section of the political right in Canada, notably the Fraser Institute, has always argued for the elimination of government funding of research and development. They often use the technologically successful but commercially unsuccessful Atomic Energy of Canada to point out why governments have no business funding research and development. To this end the article by Francis Achana on social sciences research, especially marketing research cannot be ignored. Marketing gurus have a saying that 'you produce what you can sell but you don't sell what you can produce'.

Perhaps the failure of research and development in Africa is a testimony to the absence of a private sector economy, much as we loathe to admit. There seems to be evidence all over the world that a sizeable proportion of government research dollars end up in the drain, probably due lack of effective performance evaluation measures. Thus developing a REAL private sector is perhaps one of the solutions to our research and development blues.

In this section, unlike the section on coups and military, for instance, all cogent articles are included. The articles reflect the spectrum of opinion on Okyeame on the all important issue of research and development. My thanks go to Yaw Amoateng Agyepong and Adams Bodomo for proofreading the section and offering very useful suggestions.

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Section Editor

22.01 Research and Development, by *Steve Acheampong*

Date: Sat, 24 Apr 93 16:41:36 PDT
From: Steve Acheampong <stevea@maxey.unr.edu>
Subject: Research and Development

Over the past few months there have been a lot of discussion on the socio-economic and cultural aspects of Ghana in particular and Africa in general. Netters have expressed opinions on the legacies of colonialism and how past governments have failed to do certain things. There were discussions on ways to integrate sex education in our society with the right cultural perspective. There are certain cultural practices that some of us just do not understand. I became a bit worried when during the debate on sex education, someone requested if somebody on the net could enlighten us on what happens during puberty rites for girls in our society.

I hope some of our sociology friends on the net might have done some research in certain aspects of our society to enable us have an insight into such issues which form an integral part of our culture. What makes the West and other developed countries 'tick' is that they put a lot of money into social and scientific research to enable them understand certain basic things which are crucial to their development. Without research, it is impossible for any society to progress.

I want to use this medium to invite netters to discuss ways and means that we can improve research in the third world in general and Ghana in particular. At the moment, it seems that most of the research institutions in Ghana lack the necessary equipment and facilities to conduct any meaningful research work. The libraries in the universities also lack the necessary books and journals. I believe that we have well trained technical men and women who can hold their own against anybody anywhere in the world. The problem is the lack of the tools with which to do the work. Any suggestions?

22.02 Re. Research and Development, by *Alex Aboagye . Kjemiteknikk*

Date: Tue, 27 Apr 1993 11:52:51 +0200
From: "Alex Aboagye . Kjemiteknikk" <alexab@kjemi.unit.no>
Subject: Re. Research and Development

Steve Acheampong raises a very important issue - research and development. Steve seems to be saying we have the men, but we lack the tools of the trade. I agree with Steve that every research institution needs a certain basic set of equipments and library facilities to be able to function. Perhaps the real question is - are our universities and research institutions back home so poorly equipped that they cannot do any meaningful research?

I will say it depends on what research work is being done. Hardly anybody does research these days just for the fun of it. Research should aim at not only solving problems but relevant problems. For “poor” countries we may even narrow the purpose of research down to finding solutions to the country’s social, economic and technological problems. These days every country is finding out what it’s strong points are and investing most of it’s energies and resources in those areas.

So if we find out that we have a lot of gold and other mineral reserves, then we should strengthen our mining, geological and mineral processing engineering departments so that we can make the best use of our natural resources instead of giving all to foreign companies because we lack the knowhow. If our basic problem is feeding our populace, not because we do not produce enough food but because we need novel methods on how to preserve our staple foods, then we expect our food technologists to research into how best we can preserve cassava, plantain, yam, etc. using the resources available to us rather than researching into how to prepare Ghanaian dishes with microwave oven.

I think that many of our scientists will not do certain types of research because they do not have high sounding academic titles even though these may be extremely crucial to our survival as a nation. A lecturer at the Chemical Engineering Department will prefer to research into modeling and simulating multiphase fluidized bed reactors than research into using solar energy to dry cassava. The former makes him feel very academic (and “kuntan”) even though his or her findings might not be used in Ghana. The latter, even though it may solve a lot of our food problems, sounds cheap and unacademic to him. She or he will need a great deal of money to set up the the equipment for the former and hardly any funds at all to set up the equipment needed for the latter. Both topics might be equally challenging and educating, academically. We should pause and question why our research findings are used more internationally than domestically and why most of them are rotting on shelves.

The novelty of an idea lies in the use of very meager resources to solve great societal problems. Very little can be said for a finding which requires massive inputs but comes out with cosmetic results. On library facilities, I think the universities and research institutions do have problems. Recently when we had a chance to talk to the Vice Chancellors of the three universities in Ghana they made it clear to us the sorry state of the libraries on the campuses back home. Here is an area we may be able to help.

Do we have the personnel? I will say yes, we do. But because most of our scientists have been trained in developed countries we sometimes tend to do research which are relevant to developed countries. Whilst doing research work here we have no choice but to work on topics which are relevant to these parts of the world. They pay the money hence they have the right to dictate what topics we work on. But the techniques and skills we acquire here know no boundaries. We should be able to transfer the knowledge and skills acquired in these settings and modify them to harness the resources of our environment to serve the needs of our society. It is because we tend to copy the developed countries in our research endeavors that we claim that we need the same type of equipment to do our research. Granted, we need some basic equipment! But we also need ORIGINALITY in our thinking in defining research areas and carrying out research. Look at the potential in solar energy in Ghana. Do we have to sit down until the developed countries come with a technology on how to harness this source of energy? The policy makers should set their priorities right, define goals and demand reasonable results for research grants to keep researchers on their toes.

22.03 Research and Ghana, *Charles Awasu*

Date: Tue, 27 Apr 93 10:59:20 LCL

From: Charles Awasu <CAWASU%SUV.M.BITNET>

Subject: Research and Ghana

This is to build on Aboagye’s posting on why most of research work is not relevant to our local needs. After independence, policies of westernization were adopted causing our development process to be directed by western trained economists, development agents, scientists, engineers, and civil servants.

1. This has alienated majority of Ghanaians from our own development. Farmers, artisans, and ordinary people who make up the majority of the population who possess traditional knowledge, who are familiar with the environment, who use traditional skills for their livelihood and survival were left out of the decision making and implementation process.

2. Most of the information gathered originated from the west, and processed through western thinking and relayed through established channels for the westernization of the Ghanaian.

Two examples:

- (a) The milk scenario. African babies developed Protein-Calorie-Malnutrition (P-C-M) because they did not have access to milk. This led to the establishment of multinational factories to produce evaporated milk and reconstituted liquid milk using imported surplus milk powder and butter oil. After twenty years of producing evaporated milk in Ghana, P-C-M is still prevalent. P-C-M could be reduced by supplying the baby with acceptable sources of protein, such as oil seeds, groundnuts, winged beans, soybeans etc. which could be made into vegetable milk, yogurt etc. The point is not about lactose intolerance, but that setting up vegetable milk factories, would have given traditional agriculture a boost. That will be economic development. Thus large quantities of seasonal tropical fruits with better nutritional values rot and are wasted, whilst people keep queuing for milk.
 - (b) The beer (draft or 'bubra'), carbonated beverages, Wheat flour etc. These products were established not for economic development but to satisfy investors economic interests. Their presence does not stimulate the increased production of any crop. Why can't we improve "pito" and other sorghum related drinks whose production will use raw materials and manufacturing methods that make use of traditional processes? What about our maize, millet, and rice which can be milled into cereal flours. These can be used to produce convenient bread-like products with acceptable taste, and can easily blend into local dietary patterns?
3. I am not questioning anyone's taste for such western-oriented items, but my point is that by increasing the production, processing, and consumption of local raw materials, that will stimulate economic development.
 4. I will like to encourage Ghanaian researchers and industrialists to collect information which can enable us to set up industries that can process what we have. I know certain drinks from "Nkulenu" etc are on the market but we need to go further. For those who have been in the west for long, you know with some advertisement, anything can sell. Before we can accelerate economic development, we need to do something about our tastes for western food products most of which are imported with "sweat-earned" foreign exchange, including, wine, whisky, jams, marmalades, and army rations. Sales and consumption of products contribute little or nothing to Ghanaian economic interests. All that and more is "inverted eurocentrism" and we need its collapse.

I'm sure others are ahead in such matters, lets hear from our scientists.

[Editors comment: In 'GHANA - the autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah', Nkrumah mentions that during the second world war, when the British needed extra quantities of potatoes to feed their military, they started cultivating potatoes in Ghana and some of the West African colonies. He claims the harvests were plentiful and the products were of good quality. Thus even granted that we still want to drink beer or eat bread or french fries(aka potato chips), we have to be able to develop and grow local varieties to feed the production units. Remember cocoa is not native to Ghana. I think it is economic treason when products with high demand (a producers dream) like bread and beer are hoarded because of scarcity.]

22.04 UNIVERSITIES AND RESEARCH, *Alexo Ganyobi*

Date: Thu, 16 Dec 1993 10:03:10 EST
From: Alexo Ganyobi <udkj001@bay.cc.kcl.ac.uk>
Subject: UNIVERSITIES AND RESEARCH

Following my earlier posting on herbal medicines vis-a-vis patent rights etc., a lot of issues have been raised not only on that specific issue but on the issue of research in our universities. I will like to further expand on the themes raised in my initially posting. To do justice however to each of the themes, I will dedicate this issue to our universities and research. It is an incontrovertible fact that governments in Ghana have not and do not care about research in our universities. We all know very well that their only aim is to stay in power so we have to start this discussion on

research funding. Knowing that little or nothing comes from the central government, how do we fund research? From the private sector? Do we have a “private sector” at all in Ghana? I think not. Who then do we consult? Foreign organizations? Their monies are not enough even for their own people. As Amoah Apraku said, they will only support research in our countries in areas like clinical testing where they do not want to use their own people as guinea-pigs.

What then do we do? Before attempting to answer what we do, we need to answer the all-important question of: what sort of research do we do? Basic research or end-user research? If you were the Minister for Health and the Faculty of Pharmacy, UST comes asking you for 300 million cedis to study the molecular features of proteins that allow them to be absorbed across the lungs, what will you do? On the other hand if they come to you asking for 5 million cedis to set up a unit to produce infusions for Korle-bu and also to look into factors that cause patients to “come to hospital instead of seeking primary care from auxiliary health workers” won’t you smile? The fact is that we have very little resources available for research and we have to learn to draw the line as to what we can do WITH THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO US. Yes governments have not been kind to us in terms of research funding but over the years we have given governments a lot of reason to be pleased about not helping us.

Apart from training world-class scholars for the international market (not intentional though) what else have the universities done? How well do our people know of our capabilities? Morally speaking, I think it will be bad to spend money on basic research when so many of our people are suffering. Thanks to technology etc, the information to be gleaned from such studies can now be obtained elsewhere i.e from journals. Yes, it will be nice to also contribute our share. But with the resources we have we just cannot. Basic research needs a lot of money and more often than not the results are not “seen” till years later. On the other hand the problems confronting us as a nation are numerous. Shouldn’t we therefore be using our scarce resources into the solution of these problems?

For the private sector. How well have we made them aware of the need for research. Anybody who has tried going into business with a Ghanaian private entrepreneur can tell you that all they want is QUICK profit. Something that research and development (R&D) does not give. Maybe the money in the private sector is in the wrong hands. But then I think the universities have failed in making the private sector see the potential gains in R&D.

Let us take the case of Britain as an example. When Thatcher was the PM she decided not to give any more money to universities for research. Rather the various research councils were to be funded to carry out research in basic science, arts, etc. Universities were asked to go to industry for money. Initially they grumbled because like Ghanaians, they were used to getting money from government and using it as they wished. Now they just don’t do any kind of research. And the good thing is that the universities are now coming up with things which are ready for the market. Here at King’s College more than half of our work is sponsored by the pharmaceutical industry. Can this happen in Ghana? Yes if we do approach people and make them aware.

Amanfour, our problems are many but we can overcome them with the resources we have. If we the educated cannot do anything who can? Why don’t we provide answers to our people on the various things they don’t understand?

P.S

There are a few Ghanaians who are making it big in business because they went into R&D. The producers of Refresh is one such company. As for the commercial exploitation of research, I think it is the universities’ responsibilities to do that. Why? Because nobody is doing it. Also, because they are in a better position to do so. Once they lead the way, others will follow. We once wanted to go into production of pharmaceuticals at UST. Apart from the experience and possible remuneration that it could offer students, the Faculty stood to gain a lot. I mean, if UST produces paracetamol tablets, there is no reason whatsoever that it will not sell like hot cake. The profit from this venture can then be used for “luxury research” etc. Ghanaians surely do like foreign goods but if we make them aware that what we have is of high quality, they will accept it.

After INDUTECH ‘86, some friends and I at UST decided to sell some hair creams we made for INDUTECH. The market was good and demand soon outstripped supply. As poor students and Teaching Assistants we were more than happy with the little that we made. We should have gone on but what did we do? Just went and enjoyed the money. Of course by then our main aim was to go overseas. Well now we have come here and realised that the action is at home. This experience together with many others have shown me that if we make people aware of what we can do, they will make their monies available.

22.05 Of Research and Products, by *Amoah Apraku*

Date: Wed, 15 Dec 1993 12:27:43 EDT
From: Amoah Apraku <amoah@maple.circa.ufl.edu>
Subject: Of Research and Products

Alexo has raised very good points about our universities and research. However, I beg to disagree on a few points. Firstly, research requires money, and a lot of it. Research can be funded through the government or private sector or both. The question is, is the private sector in Ghana such that it can fund GOOD research? I think the answer is obvious. As for the government, we know that like any government in the third world, their priority is STAYING in power, rather than funding research.

Thus research in Ghanaian universities are mainly funded by donations from international agencies. These funds are erratic and unreliable and also have several competitors. They are also usually concentrated in areas like clinical studies in medicine (for which Western patients don't want to be used as guinea pigs). Now, what happens to the results of research in Ghana that are not clinically based? They sit on the shelves waiting to be utilized. Whose duty is it to turn these results into commercial goods? Once again it is either the private sector or the government or both and certainly not the University Professor, who by the way occasionally has to resort to strike action in order to get sufficient remuneration to survive.

Good research has been done and continue to be done in our universities, given what we have to work with. As medical students, we had to rotate through the Manpong Plant and Herbal Research Center on the Akuapim Ridge. In fact we were shocked at what has been achieved in terms of extracting remedies from herbs that were quite efficacious in treating even diseases considered untreatable in the West. Some of these had been made into very presentable forms like creams etc. We were even told that Osagyefo, in his time, used to pass by occasionally for certain remedies. But it is common knowledge that we don't find these on the market. Whose fault is it? Private business which do not exploit these, the government, or the professors doing the research?

There have been several INDUTECHS in Ghana and I have seen very good products on display from our universities, especially from UST - traffic lights, mills, etc., but once again, they are not on the market. So, I think the problem now is the effective utilization of what we have. This has a sort of snowball effect because more utilization will mean more money being plowed back into research and more products being made. The situation we have now is lack of initiative (private or public) to utilize even the little that we have.

So rise up you potential businessmen out there and start doing something. Well, but there is a catch: there has to be a conducive atmosphere for private entrepreneurs, especially Ghanaians to sink their money into these ventures. So, you see, it is more complex than we think. Despite these shortcomings, the universities are not sitting down. Now there are consultancy and technology transfer centers set up by the universities all over as a way of going after reluctant entrepreneurs. Given the constraints, I think these are all we can do at the moment.

22.06 Universities and Research, by *James Opare*

Date: Wed, 15 Dec 93 18:51:47 CST
From: James Opare <SOPARE%LSUVM.BITNET>
Subject: Universities and Research

Ganyobi has raised a very interesting and useful question. I'd like to add a little bit to it.

1. Ganyobi lashes at those in the universities for allegedly letting the nation down. That is just about 15% true. The question is, how can a university researcher conduct useful, problem-solving research without the barest inputs? In

a country where expenditure on political activities are considered over and above everything else, how do we expect the universities to get just enough to conduct research? We know that we can boast of some of the best scholars in Africa, all trained in European and North American Universities. How are they treated by policy makers when out of patriotis m, they return home? We know that they are by-passed, and so-called experts from overseas, some of them mere mediocrities, are recruited as consultants, and paid 2000% over and above what the Ghanaian expert earns. Will any of you be motivated by such a state of affairs? Were you surprised to hear that at a stage in Ghana's history, the government decided to invite Ngugi Wa Thiongo and Chinua Achebe as educational consultants to Ghana? What are the credentials of these 'book wizards'. Don't we have men and women of loftier credentials in Legon, UST, UCC, and even Winneba? Let me point out that one of our biggest national, or precisely official disease is the belief that "anything from outside is better".

2. On the question of translating research findings into reality, who should translate what into reality? The research scientist who lacks capital to come out with the concrete product? If neither the state nor private firms have the courage and enthusiasm to fund research and translate findings into reality, then whither are we going? Can we justifiably blame the universities? In the West, we know how professors are funded to do research. We also know how research findings are translated into reality. Without the necessary support base, American Universities for example, would be like their counterparts in Ghana.
3. It is encouraging to hear from people like Ganyobi that they intend going into the kind of business we have been crying for.

22.07 Basic v/s Competitive Research - a case of misplaced priority?, by S. Asomaning

Date: Sun, 19 Dec 1993 21:11:37 -0800 (PST)
 From: "S. Asomaning" <asosam@chml.ubc.ca>
 Subject: Basic v/s Competitive Research - a case of misplaced priority?

There has been a discussion on the net on research or the lack of it in Ghana and indeed Africa at large. It is well known that whenever there is talk about research and development, African Intellectuals are quick to hide behind the 'lack of resources' smokescreen. They are quick to shift the blame elsewhere.

Research has traditionally been of two types - Basic and Applied or Competitive Research. The thrust of basic research has been the acquisition and furtherance of knowledge. Basic research gets into the fundamentals of problems and issues and at times produces knowledge that, taken independently, is of little use. Competitive research on the other hand builds on basic research and brings knowledge acquired in basic research to production and real life products. In short, competitive research generates wealth, something basic research rarely does.

Basic research is mostly, but not exclusively done at universities while competitive research is done mostly, but not exclusively at non-academic establishments. Basic researchers always think about publication, or a way of disseminating the knowledge acquired, while in competitive research, secrecy is the norm. Thus the results of basic research tend to be public information. Basic research generates few or no spinoffs. Competitive research on the other hand, usually generates spin offs leading to new products, jobs and wealth.

Where and what type of research is done is dictated by the the reward system in place. Academics get their 3 P's - perks prestige and promotion from the quality and quantity of their publications. Scientist and engineers engaged in competitive research on the other hand get theirs from the profits or wealth generated by the fruits of their labour in the form of remuneration perks promotion etc. It can be argued that competitive research has a built in cost recovery element (since profits are revenues less costs), something basic research lacks. Lastly, the most important factor, which incidentally, is common to the two types of research, is creative minds.

Given the above, the type of research a country like Ghana, trying to find its economic feet, should engage in seems too obvious to write. Thus the argument that we have university dons who do very good research which is left to rot on shelves is not only sustainable but points to an obvious case of MISPLACED PRIORITY. An excellent basic research produced by an academic gets published and becomes public knowledge. The reward system not only dictates but also motivates the researcher to do just that. Thus one that is left on the shelf to rot unarguably is not a very good one. The

results of good competitive research is money in hand. It is realized in production. Where facilities and resources do not warrant, it is patented and sold to other users. The reward system and especially the cost recovery aspect dictates that it be such.

Going by these arguments, the wariness of the governments of most developing countries to fund the so called basic research seems to be justified. You see since the results of basic research is public information, a developing country that funds basic research is in effect subsidizing the rich countries which do competitive research, which makes use of the results of basic research obtained as public information (free of charge). Not a wise thing to do eh? Moreover the cries of policy makers in developing countries about the absence of technology transfer is totally rubbish. You see technology results from good competitive research work. If you decide to spend your \$30,000 on a mercedes benz and then come to ask Kofi 'Asumesi' for a room to sleep in, then you obviously have not got your priorities right and he is justified in refusing you.

So who should set the direction and basic strategies for competitive research to take place? My answer to this is that while the government's role will be laudable, it is ABSOLUTELY not a necessary condition. That competitive research can take place in the absence of governments efforts, and even in the presence of BAD and UNSTABLE governments. Given the structure of our countries, the burden falls squarely on the shoulder of the universities to get their act together. The University in Africa is the single most organized entity to be able to get such work done given the perennial political instabilities. They should therefore abandon the so called basic research and get their hands dirty with real wealth producing research. The realities of the African continent today dictates just that.

One something something Amankwaah a lecturer in law at UST social sciences did a series of articles about the role of the university in national development in the weekly spectator in 1978 or 1979. The central idea of the articles was that the university should be a center of change and innovation and not a perpetrator of alien customs and traditions. Some of you might know the history behind American Land Grant Universities. The notion that basic research is what is done in the Oxfords, Harvards and Sorbonnes of this world, DOES NOT mean we should do likewise. You see they have different economic and political structures and are not at the same stage of development like us. Thus the established reward systems in our universities that call for publication in 'metropolitan magazines' (to quote a netter), should undergo 'self' examination.

I will end this piece by illustrating with the story of ammonia the basic ingredient of ammonia based fertilizers. Basic research in the 1800's established the reversible reaction between Nitrogen (the most abundant element in the air around us) and Hydrogen to produce Ammonia. The reaction looked simple, and the reactants were in abundance. Basic research had calculated all the thermodynamic parameters of the system. All the optimum conditions for maximum yield of ammonia were published in the most influential German organic chemistry journals. Yet the reaction could not be realized to yield commercial quantities of ammonia as feedstock for fertilizer production. Meanwhile, crop yields were low and famine was widespread. It was up to competitive research led by the German Chemist Habber (a Berlin University don) to establish that the activation energy of the reaction was too high and to work towards the development of a catalyst (through 20,000 trials) that lowered the activation energy enough to ensure a commercial yield. Ammonia was produced in abundance followed by fertilizers and of course food. All the famine disappeared and with it the miseries associated with it.

The only necessary ingredient in the equation is creative minds. If we think we have it, then the unstable governments and lack of government leadership notwithstanding, we can achieve something to alleviate our economic woes. There is enough published basic research to build upon into products using the raw materials we are endowed with. Remember, the root cause of all our political woes is economic. It is no secret that in Africa as probably elsewhere, those near the National Cake take a disproportionate bite. That, more than anything else, is the major motivation for our soldiers willingness to keep taking power through the 'barrel of the gun'.

22.08 Re: Basic v/s Competitive Research - a case of misplaced priority?

Date: Mon, 20 Dec 1993 05:22:21 -0400 (EDT)

From: benjamin baidoe-ansah U <bbaidoe4@mach1.wlu.ca>

Subject: Re: Basic v/s Competitive Research - a case of misplaced priority?

I will use the MAN's contribution as a means to enter the discussion on research and development. I totally agree with Sam that we should be concentrating on applied or competitive research. In our current state, where we can hardly provide current journals in our university libraries, we will definitely be misplacing resources by concentrating on basic research. I must point out that nobody is calling for complete disregard of basic research.

It is a well documented fact that Japan shot to stardom riding on the back of predominantly U.S. basic research. The Japanese showed an unusual knack for transforming basic research knowledge into mass produced products. A lot of the newly emerging third world stars are also making it using basic research knowledge acquired elsewhere. I was surprised to learn that microwave technology has been around since the second world war. Yet it was fairly recently that it found its way into our kitchens! Finding new applications for existing technology is certainly something that we can look into seriously.

I believe the problem of technology transfer, or the transfer of applied research lies with the type of entrepreneurs we have in Ghana. There has been a lot of applied knowledge sitting around in Ghana, waiting for some entrepreneurs to transform them into goods and services. INDUTECH has done a lot to expose some of these research to the public but the response has not been very encouraging. I am targeting the entrepreneur here because ultimately, it is the entrepreneur who will bring together resources (including choice of human and TECHNOLOGICAL resources) to produce goods and services. The entrepreneur is the one to identify opportunities, needs, etc. and develop the products to satisfy them. Unless the universities want to go into production (something that they may not be good at doing), all they can do is make entrepreneurs aware of the technology.

I seem to be coming to the entrepreneur in my analysis of a lot of problems I see in Ghana, Darko of Darko Farms, Ocran of Mankoadze, etc are the type of entrepreneurs we need more of in Ghana. These are entrepreneurs who have managed to build giant businesses, in spite of our political instability. Most of the entrepreneurs we have in Ghana are usually not of the right type. Some of them have money, or have access to money, but have hardly any clue as to how a business should be run. How many times have we not heard of some entrepreneur going bankrupt after building a house, or starting to build one? How about those who ride in Benzes and BMW's with their businesses hardly standing on their two feet.

We can have all the right resources (loans from abroad, the best management skills, etc) but without someone to bring them together in a productive venture, we will not get the best out of it. This reminds me of the biblical story about the richman who gave money to two servants before he left on a long journey. One servant found a safe place to keep the money and waited for his master's return. The other one (the entrepreneur), invested the money and multiplied it manyfold. We seem to find ourselves largely in the first situation, where we have not been able to make the most of even the little resources that we have because we lack people to put those resources to work.

Some entrepreneurs are self-made, but many more can be CREATED through the right policies and environment. A lot of countries have special programs to encourage entrepreneurship. This includes providing free and PAINLESS (because we don't want the process to be like a tooth extraction) access to tons of information, and assisting with all aspects of forming a business, including providing the basic statistical information on which business decisions will be based. Such programs can also give information on all kinds of applied research/technology.

Some governments spend money to send selected entrepreneurs on trade tours to LOOK for foreign markets and learn some new ideas. In Ghana the tendency used to be to send some government officials and their girl friends. Some countries have trade missions in their embassies THAT FUNCTION. We need tax laws to encourage the adoption of new technology, the use of consultants, and to discourage the over-concentration of resources in buying and selling. I am usually not in favor of free government handouts, especially if they will make money for someone, but this is one area that I will make an exception.

Our financial system should be giving loans on merit, to people with viable business plans. Again some countries help here by guaranteeing loans to entrepreneurs without assets to put up as collateral. In such an environment, it will be possible for 6 engineering graduates from U.S.T with a good business plan, but no assets, to go into business.

There is the need to transfer a lot of current management techniques and practices to new and EXISTING businesses. The universities have an immense role to play here. The universities and polytechnics should be running evening

courses on entrepreneurship and basic business skills. The banks could make certain courses/programs part of the prerequisite for obtaining loans, and the government could also make them a prerequisite for obtaining certain business related free services, and even make them tax deductible initially.

The universities should assist businesses/entrepreneurs/academics to form formal networks where people can learn from each other. The universities' consultancy centers and individual lecturers should be involved actively in all these. Knowledge obtained through consultancy should be incorporated into teaching (especially in practical courses meant for existing entrepreneurs or would-be entrepreneurs). In all these I believe in a pro-active approach: we should be out there SELLING these ideas as if our very lives depended on them! We should forget the idea of sitting in a consultancy office and waiting for someone to bring us a problem. We should go after our targets and make sure that by the time we leave them they are totally convinced that they cannot LIVE without us!! It is a war and we have to pursue it as such!!

A sophisticated and demanding consumer base is also critical for innovation and adoption of new technology. We can enhance this process by firing the imagination and needs of consumers through commercials.

22.09 RE: Of Research and Products, by Amoah Apraku

Date: Mon, 20 Dec 1993 17:45:22 EDT

From: Amoah Apraku <amoah@maple.circa.ufl.edu>

Subject: RE: Of Research and Products

I have been following the spin-offs about research with interest. Most netters are sort of emphasizing "competitive research" as opposed to "basic research". I beg to differ. I think both are very necessary for our development as a nation. I do not mean basic research like the super conducting super collider. That type of research is not the only type of basic research.

Somebody wondered why we cannot convert yam and corn into many products. To successfully do that, one needs to study the fine molecular biology of yam, the type of fluids and enzymes present in the fresh state, how to preserve those without destroying them and thus maintaining the flavor et many ceteras. This is basic research because it does not lead to immediate reward, but it must be done in order to successfully accomplish the task of storing or converting yam to products. Somebody can take that knowledge to apply the proper preservation methods, and think of marketable products to put the yam to. The latter is what I consider "competitive research".

It seems in our eagerness to "trash" basic science research, we have lumped all basic research together and put a noose around its neck. Maybe what we REALLY want to say is that, we must do the appropriate basic research which is applicable to our special situation. Nobody will conduct basic research into our yams, corn, clay etc for us. But we all will agree that we need to know more about our clay, the tensile strength in the various forms (eg oven-baked or sun-baked) the shear strain and stress they can withstand before we can meaningfully use them to build our future skyscrapers in Ghana.

The earlier points I raised seem to have vanished in the arguments. What I meant to portray was that, all these various forms of research have been successfully done in Ghana, BUT the results have not been utilized. I cited the Mampong case to show that the basic research of identifying the active ingredients of some of our herbs has been done. The "competitive research" of isolating it and converting it into marketable products has also been done. YET the products are rotting on the shelves. I also cited the UST products as seen at the various INDUTECHs. The fact that there are products means both types of research have been done. So the BIG question is how to find these on the market. I sincerely think this is what we should be addressing, NOT trashing basic research. Some basic research is necessary, even in our situation. So once again, we need to address the problem of converting what we already have into supermarket items, and ALL OTHERS SHALL BE ADDED UNTO IT. So WAKE UP all you potential entrepreneurs out there.

22.10 RE: Of Research and Products, by *Charles Appeadu*

Date: Tue, 21 Dec 1993 12:38:10 -0800 (PST)
From: Charles Appeadu <app@u.washington.edu>
Subject: RE: Of Research and Products

Amoah Apraku wrote:

“The fact that there are products means both types of research have been done. So the BIG question was how to find these on the market.”

This is the BIG question, indeed. I suggest that one possible answer is that the Ghanaian educated class has not seen itself as a business class. We have always thought that education is an end and not a means to an end. The fact that you have a BSc, BA, MSc, or PhD is the end of your achievement and it must ensure you your daily bread. What a shallow way to think and yet that is how we have grown up thinking. This is the reason why we emphasize titles and appearances because we have missed the essence - translating your title into visible, useful, products for your people and nation!

Somehow we have to redefine usefulness and importance. Titles aren't enough! We look down on the people who venture out and when they succeed we then try to bring them down! Kwabena Darko should be praised for translating his degree into useful productivity instead of envied and attacked!!

Let me give you an example. There are many university students who are poor and complain that they are poor. They have education. They could use their education to find out the areas of Ghana where pepper, say, is grown and forecast the pepper harvest by visiting these areas to see how pepper farms are doing (after all Ghana is not that big). Then, knowing that pepper is going to be scarce due to, say, poor predicted yields, the wise university student could buy a few bags of pepper from the farmers at the going market price, dry them, and store them for the lean season. Imagine how much this student will reap in the lean season. This is what I call useful education. Of course this is just an example! But who does this in Ghana? The university student considers this job to be very demeaning and so leaves it to the “low class zongo zamrama men” who make millions of cedis from the same process. Now tell me who is the wiser one and who is the real low person. We need better vision. We need to redefine usefulness and importance!!! Most of our actions are the reverse of what it takes to develop a nation.

That potential entrepreneur could be YOU or ME! We only need to look within to whip that spirit up! There are too many “book PhDs” in a nation like ours. We need PhD-become-entrepreneurs!!!

22.11 The Research Issue, by *Francis Achana*

Date: Mon, 20 Dec 93 21:20:45 PST
From: Francis Achana <RRTECO@IDUI1.CSRV.UIDAHO.EDU>
Subject: The Research Issue

It appears the debate about research is centering solely on natural science research, and that is why everyone appears to end up saying one of two inconclusive things: (1) there is not enough research being done in Ghana (2) a lot of research is done but it is not being transferred from the laboratory to the market place.

If you look at places like the U.S. you will see that research, even natural science research, does not go straight from the lab to the market place. there is the “missing link” which is research in the social sciences and the humanities that will indicate which of these new products will have a high probability of being accepted in the market. We have often heard of people saying they have not eaten anything for 3 days, just because for 3 days they have been forced to eat rice and not fufu.

Thus when we are talking of the benefits of research, it must not be narrowly focused on the type that can result in products alone, without the backup sociological, economic, marketing, historical, linguistic (etc) research through which the market, made up of this psychologically complex entity called the human being, can be understood in terms of its needs. I am a novice on matters of marketing, but it appears from what I can remember, that in earlier periods, entrepreneurs simply produced goods, and then mounted a hell of a sales pitch using handsome and beautiful faces to try to convince people to buy what they had assumed would be good for the customer. With time, they learnt that you should start by getting to know what the consumer is looking for and not finding first. Once you know this, then design the product to meet those demands, and then make a whole hell of a noise about the arrival of the “solution product”. Maybe the researchers are putting the cart before the horse, or maybe, once they have the right product, they don’t shout above the din. It is thus important that when we are thinking of research, it should not just be the lab and test tube type alone which should concern us.

22.12 WE ATE THE DAMN RESEARCH MONKEYS!!, by A. B. Dadson

Date: Tue, 27 Apr 93 11:01:00 -0700
From: A. B. Dadson <abdadson@sj.ate.slb.com>
Subject: WE ATE THE DAMN RESEARCH MONKEYS!!

A couple of years ago, the zoology department in one of our then three universities had a distinguished British lady on its faculty. Her name was Prof. Dimelo alias Fimelo - the smell of animals followed her everywhere. At the time, we kids found that funny and that was the case until I attended college in the U.S. and found out that it was not much different here. A dedicated professor often carried the scent of his or her lab/research, reflecting the hours spent on his/her job.

Going back to Dimelo, She used to run the university zoo single-handedly. She monitored all her research animals and those of other “kuntanic” professors. Her car was the official zoo-mobile with which she hauled in food for all the animals. She employed men and paid them with her own money to help her with this job. This lady redefined dedication to animal research/rights. She had all sorts of animals living in her home! The most frightening thing about killing a cobra/monitor lizard that was threatening you in your own community was having to run from Dimelo if she found out about this “murder”.

When she got bitten by one of her monkeys and became sick, she went about her normal duties possibly against her doctor’s advice. One day while driving on campus, she run into a tree and died instantly. While the entire university mourned the death of Dimelo, the number of animals at the zoo started diminishing. Hardly had she been buried, than I heard that with the exception of the alligator, all the other animals - deer, monkeys, grass-cutters, bay-las (the big rats) etc - have “been transferred for safe-keeping”. They were never brought back. The alligator subsequently disappeared too. The only other animals left were the dangerous snakes (green mamba, whiskered cobra etc). Even the pythons did not make it to the list of dangerous animals.

This is one single example of the horror stories I have about research in Ghana. My question is, do we really understand the meaning and importance of research? Is it of any value to us? What will we do to achieve results? Have we even questioned the type of research we do or have done back home?

22.13 Re: Research and Development, by Steve Acheampong

Date: Tue, 27 Apr 93 18:37:48 PDT
From: Steve Acheampong <stevea@maxey.unr.edu>
Subject: Re: Research and Development

I am very much encouraged by the way netters are expressing views on research in Ghana. We have learnt of some horror stories about research (e.g. Nana Benyin Dadson’s story on the monkeys at Legon) and I believe these types of stories will help us not to repeat some of the mistakes we as a society have made in the past. As to the question of whether we understand the meaning and importance of research, I believe some of us do and it is our responsibility to

demonstrate its importance in our socio-economic development to policy makers and the population at large for acceptance and logistic support. How do we do it? This is the million dollar question that I want those who believe they understand the importance of research (on the net) to help discuss and come up with some ideas.

It is true that some of the earlier research had been very much 'westernized' and there is the need to do research that addresses our needs. The unfortunate thing is that even in situations where researchers have sought to address local needs they seem to hit the wall at some point. To tell you a brief story, the Mechanical Engineering Department of UST designed and developed a handpump for rural water supply as far back as 1973. Twenty years later (1993), the pump is still at the pilot trial stage. The main reason is that UST has not got the money to produce a large number of the pumps for field trials to enable them correct any defects with the design. Attempts to get a local entrepreneur to produce them proved futile because the entrepreneur could not be assured of ready market for the pumps after production. The Ghana Water and Sewerage Corporation (GWSC) which is the largest user of handpumps is not able to come up with any money for the production of the pumps because they cannot afford it. The reason is that all the drilling projects that are undertaken in Ghana are done on bilateral basis and the donor country supplies the pumps for installation. So we end up with pumps like India Mark II and Moyno that are manufactured elsewhere. As with any machine, the pumps break down and we have to import the parts from outside for maintenance. The UST pump is made up of materials easily obtained in Ghana but here we are... What do we do?

To improve sanitation in the rural areas, the Civil Engineering Department of UST came up with the Kumasi Ventilated Improved Pit (KVIP) latrine in the late 1970s. The technology is simple and it has gained acceptance in the country but its widespread use is not very much encouraged and people still use the old-fashioned pit latrines in the rural areas. I feel that some of the research has been focused on our needs but in certain cases the technology transfer has not been adequate as a netter rightly pointed out and I believe that the establishment of the Technology Transfer Center should improve that aspect. Let us keep the discussion going and find out how best research can be supported and become meaningful in our development efforts.

22.14 Re: Research and Development, by Alex Aboagye . Kjemiteknikk

Date: Wed, 28 Apr 1993 15:43:21 +0200

From: "Alex Aboagye . Kjemiteknikk" <alexab@kjemi.unit.no>

Subject: Re: Research and Development

Charles Awasu's contribution to the discussion on research is very elucidating, especially the reasons given for the wrong slant in research in Ghana. He also comes out with very salient suggestions as to how some of these problems can be solved.

I wish to build further on Daniel Asare and Stephen Agyepong's call that we involve the common people in research. This is essential if we want new knowledge to be assimilated. Given the general educational level of the populace this will be possible only if the idea is not too foreign. Research should seek to make good and cheap ways of doing things even better and cheaper. Therein lies the spirit of competitiveness. Imparting the knowledge is less cumbersome if the idea takes its starting point from what people already know.

Steve Acheampong raises the following issues: sources of research funding, technology transfer and commercializing of research findings.

There are some research work which must necessarily be funded by government. Basic research for example must be funded by government. I am not sure whether we can afford to do basic research. But sometimes it is not easy to draw the line between basic and applied research. When it comes to applied research both the government and individuals and companies should sponsor. In countries like Norway the government has made it a law that a certain percentage of the profits realized by industries should go into research. The industries have a lot of say in how their research money is used. There is an understanding between the universities and the industries that 15% of the research funds from the industries should go into basic research and the rest to applied research. The government funds most basic research and some applied research.

On commercializing research findings, I am of the opinion that both the government and the private sector should pull their strengths together. The government should protect the market to a certain extent and give industrialists and businessmen some tax holidays to enable them find their feet. But it should not be so protectionist that the businessmen go on Mercedes Benz shopping spree with their first profits. There should be a certain amount of competition to ginger them to re-invest their profits in research and development.

Because of the low literacy rate and a lack of channels of communication - TV, radio, newspapers etc - only a small fraction of the populace has access to these or can understand these modes of communication. Due to the inhomogeneity of the Ghanaian society compared to western societies, selling new ideas is not so easy - not even for the government which has access to all these channels. These may be some of the bottlenecks to advertisement. Perhaps others have ideas about this.

22.15 RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT--THE FINAL WORD!!!!, by *Paul Opoku-Mensah*

Date: Fri, 7 May 1993 13:52:31 +0200

From: Paul Opoku-Mensah <Paul.Opoku-Mensah@avh.unit.no>

Subject: RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT--THE FINAL WORD!!!!

Before the discussion on the above topic dies off, let me add a final word. Most of the contributors and hopefully all the readers agree that there was and still is the urgent need for relevant research to enhance all aspects of our development. Again everybody agrees that there is an unacceptable culture of "non-utilization" (or should it be non-appreciation) of research in Ghana.

The million dollar question then is: How do we change this system to ensure that all research done (and those to be done in the future) do not end up on shelves only to be destroyed later?

As a start, let me share an Idea I have been "toying" with for sometime now. There could be a program on GBC-TV in which various researchers would be hosted to talk about their work and its relevance to the nation's development. Not only will this kind of program serve as a motivation for our unappreciated researchers, but for all you know some policy makers will be listening. It could begin with researchers at home. Later researchers in the Diaspora could be featured anytime they visit. Here are some suggested names for such a program? What about "Time With the Researchers", "Research Hour", "Research and Development", "The Researchers", etc. I made some enquiries about hosting such a program sometime ago and I was told by GBC that I needed to get SPONSORS. They seemed interested in the Idea however. It is not difficult to host an acceptable program once you have SPONSORS. Any sponsors out there?

22.16 Re: RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT--CALL FOR ACTION, by *Alhassan Manu*

Date: Sun, 9 May 1993 00:02:36 -0700 (PDT)

From: Alhassan Manu <aamanu@ucdavis.edu>

Subject: Re: RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT--CALL FOR ACTION

I whole heartedly support the concrete plans Yaw Oheneba-Sakyi put forward in his call for action on Research and Development debate. I think they are laudable.

Regarding his call for a Research Conference in Ghana, I have the following suggestions:

- * A steering committee could be set up to study the feasibility of such a conference, in terms of funding (most importantly) and other logistics.

- * The committee members should be Ghanaians in various countries. This way, while the US folks will be looking at Rockefeller, USAID etc, for funding, others in Canada may also be looking at CUSO, CIDA etc. Our Scandinavian

folks could also be exploring places like The Institute for African Studies, NORAD, NAVF etc, while our British guys may be looking at Overseas Development (and whatever that may exist out there).

* We may include other non-Ghanaians with research experience in Ghana in such a planning committee. These researchers may be good resource personnel.

* People with relevant experience (research and conference organization) could come forward to nominate themselves.

* July-August may be an ideal time for such a conference. This coincides with a period when many schools are not in sessions and many work places may be having their summer recess.

This is a laudable idea. Contributions of some “thoughts” to the discussions is strongly encouraged from everybody. In the meantime I would ask Yaw Oheneba-Sakyi to start putting together the ideas which netters would put forward.

I have some conference organization experience. I will be most glad to share my experience with the committee, if netters are willing to put these suggestions into action.

22.17 Re: RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT--CALL FOR ACTION, by *Martin Dwomoh-Tweneboah*

Date: Sun, 9 May 1993 15:54:35 +0200

From: Martin Dwomoh-Tweneboah <martind@ifi.unit.no>

Subject: Re: RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT--CALL FOR ACTION

It is time we all take the piece written by A. Manu and Oheneba Sakyi very seriously. We have to do something before we all start seeing on our screens the type of pictures shown about East Africa being shown about Ghana. Where is our Glory of being the Black Star of Africa. I hope Nkrumah didn't take it with him to his grave. If he took it with him then we have to retrieve it now before it is too late.

When we talk about research, we don't necessary have to research into going to space, developing atomic bomb, building a supersonic jet, We are not yet there and we can't be there if we cannot preserve our own foodstuffs and we depend on wheat from the west to make flour for our bread needs; we depend on canned fish from the west; we depend on canned tomatoes from the west; we depend on powdered milk from the west, etc. How long can we depend on these Kwasi Oburonis for all our needs. Why can't we process our cocoa and make the best use of all the by-products? Why can't we process our timber? Kwasi Oburoni will do everything to buy the raw materials at prices which suits him and sell the finished products to us at prices which maximize his profits.

Our research activities should be concentrated on our needs and should be in line with the popular slogan “GROW WHAT YOU EAT AND EAT WHAT YOU GROW”. I was shocked to hear that Ghana has spent millions of dollars to acquire some nuclear reactors from the East whilst GIHOC Pharmaceuticals was at the verge of collapse, Korle Bu Teaching Hospital was nothing more than “Korle Bu Death Hospital”; and the educational institutions are in a complete mess.

Our research activities should concentrate on the four cornerstones of a country's development, viz: AGRICULTURE, EDUCATION, HEALTH AND HOUSING. All these should form an integral part of RURAL DEVELOPMENT. We have to do something to show the Government that this is what Ghana needs and not spend money to train Commandos in Cuba. Why all these security networks? The Government should know that it has to FEED, CLOTH, HOUSE, AND EDUCATE the masses before building this local security network.

We have to have clear goals for our research activities and channel all these monies we are receiving as loans and aid into these areas. Let's follow the footsteps of Nkrumah. I don't think we have any regrets for the money he borrowed, because they were used to build the Akosombo Dam, Tema Harbour, Secondary Schools, UST ,etc.

As suggested by A. Manu and Oheneba Sakyi we have to take action now and then make it an “ANNUAL RITUAL” so as to have a consistent follow up of what is happening. There are agencies who are prepared to help but they are scared that the monies will end up in the pockets of some individuals and the equipments will end up with some influential people who have connections with the government.

22.18 Re: Research and Development, by Alex Aboagye . Kjemiteknikk

Date: Mon, 10 May 1993 11:33:04 +0200

From: “Alex Aboagye . Kjemiteknikk” <alexab@kjemi.unit.no>

Subject: Re: Research and Development

I'm happy we're trying to translate our thoughts into actions on this research and development issue. That's the way to go, moreover, we may not look like arm-chair critics. As a follow up of my earlier posting that research must serve the economic, social and cultural needs of the society, I have a suggestion for CIVIL ENGINEERING postgraduate students who have the choice of deciding what they want to work on for their thesis.

Most of us probably know about the huge uncompleted silos at Tema Cocoa Processing Factory. Those structures have been standing there for who knows how long? I think it's an assault on our capabilities as a nation to let them continue to stand until one day they collapse on some people. Think of the huge sums of money which has been sunk into the project already. I don't really know why the project was abandoned but I guess it's a mixture of technological and financial problems. It is speculated that some western concerns stand to lose if those silos are built, since we can then regulate the amount of cocoa we put on the market.

I want to believe (even though this is not my field) that the technological aspect of the problem can be solved not only by white experts but by Ghanaian civil engineers too. And believe me if white experts are taken there they will solve the problem. The sad part is that the government might give money to foreign experts to solve the problem but local experts might not get such positive response. I may be wrong here. There may be more sides to the issue than I am aware of. All the same, I think we must start thinking about solving it before the government brings in foreign experts.

To those who have the choice of deciding what they want to work on for their thesis and can get financial support from other sources other than the Ghanaian government, I suggest you consider this as a possible project. The way cocoa prices fluctuate on the commodity exchanges, I think it is high time we started finding a way of storing them and turning them into some processed products that will earn reasonable income for our poor cocoa farmers.

I read somewhere (was it in the Time magazine?) that an European student has proposed that he can straighten the leaning tower of Pissa. This is just for the fun of it, since it has been proven that it is not a threat to human safety and in fact it is a tourist attraction as long as it continues leaning. Putting those silos to more profitable use other than breeding grounds for frogs should be considered a national priority.

It has been contended by people who have worked in Ghana for some time that even when one is trying to help, some people in authority try to put impediments in ones way. It may sound ludicrous but it is often true that not all Ghanaians who want to help solve Ghana's problems are received with appreciation. Whites more often are, regardless of whatever their motives may be. Anybody who wants to take this issue up should be aware of these things and use a lot of tact.

So Structural and Geodetic engineers, over to you! As I said, I am not a civil engineer, so if I've shown ignorance in my analysis, please forgive me. I stand to be corrected.

23 MISCELLANEOUS ISSUES

Compiled and Edited by *Adams Bodomo* and *Sam Asomaning*

23.00 Editors' Preface

The Miscellaneous section resulted from the fact that a few of the postings on Okyeame did not fit into the neat categories we used in compiling the Okyeame Yearbook. Okyeame after all is a talking net. However, some of these postings are humorous and informative and hence make good reading. Thus we lumped these postings together in a miscellaneous section.

No attempt was made to achieve balance or anything of the sort. The miscellaneous section reflects purely the taste of the compilers, hence no rigid criteria for including or excluding an article was used. Your favorite article might not be here, nevertheless we hope you will enjoy our selection. Happy reading.

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Section Editors

23.01 Towards A New National Capital, by *Adams Bodomo, Norway*

In this posting I wish to take up an issue that has often captured my attention and, I am sure, that of other Ghanaians.

The State of Affairs:

Indeed, in some of our discussions, the subject of congestion in Accra has often been mentioned. That Accra is now a congested town is no secret to most people. The city clearly has grown faster than planned. There are a lot of 'unauthorised' structures in virtually all areas of Accra. Slums and shanty settlements seem to be developing at an unhealthy rate. As one netter put it, most of Accra can be considered a slum.

Consequences:

If it is agreed by most of us that this is the situation at hand, then there are serious consequences for keeping Accra, in its present state, as our national capital. There are probably two main alternatives at our disposal if we are to set about doing anything at all.

The search for solutions:

The first is to give Accra a better face. Here one would still have to choose between undertaking periodic face-lifts during times of remarkable foreign visits (as happened during the NAM conference a couple of years ago) and finding permanent ways of beautifying the city such as breaking down houses and enlargening our roads, etc. Given the gravity of the picture, however, it would mean that we have to break up almost half of Accra to achieve any appreciable results. But the natural question is: what is the better choice? To restructure and rebuild half of Accra or to lay the foundations of a new capital for the country?

Towards a New Capital:

The second alternative would then involve establishing a new national capital for Ghana. With the money that would be used in restructuring and rebuilding half of Accra we could probably already lay the foundations of a new national capital.

In effect other reasons and factors would interplay here to favour this latter alternative over the former: that Accra is situated in a geomorphologically unstable area, that the present capital has a defective geographical location in that it is not centrally located in the country, etc. It should be possible, for instance, to reduce the distance most Ghanaians would take to travel to their national capital if we locate a new capital more centrally. The resources that would be left behind could also be more judiciously distributed to the people who stay back in the pensioner capital.

Surely, there are many issues involved in this important national decision. The present posting is only meant to draw attention, once more, to the problem. We would need a lot of ideas from our future planners, economists, engineers, environmental specialists, etc. Above all, we need a strong political courage to address the entire dimensions of the issues.

23.02 Re: Towards a New Capital, by *Ebow Halm*

ehalm@lynx.dac.neu.edu (12 Oct 1993)

Before I left the land (June '92) there was talk of a new capital being created at Adenta. The rumours (something even appeared in the Daily Graphic about it) were that a new capital had been planned at Adenta. What I am unsure of is, if it was supposed to be a national capital, or just the new capital of Greater Accra. The residential areas were supposed to have been well mapped out etc. Anyway that part of my info came from someone I met in a taxi who lived at Adenta but I am certain I read about it in the newspaper too.

23.03 Okomfo Anokye, by *Wadada*

AGYEI@net2.eos.uoguelph.ca (12 Oct 93)

This is just a point I am trying to make to satisfy my curiosity. Let me start it this way:

When we were kids, we were told not to sing while bathing else our mothers will die. We grew up only to find out that 'this fiction' was just to prevent soap from entering our mouths.

Later in our lives we were taught in our various schools (during history lessons) that one great man, Okomfo Anokye came to perform so much wonders for the Ashantis. But the end of this man has been a mystery to me (and maybe others). History tells us that this man at a point in time decided to go and bring 'medicine for death' and that was all. Since then nobody heard of him anymore. Like the 'bathing fiction', I have just been hoping to get the truth in the sudden disappearance of this man but I seem not to come across it anywhere. I believe the truth about his sudden disappearance is hidden somewhere and some of our brothers and sisters who have studied advanced history could tell us. For the end of Okomfo Anokye to remain a mystery to me at this age of my life is something that marvels me a lot. So, sons and daughters of Nana Okyeame, tell me the truth. I want to know!

23.04. Humour: Home Economics, forwarded by *OSEIDAN@Meena.CC.URegina.CA*

(25 May 1993)

Son: "Dad, I have to do a special report for school. Can I ask you a question?"

Father: "Sure, son. What's the question?"

Son: "What is politics?"

Father: "Well, let's take our home for example. I am the wage earner, so let's call me "Capitalism". Your mother is the administrator of money, so we'll call her "Government". We take care of your needs, so we'll call you "The People". We'll call the maid "The Working Class", and your baby brother we can call "The Future". "Do you understand, Son?"

Son: "I'm not really sure, Dad. I'll have to think about it".

That night, awakened by his baby brother's crying, the boy went to see what was wrong. Discovering that the baby had seriously soiled his diaper, the boy went to his parents' room and found his mother sound asleep. He went to the maid's room, where, peeping through the keyhole, he saw his father in bed with the maid. The boy's knocking went totally unheeded by his father and the maid, so the boy returned to his room and went back to sleep. The next morning he reported to his father.

Son: "Dad, now I think I understand what politics is".

Father: "Good, son! Can you explain it to me in your own words?"

Son: "Well Dad, while Capitalism is screwing the Working Class, Government is sound asleep, the People are being completely ignored and the future is full of shit".

23. 05. Ghanaian Recipes... , forwarded by *Joseph O. Nattey u*

jnattey@kentvm.kent.ed (04 Nov 93)

Below is a list of Ghanaian recipes I just downloaded from one of the FTP sites. I am going to try some of them this weekend. Hope you enjoy too. It is amazing how much info. is out there to be retrieved.

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Below are some recipes for dishes from Ghana. They are garnered from five cookbooks:

ANC -- African News Cookbook: African Cooking for Western Kitchens, Africa News Service, Inc., edited by Tami Hultman, Penguin Book (Viking Press), ISBN 0 14 046.751 3 (pbk)

CAC -- Caribbean and African Cookery, by Rosamund Grant, Distributed in the U.S. by Seven Hills Books, Cincinnati, OH, ISBN 0-948817-13-5

BCIC - Betty Crocker's International Cookbook, NY: Random House, ISBN 0-394-50453-4

FC --- Fiery Cuisines: A Hot & Spicy Food Lover's Cookbook, by Dave Dewitt and Nancy Gerlach, Chicago: Contemporary Books, Inc., ISBN 0-8092-5148-5

TH --- Totally Hot! The Ultimate Hot Pepper Cookbook, by Michael Goodwin, Charles Perry, and Naomi Wise, Garden City, NY: A Dolphin Book (Doubleday & Co), 1986, ISBN 0-385-19198-7.

The source of each of the following recipes is noted by the corresponding abbreviation.

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Hot Plantain Crisps -- (Snack or Appetizer), ANC

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4 plantains [should be firm]
4 tsp lemon juice
4 tsp ground ginger
4 tsp cayenne pepper
oil for frying

Slice the plantains into rounds 1/2-inch thick, and sprinkle lemon juice over the pieces, stirring to moisten. In a separate bowl, combine the ginger and pepper. Heat about 1/4 inch of oil in a heavy skillet until a test piece of plantain sputters. Roll plantain pieces a few at a time in the spice mixture to coat surfaces, then transfer to the skillet. Fry until outsides are crisp and golden. With a slotted spoon, remove plantains to an absorbent cloth [or paper towelling] for cooling [slightly]. Serve hot.

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Nkatenkwan (Groundnut Stew) -- (good served with FuFu, or dumpling),
ANC

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1 chicken, cut into pieces
1-inch piece of ginger
1/2 of a whole onion
2 tblsp tomato paste
1 tblsp peanut oil, or other light cooking oil
1 cup onion, well chopped
1 cup tomatoes, chopped
2/3 cup peanut butter
2 tsp salt
2 hot chills, crushed, or 1 tsp cayenne pepper
1 medium-size eggplant, peeled and cubed
2 cups fresh or frozen okra

Boil chicken with ginger and the onion half, using about 2 cups water. Meanwhile, in a separate large pot, fry tomato paste in the oil over low heat for about 5 minutes. Add to the paste the chopped onions and tomatoes, stirring occasionally until the onions are clear. Remove the partially-cooked chicken pieces and put them, along with about half the broth, in the large pot. Add the peanut butter, salt and peppers. Cook for 5 minutes before stirring in the eggplant and okra. Continue cooking until the chicken and vegetables are tender. Add more broth as needed to maintain a thick, stewy consistency.

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Fufu -- ANC

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Note: Conventional west African fufu is made by boiling such starchy foods as cassava, yam, plantain or rice, then pounding them into a glutinous mass, usually in a giant, wooden mortar and pestle. This adaptation for North

Americans may trouble you if you try to stick to minimally processed foods. But it's worth trying at least once with west African groundnut stews.

2 1/2 cups Bisquick
2 1/2 cups instant potato flakes

Bring 6 cups of water to a rapid boil in a large, heavy pot. Combine the two ingredients and add to the water.

Stir constantly for 10-15 minutes -- a process that needs two people for best results: one to hold the pot while the other stirs vigorously with a strong implement (such as a thick wooden spoon). The mixture will become very thick and difficult to stir, but unless you are both vigilant and energetic, you'll get a lumpy mess.

When the fufu is ready (or you've stirred to the limits of your endurance!), dump about a cup of the mixture into a wet bowl and shake until it forms itself into a smooth ball. Serve on a large platter alongside a soup or stew.

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Abenkwan (Palm Nut Soup) -- (a seafood soup), ANC

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2 cups palm oil (no substitutes)
1 cup onions, chopped
1 chilli pepper, crushed, or 1/2 tsp cayenne pepper
2 cups tomato, chopped 2 cups okra
1 medium eggplant, cut into chunks
1 lb fish or crab meat
1/2 tsp salt

In a large, heavy stew pot, boil the palm oil for 10 minutes. Add onions and pepper and continue cooking on high heat for another 5 minutes. Reduce heat, add remaining ingredients and simmer for an hour or more, until soup is somewhat thickened. Stir from time to time. If there is too much palm oil on the surface for your liking, skim it off with a large spoon before serving.

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Kentumere -- (fish & spinach in tomatoes), ANC

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1 cup palm oil (no substitutes)
1 cup onions, coarsely chopped
1/2 tsp cayenne pepper
1 cup tomatoes
1 cup kippered herring
4 cups fresh spinach, chopped

Heat the oil in a large skillet or heavy pot, then saute onions and pepper together. Mash or grind the tomatoes and stir them in, along with the remaining ingredients. Cook at a moderate temperature for 15 minutes, or until fish is tender and flaky. If there is too much oil on the surface for your liking, skim some off with a spoon. Serve kentumere with cooked plantain or rice.

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Cooked (or Boiled) Plantain -- ANC

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Note: Boiled plantains make an easy-to-prepare base for meat or vegetable stews. Because of the amount of agricultural chemicals used in fruit cultivation, we suggest a good soap and hot-water scrub before cooking plantains this way. If you prefer, you may peel them before boiling.

4 large plantains

Drop unpeeled plantains in boiling water. Cook for 15-20 minutes until a test plantain is tender when pierced with a fork. Peel before serving.

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Avocado with Smoked Fish -- (serves 4 as appetizer, 2 as entree), ANC

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1/2 lb smoked fish
4 eggs, hard-boiled, with whites separated from yolks
1/4 cup milk
1/4 cup lime juice
1/4 tsp sugar
1/2 tsp salt
1/3 cup light cooking oil
2 tblsp olive oil
2 large ripe avocados
1 large red bell pepper, or a dozen pimentos from a can or jar

Remove the skin and bones from fish and flake the flesh with a fork.

In a deep bowl, mash the egg yolks with the milk until they form a smooth paste. Add sugar, salt, and 1 tablespoon of the lime juice. Then beat in the vegetable oil, a teaspoon or so at a time. Add the olive oil in the same gradual manner. chop egg whites finely and add them to the bowl, along with the fish. Combine thoroughly but gently.

Just before serving, cut the avocados in half, remove pits, and fill cavities with the fish mixture. Garnish with pepper or pimento, and pass around the remaining lime juice to sprinkle on individual servings.

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Akotonshi (Stuffed Crabs) -- (makes 16, to serve 6-8), ANC

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2 lbs crab meat [I think this recipe assumes raw crabmeat to start; refer to instructions below about boiling crab meat and alter technique if using pre-cooked crab meat, perhaps by just boiling some ginger and cloves in small amount of water and adding a bit to flavor crab. -- cmt]

1 tsp salt
1-inch piece of fresh ginger
4-6 cloves
4 tblsp cooking oil
1 small onion, minced
1 tsp ground ginger
2 tomatoes, finely chopped
1 tblsp tomato paste
2 green bell peppers, finely chopped
pinch of paprika
1 tsp cayenne pepper
1 tblsp dried shrimp [available in Oriental food shops]
1/2 cup whole-wheat bread crumbs
1 egg, hard-boiled and finely chopped
1 sprig parsley

Put crab meat in boiling salted water along with ginger piece and cloves. Cook about 15 minutes, until meat is tender enough to flake with a fork. Drain, flake and set aside.

In a heavy pot, heat oil to a moderate temperature and add other ingredients in the following sequence, stirring for a minute or so between each: onions, ground ginger, tomatoes, tomato paste, green pepper, paprika, cayenne, and dried shrimp. Reduce heat and simmer for 4-5 minutes, stirring constantly, until vegetables are cooked. Add crab meat and stir another couple of minutes to heat it through. Then spoon the mixture into clean crab shells or ramekins (small individual baking dishes).

Sprinkle bread crumbs on top of each crab and toast under an oven broiler, being careful not to let the crumbs scorch. Garnish with egg and parsley.

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Avocado with Groundnut Dressing -- CAC

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2 avocados ripe but firm
15 ml (1 tbsp) lemon juice
30 ml (2 tbsp) shelled groundnuts or peanuts
2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) paprika
2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) cinnamon
chile powder [cayenne], to taste
salt, to taste
fresh chives, to garnish

Peel the avocados; cut out the stone and cut into cubes. Sprinkle with lemon juice and set aside. Grind the peanuts roughly with a rolling pin or in a grinder for a few seconds. Mix the peanuts and spices well. Sprinkle over the avocados with finely chopped chives. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

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Tatale (Ghanaian Plantain Cakes) -- (appetizer), CAC

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2 over-ripe medium plantains (black and soft)
1 small onion, finely chopped or grated
25 to 50 g (1 to 2 oz) self-raising flour
5 ml (1 tsp) palm oil (optional)
salt and hop pepper, to taste
oil, for frying

Peel and mash the plantains well. Put into a bowl and add enough of the flour to bind. Add the onion, palm oil, salt and pepper to taste. Mix well and leave to stand for 20 minutes. Fry in spoonfuls in a little hot oil until golden brown. Drain on kitchen paper and serve hot.

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Avocado and Crab -- (appetizer), CAC

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15 ml (1 tbsp) lemon juice
1 clove of garlic, crushed
pinch of sea salt
freshly ground black pepper, to taste
pinch of paprika
1 avocado
175 g (6 oz) white crab meat
spring onions to garnish

Mix together the lemon juice, garlic and seasonings. Peel and remove the stone from the avocado and mash the flesh with the lemon mixture. Mix in the flaked crab meat, with a fork. Garnish with chopped spring onions. Serve on fingers of toast.

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Gari Foto -- (vegetarian, vegan side dish for stew), CAC

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25 g (1 oz margarine or palm oil
1 medium sized onion, chopped
2 fresh tomatoes, peeled and chopped
175 g (6 oz) carrots, chopped
175 g (6 oz) mushrooms, chopped
175 g (6 oz) green peppers, chopped
300 ml (1/2 pt) vegetable stock or water
hot pepper, to taste
100 g (4 oz) gari (gari is a coarse-grained roasted, grated fermented flour, made from cassava and used as a staple food in a similar way to ground rice)

Cook the onion and tomatoes in the margarine or palm oil, stirring until pulpy, in a non-stick saucepan. Add carrots and fry for a few minutes. Stir in the palm oil, then add the mushrooms, green peppers, stock and hot pepper. Cover and simmer for 10 minutes. Mix the gari into the sauce in handfuls, stirring constantly until all the liquid is absorbed. Serve hot with a vegetable stew or fish stew.

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Jollof Rice Ghana -- BCIC

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2 1/2 to 3 lb broiler-fryer chicken, cut up
2 cans (16 oz each) stewed tomatoes
2 cups water
2 tsp salt
1/4 tsp pepper
1 cup uncooked regular rice
1/4 lb fully cooked smoked ham, cubed (3/4 cup)
1/4 tsp ground cinnamon
1/4 to 1/2 tsp ground red pepper [or more to taste]
3 cups coarsely shredded cabbage
8 oz green beans (1 pkg, 10 oz frozen French-style green beans, thawed can be substituted for fresh)
2 onions, cut into 1/2-inch slices
1/2 tsp salt

Heat chicken, tomatoes (with liquid), water, 2 tsp salt and the pepper to boiling in 5-quart Dutch oven; reduce heat. Cover and simmer 30 minutes. Remove chicken. Stir in rice, ham, cinnamon and red pepper. Add chicken, cabbage, green beans and onions. Sprinkle with 1/2 tsp salt. Heat to boiling; reduce heat. Cover and simmer until thickest pieces of chicken are done, 20 to 30 minutes.

[Note: There are lots of versions of Jollof rice. It is a common West African dish. One I particularly like uses chicken, rice, onion, chopped tomatoes, and a bunch of fresh thyme. Saffron added is also good as a variation. -- cmt]

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Braised Chicken with Chiles -- FC

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3-4 green chiles, skinned, seeds removed, chopped
1 3-lb chicken, cut into 8 to 10 pieces

2 tbsp butter
1 tbsp peanut oil
1 onion, sliced and separated into rings
1 cup chicken broth
1/2 tsp ground nutmeg
Salt and pepper to taste

Melt the butter and oil and brown the chicken, a few pieces at a time. As the chicken browns, remove and keep warm. Add the onion rings and saute until soft.

Add the broth, nutmeg, salt, pepper, and chile and bring to a boil. Put the chicken back in the pan, cover with the stock, reduce the heat, and simmer until the chicken is done -- about 45 minutes.

Variation: Make a stew by adding coarsely chopped onions, tomatoes, and corn while the chicken is simmering.

Note: Fresh tropical fruits such as pineapple, papaya, or mango along with baked yams will complete this easily prepared chicken dish.

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Shoko (Beef and Spinach Stew) -- TH

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6 small canned tomatoes, with juice
1 whole fresh hot chile
4 medium onions, whole
1/4 cup green bell pepper
6 tbsp vegetable oil
1 lb stewing beef, cut in cubes
1 cup water [or beef broth]
1/4 tsp sugar
1/4 tsp salt
2 tsp cayenne [more or less to taste]
1 1/2 tsp minced fresh ginger
3/4 to 1 lb fresh spinach

1. Reserve 1/2 cup of juice from the canned tomatoes, and discard the rest of the juice. Combine the chile, tomatoes, onions, and green bell pepper in a food processor, and process until the vegetables are minced but not pureed.
2. Heat the oil in a large, cast-iron pot, and saute the vegetables and beef for 5 minutes over high heat.
3. Add the reserved tomato juice, water sugar, salt, cayenne, and ginger. Cover, lower the heat, and simmer for 2 hours. Stir occasionally to keep from burning.
4. Meanwhile, soak the spinach in warm water for 15 minutes. Then rinse thoroughly, separate, rinse again (and even a third time if you want to be extra careful), shred coarsely, and set aside.
5. After 2 hours, add the spinach to the pot and cook over medium heat for 30 minutes, until the water is gone and the spinach is cooked.
6. About half an hour before serving, prepare boiled rice. Serve Shoko with rice. [Also good served with Yam Foofoo.]

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Yam Foofoo -- TH

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Note: Foofoo is a ubiquitous and much-beloved staple through most of West Africa, whether topped with a fiery Palava sauce (or Shoko) or served as the bland accompaniment to a main dish. Foofoo is traditionally made with cassava (aka yucca and/or manioc), but it can be prepared as well with everything from rice, yams, and plantains to instant mashed potatoes! It is also somewhat harder to make than it would seem. Ellen Wilson quotes a traditional proverb that goes, "If a woman were like foofoo, a man could get to know her before he married her." What this has to

do with foofoo (or women) is anyone's guess. In any case, this version of yam foofoo -- traditionally made by pounding and beating the yams in a mortar with a wooden spoon -- has been adapted for a food processor.

2 lb yams
1/4 tsp black pepper
1/4 tsp salt
1 tsp butter

1. Place the yams in cold, unsalted water, bring to a full boil, and cook 25 minutes, or until soft.
2. Remove the yams, cook, and peel. Mash with the other ingredients.
3. Place in a food processor, and run briefly to remove lumps. DO NOT PUREE! (If a processor is not available, go directly to step 4.)
4. Remove foofoo to a bowl, and beat with a wooden spoon or wire whisk until smooth. The foofoo should have a sticky, slightly resilient consistency.
5. Shape the foofoo into balls with your hands, and serve warm.

23.06 A GHANAIAAN SPEAKS, by ALEXO

<udkj001@bay.cc.kcl.ac.uk> (30 Nov 1993)

I was reading through my old copies of the Ghanaian Chronicle and came upon certain quotations from the late P.A.V. Ansah which I think are relevant to our current discussions. I am therefore posting a few of them on the net:

Africa has been recolonised on the cheap, this time through economic means. But in all this tragedy, there is a silver lining, and that is the requirement that Africans move from despotism and autocracy to democracy and the respect for human rights....

Africa hitherto has been ruled by fatuous, and flatulent, low cost, cheap, obscene and obscurantist dictators.

With the greatest respect... Nobody has made the army in particular or the armed forces in general custodians of the constitution.

The PNDC government is a "patapaa" government which understands only "patapaa" language.

I shall be first to admit that our editors have not always been fair to those who write rejoinders when they genuinely feel aggrieved.

I hereby serve notice that since no one provokes me with impunity, if any rash or bask hireling tries to take "disadvantage" of me, I shall descend to the edge of that gutter to administer appropriate verbal punishment... And with my mission accomplished raise myself back to the Olympian Heights of the Ivory Tower where I abide.

23.07 Does Ghana end at Kumasi?, by Achana Francis

<achan921@uidaho.edu>
(6 Dec 1993)

I have so far enjoyed a good number of the discussions on the net. However, a certain recurrent trend appears to bubble up to the surface of some postings almost unnoticed. Whether it is about someone being surprised to learn, here in the U.S. (or is it in Europe?), that the few languages spoken on Ghana radio are not the only ones in Ghana, or when someone speaks of what she/he knows of price mechanisms and sanitation in Ghana and then admits that his/her only experience of these things is in Accra, or in many of the other topics, there is this tendency to assume that Ghana does not extend beyond Kumasi. It is true that either due to a lack of opportunity or a lack of any business to do elsewhere in Ghana, people may not have felt obliged to travel to, and get to know other regions and towns in the country. But if this

also means a lack of interest to really know your country, I think that is a real pity, and if we want to begin to address some of the problems that have brought our country to its present state of affairs, that “urban-centric” tendency of we the book-long people, in particular, and urban dwellers generally will also need an overhaul.

I am convinced that, except for the heady days of the independence struggle and the immediate post independence era, the sense of national identity that includes the whole country has gradually eroded. This has meant that those living in the southern one-third of the country, and who are closer to the seat of power, have not always been interested in getting to know more about the more rural parts of the country.

Now if those of us out here also appear, perhaps subconsciously, to be towing the same line, then it means that such attitudes (if they actually exist) will be with us for a long time to come.

It must be noted here that I am not referring to base sentiments like tribe consciousness, but rather to the things that we often accuse African Americans of: namely that they do not make the effort to get to know Africa and Africans better, and simply feel comfortable with stereotypes.

23. 08. Fufu for Thought, compiled by *Isaac Thompson*

<ixtst+@pitt.edu> (12 Nov 1993)

GARVEY SPEAKS

A race without power is a race without respect.

What others have done we can do.

You can never curb the prejudice of one race or nation against the other by law. Prejudice is actuated by different reasons. Sometimes the reason is economic, and sometimes political. You can only obstruct it by progress and force.

Prejudice by the white race against the black race is not so much because of color as of condition; because as a race, to them, we have accomplished nothing. . . we are dependent for our economic and political existence.

Suppose the whites will for some reason change their mind and stop supporting this alien and “inferior” race? What then?

A race that is solely dependent upon another for its economic existence sooner or later dies. . . if an effort is not made to adjust [its] own affairs.

Sloth, neglect, indifference caused us to be slaves. Confidence, conviction, action will cause us to be free people today.

The political readjustment of the world means that those who are not sufficiently able, not sufficiently prepared, will be at the mercy of the organized classes for another one or two hundred years.

The greatest weapon ever used against Negroes is disorganization.

Preparedness is the watchword of this age. For us as a race to remain divided is but to hold ourselves in readiness for the great catastrophe that is bound to come--that of racial extermination, at the hands of the stronger race, the race that will be fit to survive.

They subjugate first, if the weaker peoples will stand for it; then exploit, and if they will not stand for SUBJUGATION nor EXPLOITATION, the other recourse is EXTERMINATION.

Point me to a weak nation and I will show you a people oppressed, abused, taken advantage of; show me a weak race and I will show you a people reduced to serfdom, peonage and slavery.

We have been camouflaged into believing that we were made free by Abraham Lincoln. That we were made free by Victoria of England, but up to now we are still slaves, we are industrial slaves, we are social slaves, we are political slaves, and the new Negro desires a freedom that has no boundary, no limit.

No race in the world is so just as to give others, for the asking, a square deal in things economic, political and social.

I am not one of those Christians who believe that the Bible can solve all the problems of humanity. The Bible is good in its place, but we are human beings... therefore it takes more than the Bible to keep us in our place.

So many of us find excuses to get out of the Race because we are led to believe that the race is unworthy--that it has not accomplished anything. Cowards that we are! It is we who are unworthy, because we are not contributing to the uplift and upbuilding of this noble race.

You should tell people that it is an honor to be Black and that nothing is wrong with the black skin but bad conditions. Tell them that a well-kept Black woman or Black man is as good as a well-kept white man or woman.

Be as proud of your race today as our ancestors were in the days of yore. We have a beautiful history, and we shall create another in the future that will astonish the world.

The whole world is run on bluff. No race, no nation, no man has any divine right to take advantage of others. Why allow the other fellow to bluff you?

If you have no confidence in self you are twice defeated before the race of life. With confidence you have won even before you have started.

It must be the mission of all Negroes to have pride in their race; to think of the race in the highest terms of human living; to think that there is no one better than you; that you have all the elements of human perfection.

Never allow any other race to preside over your affairs. If they come as visitors, they must conduct themselves as visitors.

The Negro who lives on the patronage of philanthropists is the most dangerous member of our society, because he is willing to turn back the clock of progress when his benefactors ask him to so do.

Leadership means everything--pain, blood, death.

The powers opposed to Negro progress will not be influenced in the slightest by mere verbal protests on our part. They realize only too well that protests of this kind contain nothing but the breath expended in making them.

Propaganda [by organized people] has done more to defeat the good intentions of races and nations than even open warfare.

[The Negro race suffers from] propaganda to destroy our hopes, our ambitions and our confidence in self.

I am not white, which is no crime; to have all things makes one so great; if Negroes did have, all whites would crave more black to be for all time. The whites have ALL, in regal state, and blacks do think them more sublime but whites would think the blacks so brave if they had greater wealth all times.

As you shouldn't expect another man to give you the clothing that you need to cover your own body, so you should not expect another race to give you the education to challenge their right to monopoly and mastery; to take for yourself that which they also want for themselves.

Never forget that knowledge rules the world and ignorance carries the burden.

Never allow anyone to convince you of your inferiority as a human being. Rise in your dignity to justify all that is noble in your humanhood as a race.

Never allow your children to play with white dolls because they will grow up to like white children and they will have them.

Give them the dolls of their own race to play with and they will grow up with the idea of race love and race purity.

Negroes should not have white pictures in their homes because those pictures will inspire them to become white in their ideas. They should instead have in their homes pictures of Negroes who have achieved greatness.

Tear from your walls all pictures that glorify other races. Tear up and burn every bit of propaganda that does not carry your idea of things. Treat them as trash.

Europeans see God through their own eyes; Asians see God through their own eyes; we Negroes must also see God through our own eyes!

Up you mighty race. Accomplish what you will!

There is nothing in the world that you want that you cannot have so long as it is possible in nature and men have achieved it before. Everything on earth is man's creation.

The Negro always wants to start from the top, therefore he comes down. No success ever came from the top; it always starts from the bottom up.

Because you may not desire charity for yourself for the time being, why should you not support the appeal for charity for those of our race who may need it?

Every Black person helped from the ground to stand up is another person set on the journey of racial responsibility.

One may be prosperous today on his own initiative and account and by misadventure lose the natural ability of self-initiative to become dependent upon charity. You may lose your eyes, arms or legs. You may lose your health without contributing to it personally but purely by accident. In that case you would become a recipient of charity without you expecting it or contributing to it.

The battles of the future, whether they be physical or mental, will be fought on scientific lines, and the race that is able to produce the highest scientific development is the race that will ultimately rule.

NOTE: All quotes appears in Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey

23. 09. History of the CEDI, by *CHRISTIAN K. N. AKUAMOA*

<CKNA@ac.dal.ca> (27 Apr 1993)

Since I volunteered to post the weekly exchange rates on the net, I have received a lot of mail on various aspects of Ghana's currency. In order to avoid repeating my responses to different netters, I've put together this piece on the life of our currency. This piece attempts to answer most of the questions that are sent to me.

I've indicated the respective regimes/governments associated with the various changes as follows:

- o CPP (Kwame Nkrumah)
- o NLC (Gen Ankrah, Gen Afrifa)
- o PP (Kofi Busia)
- o NRC/SMC 1 (Gen Acheampong)
- o SMC (Gen Akuffo)
- o AFRC (Rawlings)
- o PNDC (Rawlings)

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

12th March, 1957 (CPP)

At independence Ghana was using the West African Pound which was also legal tender in Gambia, Sierra Leone and Nigeria.

14th July, 1958 (CPP)

The Ghana pound was introduced to replace the West African Pound at par (that is, one Ghana pound was equivalent to one West African Pound)

19th July, 1965 (CPP)

The CEDI was introduced to replace the Ghana Pound as the national currency. The exchange rate was 2.40 cedis = 1.07 Pound (that is, one pound and seven pence). In relation to the US dollar, C1.00 = \$1.67 or \$1.00 = C0.6 With the introduction of the cedi, Ghana converted from the sterling group of currencies to a decimal currency. 'Cedi' is the Akan (Twi?) word for cowrie which was legal tender in some parts of modern Ghana; 'Pesewa' is Fante word for money.

17th Feb, 1967 (NLC)

The New Cedi (NC) replaced the Cedi (C) at the rate of C1.20 = NC1.00. In relation to the dollar, NC 1 = \$1.40 or \$1.00 = NC 0.71

23rd May, 1967 (NLC)

The old cedi ceased to be legal tender.

8th July, 1967 (NLC)

The New Cedi was devalued by 30%. The New Cedi now exchanged for \$0.98 or \$1.00 = NC 1.02

4th Nov, 1971 (PP)

The New Cedi ceased to be pegged to the Pound Sterling and was now pegged to the US dollar at NC 1.00 = \$0.98

27th Dec, 1971 (PP)

The New Cedi was devalued by 44% against the US dollar : NC 1.00 = \$0.55 or \$1.00 = NC 1.82

7th Feb, 1972 (NRC/SMC 1)

The New Cedi was revalued by 42% against the US dollar: NC 1.00 = \$0.78 or \$ 1.00 = NC 1.28

8th May, 1972 (NRC/SMC 1)

The US Federal Reserve devalued the dollar in terms of gold by 8%. Since the value of the New Cedi was fixed in terms of the US \$, the New Cedi was automatically devalued in terms of gold by the same margin (8%)

15th Feb, 1973 (NRC/SMC 1)

The US Federal Reserve devalues the dollar, but Ghana maintained the value of the new cedi in terms of gold. Therefore, the new cedi depreciated against the dollar by 12% : NC1.00 = \$0.87 or \$1 = NC 1.15

March, 1973 (NRC/SMC 1)

The new cedi became known simply as cedi, without physically changing the currency.

June, 1978 (SMC 2)

A managed flexible exchange rate was introduced.

25th Aug, 1978 (SMC 2)

The exchange rate was C1 = \$0.59 or \$1 = C1.69

28th Aug, 1978 (SMC 2)

The cedi was devalued by 39% in terms of the dollar: C1 = \$0.36 or \$1 = C2.75

9th March, 1979 (SMC 2)

Government announces that new currency notes to replace the existing ones during the period 13th March to 26th March. The old notes were to be exchanged at the following rates:

any amount up to C5,000 ---- 30% of face value

any amount in excess of C5,000 ---- 50% of face value

[I remember the relation was the other way round, that is the first C5000 was 50% of face value and anything in excess was exchanged at 30%. Maybe netters will help clarify this point. I might be wrong - <editors note>]

21st April, 1983 (PNDC)

Export bonuses and import surcharges introduced. The cedi now exchanged for between C23.38 and C29.98 to \$1 depending on the nature of the transaction.

11th Oct, 193 (PNDC)

The exchange rate became C30 = \$1 applicable on all transactions.

**** Between this date and 22nd Sept, 1986 the cedi was progressively devalued as follows:

26th March, 1984

C35 = \$1 or C1 = \$ 0.029

24th Aug, 1984

C38.50 = \$1 or C1 = \$0.026

4th Dec, 1984

C50 = \$1 or C1 = \$0.20

10th April, 1985

C53 = \$1 or C1 = \$0.019

12th Aug, 1985

C57 = \$1 or C1 = \$0.0175

7th Oct, 1985

C60 = \$1 or C1 = \$0.0167

13th Jan, 1986

C90 = \$1 or C1 = \$0.0111

22nd Sept, 1986

A dual exchange rate system was introduced and eligible transactions specified for each of the two markets. The first auction of the cedi for foreign currencies was held. The exchange rate on this first auction was C128 = \$1 or C1 = \$0.0078.

23.10. Re: Ghana's "success", by *Isaac Thompson*

<ixtst+@pitt.edu> (26 Nov 1993)

In a way it's good to have Ghana associated world-wide with something good for a change. For too long our reputation has been soiled. Recently, on my way to Ghana, I made a stopover in Geneva. It was to take something like 13 hours. So I went over to immigration and asked if I could get a transit visa to town. The lady said yes. When I brought out my passport, she said there was no way they would allow a Ghanaian in town on a transit visa. Ghanaians, Nigerians, and Ugandans had been 'white'-listed! I had to wander through the airport lounge for 13 hours.

And then recently while attending a conference here in the US, I met a young lady who was an international consultant--whatever that is. When I told her I was from Ghana, her face lit up. "Ahhh, Ghana," she said. "Rawlings. Lots of money in Ghana. I have been trying to get Ghana on our account but you guys are tight wads!"

I didn't know what to do: Whether to burst her bubble or go along and bask in the glow of her compliments. After all, it feels good being associated with a "rich" country -- even if the reality is different. I simply told her that the Ghanaian government was using whatever money it gets to rebuild its administrative capacity and also encourage Ghanaian consultants. Still, she, gave me her business card!

Now, on to the main theme of this posting, I think Ghana's "success" story depends on how you define success: I have come up with four levels of success in the context of the ERP [Economic Recovery Program <ed>].

1. If by success, you mean Ghana's ability to repay her debts - a description the multilaterals prefer, then in fact we have been very successful. We had to or else the IMF wouldn't have given us all that money. In the process we went into heavy debt. That's the down side.
2. In terms of institutional reform, we have come a long way. The streamlining of government ministries, the "marketizing" of foreign exchange, rehabilitation of telecommunication systems, etc. are all marks of successful institutional reforms. There's some way to go though, in terms of things like tax collection. Only an abysmal 10% of Ghanaians gainfully employed pay any kind of income tax, and this after extensive reforms in tax collection under the ERP.
3. Our export performance, appearances notwithstanding, is not very good and in fact bodes ill. Sure, cocoa exports have risen, but world prices have tumbled. And the government has been forced to keep paying higher and higher producer prices to cocoa farmers. (The revenue for this might have come from a special fund created from cocoa revenue; I'm not sure.). What both the government and the aid agencies keep referring to as "non-traditional exports" are no better than cocoa in terms of their price instability. Thus, although their export volumes have risen somewhat, the returns from the non-traditionals have been disappointing. Only pharmaceuticals and cutlasses have shown any promise.
4. General economic performance. It's a mixed record. If you are into tourism or cocoa exports, you'd probably say "good news". If you are one of the many market people who make up the heart of Ghanaian commerce and you are still reeling from the effects of the killer budget, then... Further, a huge debt (\$4 billion) and a weakening export sector could mean the "miracle" might not be sustainable for long. Unless of course we went into more debt--or received more direct foreign investment or some sort of debt relief.

23.11 Travel Tips, by *Isaac Thompson*

<ixtst+@pitt.edu> (5 Dec 1993)

Going home this Christmas season? Here're some tips:

1. If you are buying your ticket in the States (and probably in Europe too) you may qualify for frequent flier mileage bonus. Ask the airline. (When you accumulate enough mileage, the airline--or other affiliate participating airlines--will issue you a FREE ticket valid for certain parts of the world). Try it; you have got nothing to lose.
2. Travel light, i.e., carry only simple gift and other items. Most things are now available in Ghana. Heavy (particularly luxury) stuff attract heavy customs duties. You may have to pay bribe to bail yourself out. If you do, you would have contributed to 'the problem'.
3. In Accra, it's best to change your money after 2 p.m., which is when the financial news is broadcast and forex bureaux set their rates. A few minutes could make the difference between thousands of cedis, depending, of course, on how much you change. The closer you are to Accra proper, the better the rates. The stretch between Circle and UTC is the most "fertile".
4. Two things you don't want to miss while in Accra: (1) The Radio Program "Good Morning Accra." Hear grassroots democracy at its finest as irate market women relentlessly question fumbling parliamentarians and assemblymen over how their tax money is spent. Breath-taking stuff. (2) The TV Program "Talking Point" with host David (Richard?) Ampofo. Undoubtedly one of the best TV interviewers ANYWHERE--and I mean anywhere. Has the best follow-up questions. Can be a little prosecutorial, sometimes, but, hey, can't win it all.

5. Please, don't charter taxis. Two reasons: (1) You put unnecessary pressure on those of us who have to save 5 years just to be able to make one trip home. We get there and they expect us to charter taxis too. Of course, in the end it's YOUR money. (2) Trotros are still the way to go. They are dirt cheap, measured against your "dollar" power, and in the end you save plenty. (For some reason, people don't like the back seat. I didn't care. Hope you don't either. It's the best vantage point, if you need an "excursion" of Accra!)
6. If someone asks for, say, 500 cedis, PLEASE give them 500 cedis--or LESS. If you give more, you create the impression you're a money machine. You'll regret it.
7. If, given the recent discussions on the net, you must eat REAL 'waakye', Abeka-Lapaz is the place to go. Forget about Nima. The fancy cars you see after 5 p.m. under the footbridge off the highway are not there to attend some conference; they are there because of "Extra-O Waakye," whose reputation transcends Ghana's borders. Rumor has it that some folks from Europe fly in every weekend just for that. But that is JUST a rumor, and an exaggerated one no less. You MUST try it.
8. Please, tell my aunt, Auntie Obieley, who sells kenkey at Lapaz, that I ran out of the half gallon shitto she gave me over the summer; I'd appreciate a refill. Tell her I know she's a nice person, which is why I keep her in my prayers every night; I swear.
9. If you're a bachelor(ette) and you are still sowing wild oats, don't forget...well...er...ugh...ehm..., don't forget your CONDOMS! The life you save WILL be more than your own. (That, of course, is as true for Ghana as it is for here).
10. Say hello to Hawa Yakubu-Odede, parliamentarian and the next president of Ghana (my choice, of course!!!!) "Hawa '96!" If you thought '92 was wild, wait till '96, when our mothers finally take over the OTHER HALF of the economy! It's about time, won't you say.
11. Have a terrific vacation.

23.12 Death and Debt, by *Eugene Quaye*

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(22 Nov 93)

I just finished reading the article by Amoah entitled "Re: Pseudocapitalism" and I must admit that it is one of the best that I have read on the net on the subject of Development in the motherland.

I have been struggling with certain cultural practices in the motherland which I believe are not helpful if not downright detrimental to the economic well-being of Ghanaians. Please bear with me as I elaborate on what I have in mind.

The first thing I want to talk about is FUNERALS. What is it that causes a family to put up the "best" funerals in town only to end up with thousands of cedis in debt. It is such a sad thing to see "living" people put themselves in the most dire financial predicaments because they went all out to bury a dead family member "respectfully". Sometimes the immediate family has to take on debt for the rest of their lives because of such a venture. Some surviving kids cannot be sent to the best primary or secondary schools because of lack of funds. I believe that our culture has elevated death to such a position that it draws away funds that could be invested more profitably elsewhere. Even if the family could afford an expensive funeral, I still think it is economic treason because we are only wasting resources that could be used in some other economic activity. What is wrong with having a small decent burial commensurate with what we can afford?

Hopefully, I shall be visiting Ghana shortly and the first thing I intend to do is sit down with my mother and father and ask them this simple question: Would you prefer that I send you financial help while you are living or have the greatest funeral service after your death? I shall make it plain that I do not intend to and will not have any big funeral celebration and that they had better get used to the idea right now so that there won't be a misunderstanding in the future. I have heard of forty day, one year and five year anniversaries of the death of a beloved one. Does a family have to mortgage its future to death?

The next item on the list is ENGAGEMENTS. I just watched a video tape of the engagement of my brother-in-law to his fiancée. I must say that by all standards it was impressive but I couldn't help asking myself the same question over and over again:

What would have happened if all the money that the guy had to send to the lady's family had been placed in front of the couple's feet with a statement to the effect that they should invest in some piece of property or something useful and watch their investment grow?

What about 'OUT-DOORINGS'? I am waiting for the day that the parents of a new born would put the funds for this activity into a Savings account so that the baby would have something to look forward to (no matter how small) when it grows up. I have heard Financial Planners say that 2 things that each of us have to work with are time and money. You may either start with a small amount of money and a lot of time on your side or with little time and large amounts of money to get to where you need to be.

As you cut up Turkeys for this Thanksgiving do not forget to think about these things. Does anyone know where the one year anniversary service for all the Turkeys that were killed in November 1992 is being held at?

23.13 Quotes on Cocoa!, by Alfred Opono

<aopoku@ccs.carleton.ca> (16 Mar 93)

I found these quotes in the course of my reading and I felt it would interest you to know what some prominent people have said about the industry....so here we go!

Sir Gordon Guggisberg, addressing the Legislative Assembly in 1919!

"We have put all our eggs in one basket. The cocoa baskets are full. What about the other baskets if anything gets wrong with the cocoa crop or the cocoa market?"

(Walter Birmingham (ed.) A Study of contemporary Ghana, Evanston, Ill., Northwestern Univ. Press, 1966, p.3)

Adam Smith.....

"When you are tempted to speculate in cocoa, lie down until the feeling goes away" (cited in Donald Rothchild (ed.), Ghana - The Political Economy of Recovery, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, 1991, p.221).

Cord Jacobson.....

"...Shortfalls in projected revenue...had reached \$180 million by 1989. ...While at the beginning of the 1980s, a revival of cocoa was one of the prerequisites for an overall revival of the economy, the situation a decade later clearly drives home the vulnerability of this strategy" (ibid, p.228-9).

World Bank (projections)...

Cocoa's share of export earnings expected to fall from 60% in 1987 to 40% in 1991 (through 1995).....

"this reflects both the poor prospects for cocoa prices and the structural adjustment of the economy which would lower Ghana's dependence on this commodity in spite of the recovery in output" (World Bank; Ghana: Structural Adjustment for Growth, Report No.7515-GH, (Washington D.C., 1989, p.65)

It is worth emphasizing that the projected decline in the share of cocoa in total earnings is not due to a neglect of

cocoa in the course of the ERP! It is due to the fall in revenues as a result of the fall in prices!

Why the fall in prices? Or, why the increase in supply?
Check this out!

Cocoa Projects by the World Bank and other Donors since 1980, in US\$M

Year	Country	Project Sum	share of WB
1988	Ghana	128.0	40.0
1988	Cameroun	285.4	103.0
1987	Sao Tome & Principe	21.8	7.9
1987	Togo*	33.2	17.9
1986	Papua New Guinea*	68.3	27.6
1985	Equitorial Guinea	16.2	9.3
1984	Indonesia*	369.8	154.6
1982	Liberia*	28.0	15.5
1981	Dominican Rep.*	40.0	24.0
1981	Malaysia*	200.0	50.0
1981	Indonesia*	322.0	161.0
1980	Western Samoa*	20.6	8.0

* projects included other tree crops.

Well, you can form your own deductions from these quotes and figures. One point of interest though, in the case of Ghana, it wasn't the first or the last time we have received such a loan in the course of the ERP!

23.14 Ghanaian scholarships, by *Kyekyeku Opong*

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A Ghanaian colleague here and I have diverse views on whether Ghana government scholarships, including C.M.B scholarships, Bank of Ghana scholarships and scholarships by all governmental organizations should be "NEED-BASED" or "MERIT-BASED". Let us restrict our argument to scholarships to secondary schools.

By need-based, I mean for instance if a student gets the highest mark in the common entrance examination, and his/her father is the Governor of the Bank of Ghana, such a person should neither qualify for a bank of Ghana scholarship nor a C.M.B. scholarship. Likewise a rich farmer's child should not qualify for any form of scholarship that is from a governmental organization.

An effective system could be worked out to bring all government scholarships under one umbrella. This organization should then see to it that scholarships are not wasted. I KNEW A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO COULD NOT GET TO SECONDARY SCHOOL DUE TO FINANCIAL REASONS AND A LOT OF PEOPLE WHOSE POCKET MONEY FOR A PERIOD OF TWO WEEKS COULD PAY A STUDENT'S BOARDING FEE BUT WERE ON SCHOLARSHIP.

23.15 Secondary School Scholarship, by *Vincent Kwapong*

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My opinion is that every Ghanaian should make it through secondary or vocational/technical school, at a minimum. From this perspective scholarship at that level should be need-based. However, that need-based scholarship should be tied to a required minimum academic performance.

Thus, if it is assumed that getting, 450 on the Common Entrance Examination is adequate, then a person will qualify for a need-based scholarship by doing better than 450 on the test. How well a person does will still determine whether the person gets to go to his/her first choice school.

Of course, there should also be a required minimum performance during the course of the education to sustain continuous financial support. There should still be some (highly competitive) merit-based scholarships to spur individual to higher standards.

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